



**Great
Lakes**
AQUARIUM

At Lakes Superior Center

Lake Superior Center Authority

2020 Annual Report to the Legislature

Submitted February 2021

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 85B.06; 1990 Minn. Laws Chap. 535

Sec. 6 Lake Superior Center Authority must submit an annual report to the legislature detailing the activities, funding and organizational operations for Lake Superior Center dba Great Lakes Aquarium.

On behalf of the Lake Superior Center Authority, we are pleased to provide this annual report on the activities carried out by Lake Superior Center dba Great Lakes Aquarium (GLA) in 2020. This year started successfully, but the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic brought many challenges. Per Governor Walz's Executive order, GLA closed on March 17th. During this closure, a majority of the staff were either laid off or furloughed. A core group of essential workers stayed on to care for the animal collection and maintain building functions. In May, GLA secured a Payroll Protection Loan and an Economic Disaster Loan from the Small Business Administration. On June 10th, the Governor lifted his restrictions. At this time, we brought staff back and worked on creating a way to keep guests and staff safe. Using the recommendations by Governor Walz's Stay Safe MN plan and the Minnesota Department of Health, GLA was able to open. Safety measures included: a mask mandate (instituted prior to the city and state mandates), acrylic shields at checkouts, wayfinding for one-way traffic, and visual guidance for six feet of separation. Our guests' feedback was positive, with many telling us how they appreciated the changes and were very comfortable visiting us with the measures in place.

We asked staff to work from home if their duties allowed and set up protocols to ensure social distancing within the workplace for those who could not stay home. We upgraded technology to enable remote access with a VPN and Microsoft Teams and created Zoom accounts.

Our revenue suffered from a three-month closure, followed by a 60% drop in attendance during June. In July and August, our numbers did recover somewhat but were still down about 30%. To make up for this revenue loss, we cut our spending by 30% and reduced our staff from 63 to 44 people. Great Lakes Aquarium currently employs twenty-three full-time staff and twenty-one part-time staff.

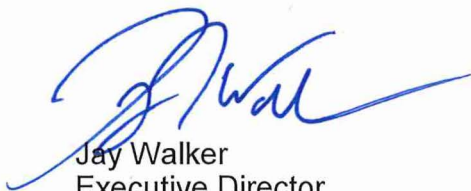
This autumn, Sarah Erickson resigned as Director of Learning and Engagement. Alexis Berke, engagement team manager, became interim Director of Learning and Engagement.

On November 20th, Governor Walz enacted an executive order that required GLA to close for a second time. This closure prompted management to furlough 18 staff. Twenty-six staff stayed on for animal care, operations, and planning for 2021, and to work on the Minnesota State Legacy project, H2O.

Most of the projects for 2020 were put on hold. The H2O exhibit opening moved from fall of 2020 to fall of 2021. Our educational offerings changed dramatically due to changes in school field trips and in house programs allowing for social distancing. However, our education department continued to find ways to connect with our community by holding virtual programs and "Summer Camp in a Box" allowing children to have the summer camp experience at home.

Though 2020 was difficult, it has presented opportunities for the aquarium staff to find new and creative ways to connect our audience to Lake Superior. It has given us a chance to analyze our current programs and offerings and make meaningful changes for effectiveness and efficiency. Please feel free to contact us for additional information at any time.

