



**Great
Lakes**
AQUARIUM

At Lakes Superior Center

Lake Superior Center Authority

2021 Annual Report to the Legislature

Submitted February 2022

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 in 2021. This year was another successful year with over 190000 people visiting the aquarium from January – December 2021. The attendance was a record number since we opened in 2000. These guests enjoyed safe and personal interactions with animals, attended classes, participated in events and socialized with friends, family and the public in our dynamic learning space.

In 2021 the Coronavirus pandemic continued to be a challenge. On November 18th, 2020, Governor Walz ordered all non-essential business to close. The order was lifted on January 11th, 2021. The Aquarium's 18 furloughed staff were brought back, and we continued to operate as we did in 2020 with safety measures in place, including mask mandates, social distancing and limited capacity.

This year was a transitional year. At the beginning of the 2021 many of our interactives and touch pools were closed, and we did not hold indoor events or classes. Throughout 2021 as new information about the transmission of the Covid-19 virus came out and as vaccinations became available, the Aquarium's interactive experiences and galleries could open as well as indoor events, but since vaccines for children were not available until the last quarter of 2021, we continued to have classes outside.

Great Lakes Aquarium currently employs 28 full-time staff and approximately 23 part-time staff. These numbers vary seasonally. Operational changes in 2021 include Alexis Berke's status as interim Director of Learning and Engagement to become permanent. In February of 2021. Additional information related to funding sources, assets, liabilities, and administrative expenses is attached to this letter (Appendix A).

In November of 2021 the Aquarium opened a new exhibit gallery "H2O Watersheds at Work". This exhibit focuses on the unique properties of water and how water moves through our community to Lake Superior and the other Great Lakes. The highlight of this display is an improved water table that is a model of the five Great Lakes that guests can navigate a boat through the various canals and water ways to the St. Lawrence seaway and includes hands on exhibits that highlight the physical properties of water. The H2O is budgeted at \$429,000. We received funding for this exhibit from the Arts, Culture and Heritage amendment, The Coastal Program and Duluth community foundations and private donations.

The Great Lakes Aquarium contracted with Northspan to lead the development of a five-year strategic plan. This planning will begin in 2022 and will guide the aquarium on vision and strategic direction through 2028.

The future looks to be exciting as new features, new partnerships and new resources strengthen the Aquarium's positive impact on the region. Please feel free to contact us with additional information at any time.

