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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Natural History Museum Debuts New Nature Exchange Program in the Curiosity Lab

Unique program helps guests learn to be ethical stewards of the natural world

Santa Barbara, California (January 31, 2018) — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History has partnered with Science North to offer a unique nature education program in the Museum's Curiosity Lab called *Nature Exchange*.

Debuting on Saturday, February 3, Nature Exchange will allow guests of all ages to bring in natural objects from their personal collections or found in nature. Guests then share knowledge about their objects and trade them for points. Points can be spent or saved and ultimately traded in for special objects found in the Nature Exchange trading case in the Curiosity Lab.

Guests will bring their natural object to a Museum Naturalist in the Curiosity Lab and fill out a tag indicating where the object was found, when it was collected, and by whom. The guest will then share what they know about the specimen itself or conduct further research to earn more points by using resources in the Curiosity Lab or the Museum Library. After a brief discussion, and if the natural item meets all ethical criteria, the Naturalist will assign a point value for the session. Guests can either use their awarded points immediately (e.g. trade for a low-point natural item such as a tree ring cookie) or save their points for items of higher value.

Guests can trade natural objects like rocks, shells, pine cones, and fossils. Points are also awarded for leaving items in nature and bringing in pictures with information. There are some limits on the types of objects accepted. Current wildlife regulations prohibit individuals from possessing bird bones, feathers, nests, or eggs as well as marine mammal bones. Living animals, plants, and cultural artifacts are also not accepted. No items are allowed from federal lands (e.g. National Parks, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management property) as well as State Parks.

Nature Exchange helps demonstrate that knowledge has value. In most cases, what a "trader" can share about their object earns more points than the object itself. Over time, traders are driven to learn as they aspire to take home high value, ethically collected items. In the process, they learn to become ethical stewards of the natural world.

Nature Exchange operates during the Curiosity Lab's regular hours and is included with Museum admission. For more information about Nature Exchange, please visit www.sbnature.org.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History strives to instill a passion for learning and discovery among its patrons. The Museum aims to build relationships with the Santa Barbara community as well as encourage members and all visitors to seek a better understanding of the world around them. For more information, visit www.sbnature.org.