Sincerely,



Jay Walker
Executive Director
Great Lakes Aquarium

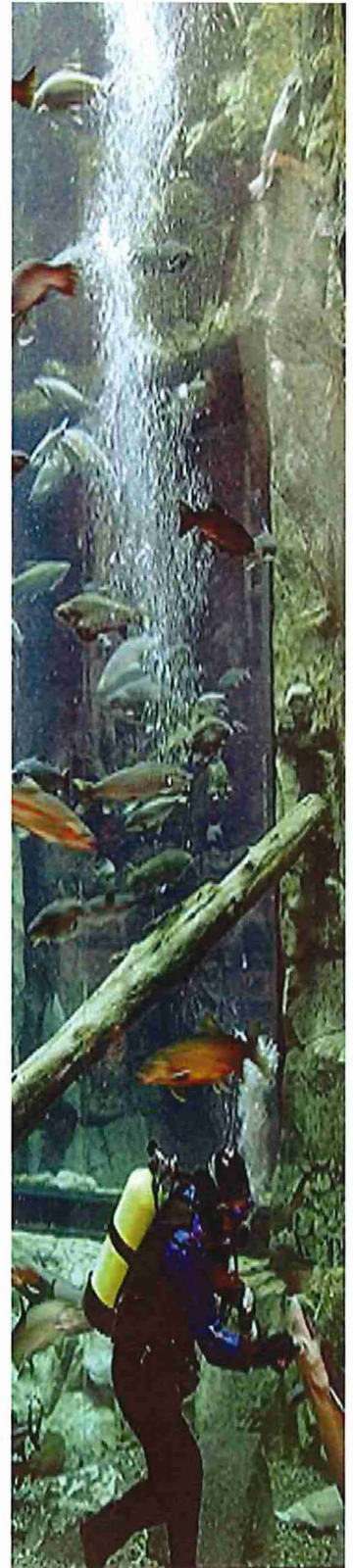


Elaine Hansen
Chair
Lake Superior Center Authority

Appendix A – Financial Statements

Income Statement

	<u>Jan - Dec 20</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Admissions	907,607.22
4050 · Membership Income	143,453.57
4400 · Education Income	63,185.03
4200 · Donations	220,973.14
4300 · Retail Sales	367,487.64
4250 · Facility Rental \ Special Event	26,611.29
4600 · Parking Income	81,300.19
4500 · Miscellaneous	<u>19,276.20</u>
Total Income	1,829,894.28
Cost of Goods Sold	
6000 · Cost of Sales	178,808.69
6710 · Freight Charges, Product	<u>9,937.91</u>
Total COGS	<u>188,746.60</u>
Gross Profit	1,641,147.68
Expense	
51100 · Freight and Shipping Costs	319.64
5100 · Admin. - Expenses	80,922.17
5101 · Admin Payroll	236,220.26
5200 · Education - Expenses	19,933.14
5201 · Education - Payroll	432,025.62
5300 · Husbandry - Expenses	91,755.29
5301 · Husbandry - Payroll	449,521.90
5400 · Operations -Facility- Expenses	363,972.50
5401 · Operations -Facility-Payroll	268,809.48
5700 · Operations-General Expense	158,733.08
5701 · Operations-Guest ServicePayroll	125,482.58
5500 · Facility Rental / Special Event	7,084.29
5600 · Store - Expenses	5,362.95
5601 · Store - Payroll	<u>49,185.58</u>
Total Expense	<u>2,289,328.48</u>
Net Ordinary Income	-648,180.80
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
7305 · Minnesota Power Rebate Income	6,889.47
7000 · Purchase Discounts	259.70
7100 · Tourism Tax Operational Support	<u>330,000.00</u>
Total Other Income	337,149.17
Other Expense	
9042 · H2O Exhibit Expenses	0.00
9041 · Second Floor Remodel	0.00
9003 · Changing Exhibit Expenses	<u>200.00</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>200.00</u>
Net Other Income	<u>336,949.17</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-311,231.63</u></u>