Sincerely,

Jay Walker
Executive Director
Great Lakes Aquarium

Elaine Hansen
Chair
Lake Superior Center Authority

Appendix A – 2021 Accomplishments

Income Statement

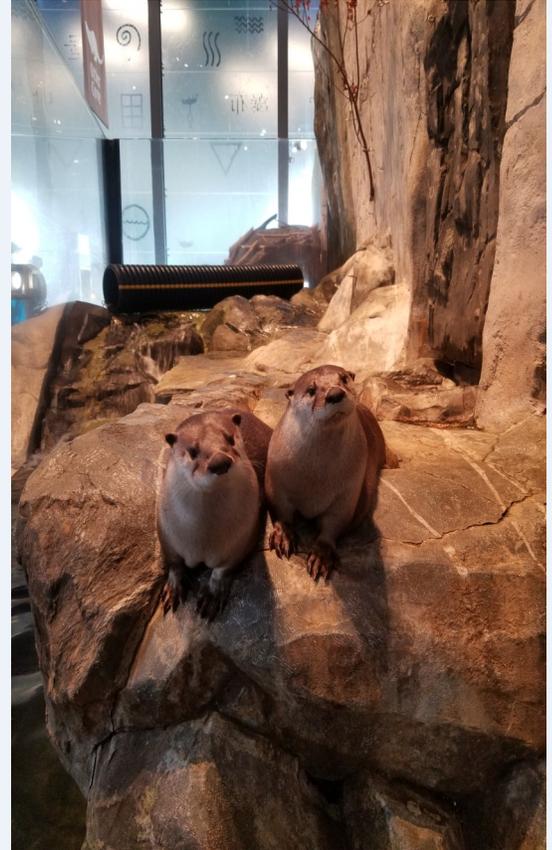
	<u>Jan - Dec 21</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Admissions	2,039,614.89
4050 · Membership Income	153,171.02
4400 · Education Income	37,363.28
4200 · Donations	131,145.78
4300 · Retail Sales	851,217.18
4250 · Facility Rental \ Special Event	49,546.55
4600 · Parking Income	212,401.88
4500 · Miscellaneous	<u>19,809.84</u>
Total Income	3,494,270.42
Cost of Goods Sold	
6000 · Cost of Sales	605,932.17
6710 · Freight Charges, Product	<u>23,414.63</u>
Total COGS	<u>629,346.80</u>
Gross Profit	2,864,923.62
Expense	
51100 · Freight and Shipping Costs	2,474.26
5100 · Admin. - Expenses	103,908.57
5101 · Admin Payroll	286,649.85
5200 · Education - Expenses	12,380.95
5201 · Education - Payroll	429,854.56
5300 · Husbandry - Expenses	144,673.62
5301 · Husbandry - Payroll	467,552.35
5400 · Operations -Facility- Expenses	514,176.89
5401 · Operations -Facility-Payroll	331,669.70
5700 · Operations-General Expense	181,526.89
5701 · Operations-Guest ServicePayroll	190,412.50
5500 · Facility Rental / Special Event	13,949.13
5600 · Store - Expenses	9,626.68
5601 · Store - Payroll	72,970.24
5000 · Depreciation Expense	<u>0.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>2,761,826.19</u>
Net Ordinary Income	103,097.43
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
7305 · Minnesota Power Rebate Income	0.00
7302 · Grants	758,047.00
7000 · Purchase Discounts	1,188.61
7100 · Tourism Tax Operational Support	<u>270,000.00</u>
Total Other Income	1,029,235.61
Other Expense	
9042 · H2O Exhibit Expenses	0.00
9041 · Second Floor Remodel	0.00
9050 · Rebate Expenses	9,964.93
9003 · Changing Exhibit Expenses	<u>0.00</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>9,964.93</u>
Net Other Income	1,019,270.68
Net Income	<u>1,122,368.11</u>



Appendix B – 2021 Accomplishments

Balance Sheet

	<u>Dec 31, 21</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000 · Cash and Cash Equivalents	<u>1,041,067.54</u>
Total Checking/Savings	1,041,067.54
Accounts Receivable	
1150 · Accounts Receivable	<u>-3,960.42</u>
Total Accounts Receivable	-3,960.42
Other Current Assets	
1300 · Other Current Assets	-79,891.28
1380 · Undeposited Funds	<u>35,192.53</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>-44,698.75</u>
Total Current Assets	992,408.37
Fixed Assets	
1200 · Fixed Assets	2,911,413.28
1250 · Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-1,748,258.49</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>1,163,154.79</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>2,155,563.16</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2007 · Accounts Payable, General	<u>61,585.41</u>
Total Accounts Payable	61,585.41
Credit Cards	
2700 · Employee Credit Cards	<u>12,173.11</u>
Total Credit Cards	12,173.11
Other Current Liabilities	
2530 · Capital Lease Payable-Current	2,792.23
2500 · Other Current Liabilities	315,351.20
2900 · Deferred Revenue	118,558.59
2520 · City Revolving Loan Payable	<u>200,000.00</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>636,702.02</u>
Total Current Liabilities	710,460.54
Long Term Liabilities	
2300 · Long Term Liabilities	614,900.00
2301 · Capital Lease Payable	<u>1,982.93</u>
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>616,882.93</u>
Total Liabilities	1,327,343.47
Equity	
3001 · Fund Balance	-635,517.45
3200 · Unrestricted Net Assets	341,369.03
Net Income	<u>1,122,368.11</u>
Total Equity	<u>828,219.69</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>2,155,563.16</u>



Appendix C – 2021 Accomplishments

The following list show cases some of the efforts and success at the 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.



