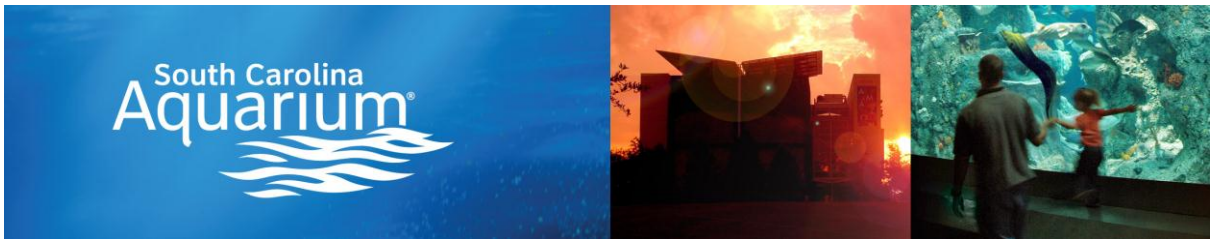


## History

Planning began in the early 1980's after Mayor Joseph Riley visited the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, and decided South Carolina should house its very own aquarium. After choosing Calhoun Park as the location in 1985, and breaking ground ten years later in 1995, the South Carolina Aquarium opened to the public on May 19, 2000.

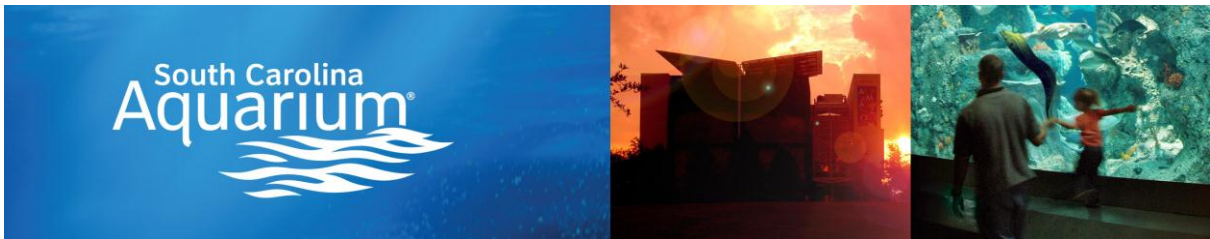
The \$69 million cost of building and opening the South Carolina Aquarium was committed from the City of Charleston, Charleston County, the State of South Carolina, the Economic Development Administration, an environmental settlement and numerous private donations. While the City owns the Aquarium building, the facility is leased and operated by the South Carolina Aquarium Board of Directors as a not-for-profit corporation, led by Hilton Smith, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) registered private not-for-profit corporation. As such, the Aquarium relies on the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations to fulfill its mission of education and conservation of the aquatic environments of South Carolina.

The Aquarium, jutting out 200 feet into the Charleston Harbor, offers a state-of-the-art environmental learning center that encompasses the entire spectrum of the **Southeast Appalachian Watershed** as found in South Carolina: the *Mountains*, the *Piedmont*, the *Coastal Plain*, the *Coast*, and the *Ocean*. The Aquarium's 93,000-square-foot building includes 9 *galleries* featuring over 5,000 amazing aquatic animals, from river otters and sharks to loggerhead turtles and American alligators, all close to 50 exhibits. Currently the Aquarium holds 6,243 specimens of animals within 350 species and 12,000 specimens of plants within 215 species.

