

## **Butterfly Pavilion Official History**

In July 1990, the non-profit corporation the Rocky Mountain Butterfly Consortium, dba The Butterfly Pavilion and Insect Center, was established with the intent of one day creating a public butterfly house. With the assistance of several committed volunteers, including Michael Weissmann (*former entomologist at the University of Colorado Museum in Boulder, Colorado*) and Dr. Richard Peigler (*former curator of Entomology at the Denver Museum of Natural History*) the Butterfly Pavilion and Insect Center **opened July 15, 1995** to foster an appreciation of butterflies and other invertebrates, and to educate the public about the need for conservation of threatened habitats in the tropics and around the world.

The Butterfly Pavilion was the first free-standing butterfly house and invertebrate zoo in the United States, and in its first year served over 200,000 visitors! The original campus included exhibit space, administrative offices and a 7,000 square foot rainforest conservatory. The conservatory houses more than 300 tropical and sub-tropical plants providing exotic blooms and nectar source for the 1,600 free-flying butterflies. The USDA regulates the Butterfly Pavilion because it imports non-native species.

**In 1996**, the second year of its existence, the Butterfly Pavilion joined the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) as a Tier II organization. The SCFD supports art, cultural and scientific institutions with important funding for operations and programming. The penny sales tax for every \$10 purchase in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson and northern Douglas Counties goes to support more than 300 non-profit organizations – from the smallest community groups to the largest regional museums.

**In 1997**, the Bugmobile program, the Butterfly Pavilion's first outreach program, was launched in partnership with the University of Colorado Science School, providing invertebrate life science education to K-12 classrooms.

**In June of 1997**, the Butterfly Pavilion was recognized as the fastest growing cultural attraction in Denver.

**In August of 1998**, administrative offices were converted into an exhibit space called Water's Edge (Tide Pool). Water's Edge features live sea creatures from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts that visitors can touch and learn about first hand.

**In May 1999**, the Butterfly Pavilion hosted its first annual Plant Conservation Day in partnership with Channel 7. The event is held annually and the proceeds from the event benefit the Pavilion's Horticulture programs.

**The turn of the century (2000)** ushered in the Adult Education department, **and in 2002** the Pavilion began to offer accredited teacher enrichment courses in partnership with the Colorado School of Mines. Annually, the courses serve over seventy metro-area educators with invertebrate and science interpretation curricula.

**In the fall of 2002**, The Butterfly Pavilion published its first book, *Morpha: A Rainforest Story*. The illustrated book tells the story of a butterfly's journey through the Costa Rican rainforest and

includes classroom resources for teachers. The book was endorsed by Dr. Jane Goodall and is available for purchase at the Butterfly Pavilion.

**In 2003**, the Pavilion published its second book, *Butterfly Gardening: A Guide for Colorado Gardeners*, written by the Pavilion's former Horticulture Director, Sarada Krishnan.

**Also in 2003**, the Butterfly Pavilion partnered with the Children's Museum of Denver to support the Denver Public Schools' Life Science and Literacy collaboration, aka The G.R.O.W. Program. The program serves under-served urban youth in the Denver Public School and Adams 12 school districts.

**In the Fall of 2003**, construction on a 13,000 square-foot addition began at the Pavilion. The new building addition, completed and opened in **2004**, included four new classrooms, administrative offices and new exhibit space! The traveling exhibit "Shrunk" was brought in to fill the new exhibit space and provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about insects that might live in their own backyards.

**In July 2005**, the Pavilion celebrated its **10-year anniversary** with its first Insectival event. The two-day annual event highlights aspects of the Butterfly Pavilion's educational programming, including cockroach races, bug hunts, bug tasting and more.

**In October 2005**, Bug-A-Boo, the Pavilion's members-only Halloween festival was offered to the general public for the first time. The facility saw record attendance during the event. Bug-A-Boo occurs during the weekend prior to Halloween and is the Pavilion's largest event of the year.

**Also in 2005**, ten volunteers celebrated ten years of service. Since 2005, hundreds of volunteers have provided over 10,000 hours of volunteer service annually – the equivalent of five staff members.

**In 2007**, the Butterfly Pavilion partnered with Adams 50 School District to provide supplemental standards-based Pre-K – 5 education opportunities including on-site classes and field trips as part of the S.E.E.D. program. The Butterfly Pavilion serves the curricular needs of over 46,000 students annually through on-site classes, outreaches, after-school programs, workshops and seminars.

**In June 2007**, the Butterfly Pavilion dedicated the outdoor Dee Lidvall Discovery Garden. Over \$700,000 was raised for the project that includes an educational amphitheatre; habitat, sensory and xeriscape gardens; two gazebos; patios; and a water feature with natural filtration. The purpose of the Discovery Garden is to serve as a link between classroom education and the outdoor nature trail. It also provides a wonderful addition to our ballroom for special events.

**In 2008**, the Pavilion's curatorial department manager, Mary Ann Hamilton, served as a consultant for the NASA experiment "Butterflies and Spiders in Space," providing valuable information for the teachers' guide and assisting with ground control experiments at the facility and in several classrooms throughout Colorado. The partnership brought national attention to the Butterfly Pavilion.

**Since 1995**, the Butterfly Pavilion has served more than 3.25 million visitors, providing them with invaluable experiences and opportunities to learn about invertebrates and the importance of conservation.

- July 1990 Rocky Mountain Butterfly Consortium Established
- July 1995 The Butterfly Pavilion and Insect Center Opens
- 1997 Bugmobile Education Program Begins
- December 1997 BP named Fastest Growing Cultural Attraction in Denver for 1997
- August 1998 Water's Edge Exhibit Opens
- June 1999 Plant Conservation Day Event (first year)
- 2002 BP Offers Accredited Teacher Enrichment Courses
- 2002 BP *Morpha: A Rainforest Story* Book Published
- 2003 BP *Butterfly Gardening: A Guide for Colorado Gardeners* Book Published
- 2003 BP Joins G.R.O.W. Program
- 2003 Expansion Construction Begins
- 2004 Expansion Completed – New Classrooms, Exhibit Space, Ballroom
- 2004 BP Voted “Best Place to Take Children by 5280”
- July 2005 BP Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary with Insectival Event
- October 2005 Bug-A-Boo Opens to the Public
- December 2005 Ten Volunteers Recognized for Ten Years of Service
- September 2007 S.E.E.D. Programs Begins
- 2007 Voted “Best Animal Attraction” by Kid’s Pages
- June 2007 BP Dedicates New Dee Lidvall Discovery Garden
- August 2008 USDA Renews BP Permits
- 2008 BP Participates in NASA Experiment “Butterflies and Spiders in Space”