2019 Accomplishments:

- ◇ At the start of 2021 we faced a second, shorter, shut down. We remained cautious and in order to best protect our Learning Team staff and participants, we shifted educational programming outdoors.
- ◇ Rather than running four sessions per year as we had done pre-pandemic, we opted for two sessions of the Whirligigs preschool program and three sessions each of the Chickadees and Kestrels nature play programs. During 2021 we saw 111 participants throughout our early childhood programs.
- ◇ In response to moving to heavily outdoor programming we made improvements to the nature playscape to improve the program and enhance safety. In the fall of 2021, a perimeter fence was installed around the outside of the playscape.
- ◇ After very serious consideration, we decided not to run our traditional day camp programs again for the summer of 2021. The surge of cases and the lack of vaccine availability for the target age group were all considerations for the suspension of the program for another year.
- ◇ Though day camps were paused, we took the opportunity to introduce a new teen focused program. TROWT (Teaching, Restoring, and Observing our Watershed with Teens) is a service-oriented program for youth who are passionate about exploring local conservation issues that impact our daily lives. Participants met in-person once a week for 8 weeks to learn from experts, engage in collaborative dialogue, and contribute to the protection of their local resources through hands on service projects.



2) Exhibits/Husbandry/Facilities

Great Lakes Aquarium features individual animals from over 400 unique species

found within the Great Lakes Basin, other freshwater ecosystems, and saltwater habitats.



- ◇ The Aquarium completed the construction of a culture room. The culture room allows the Aquarium to practice sustainable practices of culturing zooplankton and phytoplankton for animals' diets. It will give us a space to breed fish and invertebrates for display.
- ◇ The Aquarium culturalists donated 50 juvenile clownfish reared in the culture room at the Aquarium to the Minnesota Zoo.
- ◇ Husbandry received a Lesser Scaup. The Scaup is a diving duck and will be on display in the St. Louis River Gallery.
- ◇ H2O was completed on November 19, 2021. Aquarium staff helped with various tasks including, deconstruction, site prep and clean up, developing graphics, project management and construction.



3) 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 2021 focused on H2O Watersheds at Work”– a new exhibit featuring the physical properties of water and the important role it plays in our community.
- ◇ Great Lakes Aquarium recorded the highest visitor attendance 190,000 since 2002.
- ◇ Reached over 16,210 followers on Facebook, 6412 followers on Instagram doubling our, and 1,713 followers on Twitter.
- ◇ Received widespread press coverage for all major Aquarium events.
- ◇ Great Lakes Aquarium participated in The MN Department of Health *Your Shot to Summer* vaccine incentive program. The Aquarium is the only Duluth attraction featured in the list of attractions/ticket prizes redeemable by newly vaccinated Minnesotans in June.
- ◇ In November the Aquarium started a new access program, Wonder Wednesday. This program offers a 65% reduction in ticket price every Wednesday from November until March.
- ◇ The Aquarium partnered with Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra (DSSO) and Earth Rider Brewery for the Great Lakes Aquarium Beer Garden. This outdoor event features a quartet from the DSSO and Earth Rider Beer it runs weekly June through Augusts.
- ◇ A new fundraiser started in 2021 “Otter Slide” This winter fundraiser not only supports the Aquarium but encourages outdoor winter activities including skiing snowshoeing or riding a fat tire bike. Participants sign up and track their time and distance prizes are given to groups at various sponsorship levels.
- ◇ The Aquarium is selling stickers with fun messages about our animals like trout and sturgeon. These stickers are in our GiftWe will have messaging in the gift store talking about the bus fund and how buying a sticker will help support regional education. Alexis and I will be visiting clubs such as Rotary in communities that benefited from our bus fund.
- ◇ The Great Lakes Aquarium partnered with Lake Superior Zoo for 2021’s Give to the Max campaign. We focused our ask to help support animal care, and the Zoo is raising money for an updated exhibit. The Zoo and the Aquarium both reached their funding goals.

