

Title: Here to the Ocean, a nationally traveling museum exhibition

Institution: Sciencenter

PI: Janet Huie

Total Project Funding: \$750,000

Abstract: The Sciencenter seeks to develop a 1,500-square-foot traveling exhibition, called "Here to the Ocean," on how activity in inland watersheds affects the health of the ocean, and therefore the planet. The unifying theme of the exhibition is "What we do here, has an impact there," and the key take-home message for museum visitors is that ocean water quality is not just a coastal issue. This exhibition will travel to museums throughout the United States, reaching an estimated 200,000+ visitors annually for at least seven years, resulting in an estimated total impact of 1.5 million visitors in at least 20 U.S. cities. The core audience of this exhibition will be families with children ages 6-12, and children visiting museums in school groups.

"Here to the Ocean" will feature interactive open-ended exhibits that bring watershed science to life, including an immersive experience allowing visitors to conduct their own virtual underwater tours of watersheds by stepping inside and operating a submersible research vehicle on an expedition from a backyard creek all the way to the ocean. This and other exhibits will feature stunning high-definition video footage depicting fauna from various water ecosystems, as well as human activities that affect watershed health. Additional hands-on exhibits will help visitors to understand how watersheds are connected to the ocean, basic concepts in hydrology, the impact of pollution, and what science offers in the way of solutions to watershed problems. Exhibits will be designed to inspire visitors to adopt behaviors that protect their local watersheds.

Visitors experiencing this exhibition will: 1) leave with an increased understanding of watershed science that will help them make informed, data-driven decisions on issues relating to watersheds; 2) have an increased awareness of the importance of watershed health and positive attitudes about the need to protect local watersheds; 3) have an increased understanding of the value of science in solving environmental problems and will be inspired to stay involved in science through school and/or career; and 4) feel an increased sense of personal watershed stewardship which they will share with others.