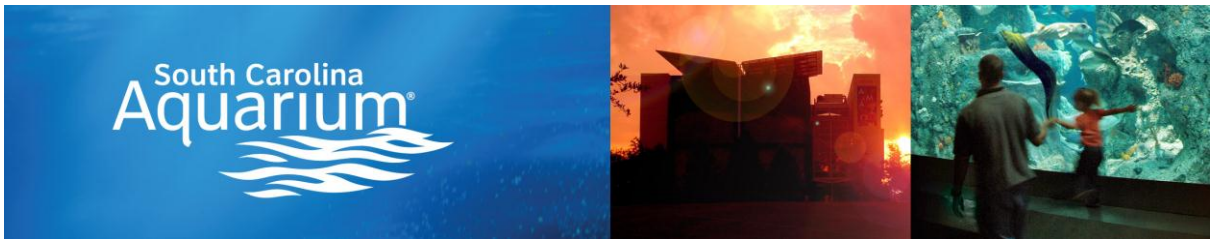


## Aquarium Milestones Timeline

- 1986:** Calhoun Park identified as the site for the South Carolina Aquarium
- October 1995:** Groundbreaking
- May 19, 2000:** The South Carolina Aquarium opens to the public
- August 2000:** First turtle released from the Aquarium's Sea Turtle Rescue Program
- Fall 2000:** The Free Structured School Program begins educating teachers and students from across South Carolina
- October 31, 2000:** First 'Fish or Treat' Halloween event
- May 2001:** Caretta, a female loggerhead sea turtle, becomes a resident of the Great Ocean Tank
- July 18, 2001:** The one millionth visitor arrives from Laurens, S.C.
- September 2001:** The South Carolina Aquarium receives its AZA accreditation
- January 2002:** First Community Appreciation Dollar Days weekend attracts 36,000 people
- March 2002:** *UFO* (Unbelievable Flying Objects) exhibit opens including 2 macaws, Marvin and Joey
- September 2002:** Kiawah, the red-tailed hawk, arrives
- October 2002:** The Sustainable Seafood Initiative begins to promote wise seafood choices in local restaurants
- November 2002:** First Scuba Do Fundraiser
- February 2003:** Pandora, the reticulated python, tries to escape while being transported to the Aquarium
- March 2003:** Debut of Name That Tuna, the Aquarium's first game show dive program
- April 2003:** Ace, the baby river otter, is rescued and brought to the Aquarium
- October 2003:** The first member's travel program takes place in the Galapagos



- March 2004:** Secrets of the Amazon exhibit opens, the first major exhibit entirely designed and built by Aquarium staff
- June 2004:** Local high school students begin working at the Aquarium as part of the High School Intern Program
- July 2004:** Wreckfish Reef, the children's play area, opens
- Winter 2005:** The South Carolina Aquarium holds its first Group Sleepover  
Conservation program, Oyster Time, is launched
- April 2005:** Maya, the anteater, goes on exhibit
- May 19, 2005:** The South Carolina Aquarium's Five Year Birthday
- August 22, 2005:** The South Carolina Aquarium welcomes its 3 millionth visitor
- Fall 2005:** Jetty, a rehabilitated loggerhead, was the Aquarium's 16<sup>th</sup> turtle to be released back into the wild
- January 2006:** The South Carolina Aquarium welcomes Kevin Mills as President and CEO
- June 2006:** Pablo Pawcasso: First Animal Art Exhibit
- Summer 2006:** Live feeds allow the public to observe Sea Turtle Hospital activities
- Fall 2006:** The South Carolina Aquarium receives AZA Diversity Award for High School Intern Program
- January 2007:** A full-time position, devoted completely to the Sea Turtle Rescue Program is created
- Fall 2007:** Opening of aquarium eatery, The Sea Turtle Café
- March 2007:** The South Carolina Aquarium receives AZA accreditation for the second time
- March 2008:** Camp Carolina opens, a major new exhibit located in the Countess Alicia Spaulding-Paolozzi changing exhibit gallery
- February 2009:** Expanded Touch Tank experience opens on the Aquarium's second floor featuring an Atlantic sting ray touch pool
- March 2009:** Opening of *Penguin Planet*, a limited-time only experience featuring four Magellanic Penguins



- February 2010:** The South Carolina Aquarium Retires Opening Debt of \$11.5 Million
- March 2010:** The South Carolina Aquarium welcomes an extremely rare Albino American Alligator into the completely renovated Blackwater Swamp exhibit
- May 2010:** Former Vice President Al Gore is awarded the Legacy Award at the 2010 Environmental Stewardship Award Ceremony
- May 19, 2010:** The South Carolina Aquarium celebrates its Ten Year Birthday
- December 3, 2010:** First *Sea Life by Starlight* fundraiser is held by the Aquarium Alliance
- February 1, 2011:** The Aquarium opens the *Toddler Cove* exhibit
- March 18, 2011:** The renovated Saltmarsh Aviary opens with the *Feed the Stingray* experience