Balance Sheet

Dec 31, 20

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings

1000 · Cash and Cash Equivalents 357,173.06

Total Checking/Savings 357,173.06

Accounts Receivable

1150 · Accounts Receivable -12,510.27

Total Accounts Receivable -12,510.27

Other Current Assets

1300 · Other Current Assets 55,376.27

Total Other Current Assets 55,376.27

Total Current Assets 400,039.06

Fixed Assets

1200 · Fixed Assets 2,637,913.41

1250 · Accumulated Depreciation -1,559,689.77

Total Fixed Assets 1,078,223.64

TOTAL ASSETS 1,478,262.70

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable

2007 · Accounts Payable, General 50,811.37

Total Accounts Payable 50,811.37

Credit Cards

2700 · Employee Credit Cards 2,476.87

Total Credit Cards 2,476.87

Other Current Liabilities

2530 · Capital Lease Payable-Current 2,587.92

2500 · Other Current Liabilities 169,808.06

2900 · Deferred Revenue 68,632.50

2520 · City Revolving Loan Payable 250,000.00

Total Other Current Liabilities 491,028.48

Total Current Liabilities 544,316.72

Long Term Liabilities

2300 · Long Term Liabilities 1,037,567.00

2301 · Capital Lease Payable 4,775.16

Total Long Term Liabilities 1,042,342.16

Total Liabilities 1,586,658.88

Equity

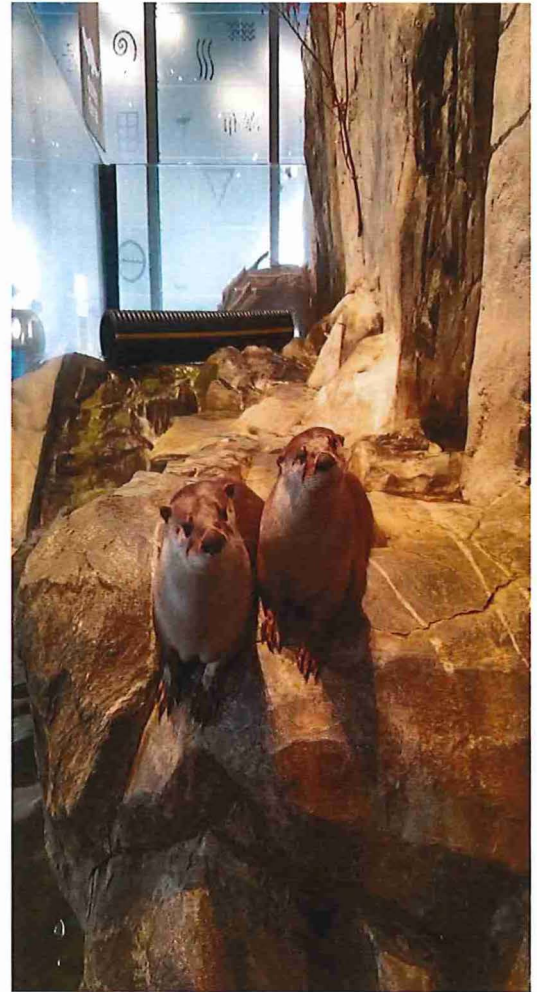
3001 · Fund Balance -635,517.45

3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets 838,352.90

Net Income -311,231.63

Total Equity -108,396.18

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,478,262.70



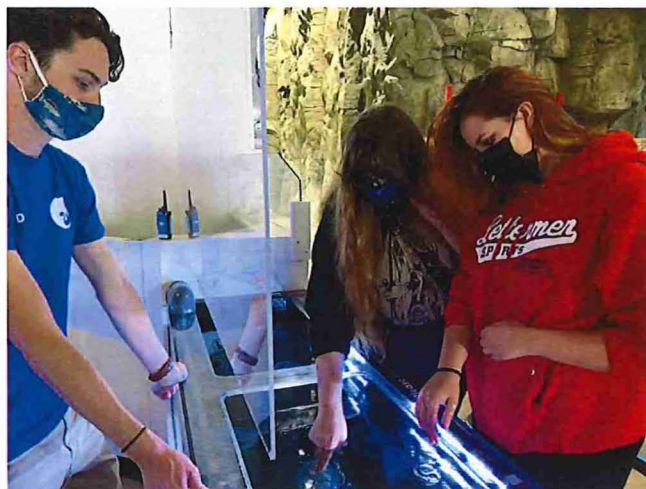
Appendix B – 2020 Accomplishments

The following list show cases some of the efforts and successes at Great Lakes Aquarium this past year:

1) Community Learning and Visitor Engagement

GLA provides on-site and outreach educational programming to learners of all ages. Daily interpretive programs give guests the opportunity to learn more about resident animals while watching them eat, play, or interact with our staff.

Classes and formal programming are provided to youth, while teacher workshops and visiting speakers provide enriching experiences for adults. Outreach programs bring the wonder of GLA to the community, especially those for whom a visit to the Aquarium is not feasible.

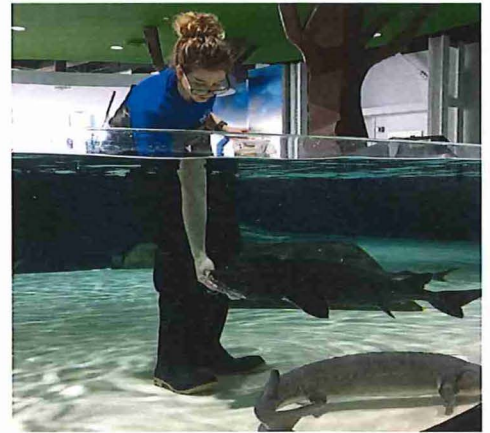


2020 Accomplishments:

- ◆ Developed a way to give children the camp experience at home, "Summer Camp in a Box". The box included a pre-packaged activity kit for each day of the week, online access to a pre-recorded video to kick off each morning, and access to a live virtual camp session each afternoon. .
- ◆ Developed a menu of live and pre-recorded digital content that is available to schools, homeschoolers and lifelong learners. We offer live Zoom animal encounters and a selection of classes to schools for a fee. We offered a fee for single item or a subscription to the entire library.
- ◆ Facilitated NOAA workshop virtually for local educators. Participated in a follow-up call with the partner organizations in early December.
- ◆ Started an aquarium TikTok social media account which has had several 'viral' posts, including one with a quick video tour of Great Lakes Aquarium, which has been viewed over 160,000 times. All the posts have garnered over 62,000 'likes'.
- ◆ 25 families participated in all outdoors early childhood programming.
- ◆ Gave presentations to Lions club, and NERR
- ◆ Reimagined Partners in Education (PIE), which is a partnership between Sea Grant, U of MN Duluth, and Great Lakes Aquarium to provide virtual programming for local school districts.

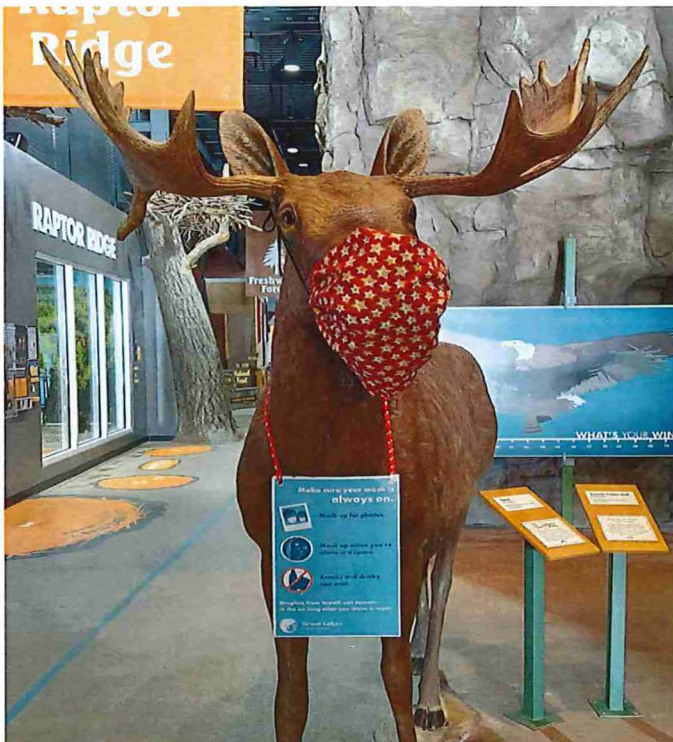
2) Exhibits/Husbandry

Great Lakes Aquarium features individual animals from over 400 unique species found within the Great Lakes Basin, other freshwater ecosystems, and saltwater habitats.



2020 Accomplishments:

- ◆ Updated St. Louis River exhibit and aviary. These new displays include a duck pond and predator fish of St. Louis River.
- ◆ Two new mammal displays have been added to the Habitats gallery: Striped skunks and a Virginia opossum. The opossum came to us from AWARE Wildlife Center in Georgia and the skunks are a popular program animal housed behind the scenes. This exhibit allows guests to learn about animal diversity in the Great Lakes watershed.
- ◆ A new display showcasing discus was added to the Amazon River gallery. Discus are very colorful global representative of freshwater fish.
- ◆ LED lighting was installed in all of the work areas in the facility and we have about 90% of the lighting in our galleries switched to LED.



4) Development, Marketing and Strategic Planning

GLA is committed to increasing support for the Aquarium by re-engaging with individuals and the funding community, planning for its long-term future, and maintaining a brand that supports its mission and is easily identifiable to the public.

Marketing in 2020 focused on reopening the aquarium with safety requirements set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health. Virtual programs for educators, "Summer Camp in a Box", and social media platforms like Facebook.

The Coronavirus pandemic severely limited our ability to host events including: weddings, meetings and our own annual fundraising event, "Aqua Affair". Looking for opportunities to make up for this loss in revenue, the Great Lakes Aquarium applied for and received an extension of premises on our liquor license and created an outdoor space, which would allow for gatherings within the MDH and CDC guidelines. GLA hosted several outdoor events in this space.

In September, we held a modified version of our annual fundraiser, Aqua Affair. Normally this event is held in the Aquarium, but due to guest restrictions we moved it to an outdoor event. Having this event helped GLA to raise \$11,000 dollars, which will be used for the H2O exhibit opening Fall of 2021.

We had tremendous support this year with Give to the Max and annual appeal. Both of these fundraising efforts raised a little more than \$20,000, which will be used to assist with costs related to animal care and the H2O exhibit.

2020 accomplishments:

- ◇ Finished our television commercial. Made changes to include mask requirements and social distancing measures.
- ◇
- ◇ Successfully raised \$142,450 from grants, and private donations.
- ◇ Created Wonder Wednesday, a discount day from November to February. It targets local families on the day most schools have designated asynchronous learning day in the surrounding district.
- ◇ Created a strategic plan for 2021. This years strategy focuses on recovery from the pandemic, reorganization, and opportunities in revenue and reach.

