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Fact Sheet

David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins Educational and Public Programs

The newest permanent exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins, tells the epic story of human evolution and how the defining characteristics of our species have evolved over 6 million years as our ancestors adapted to a changing world.

The museum has developed exciting educational programs and public events to connect people with the study of human origins and share what science tells us about how our human ancestors evolved over millions of years in response to a changing world.

Through the educational and public programs planned for the Human Origins Initiative, visitors of all ages can engage onsite and online with authentic science and scientists, and go "behind the scenes" into the field, into the lab and into a unique, interactive museum experience that illuminates the major milestones in the origin of human beings. In addition, Onsite Learning seeks to foster dialogue through personal interactions with scientists, volunteers and other visitors. Activities are designed to be adaptable to visitors' needs and can be scaled to other exhibitions through ongoing evaluation.

Human Origins-related education and public programs for visitors, families and educators launching in 2010 include:

Visitors and Families

In the Museum

- **"The Scientist Is In"**—A bi-weekly program, "The Scientist Is In," will feature the museum's scientists and their colleagues engaging visitors in conversations about their ongoing research and new discoveries in Human Origins.

- **HOT (Human Origins Today) Topics**—These 30- to 60-minute monthly presentations will feature audience participation and discussion about current topics in human origins and other timely issues, including the relationship between scientific and religious perspectives in light of the latest research on human origins and the relationship between climate change and human evolution.
- **Exhibit Expeditions**—Visitors can follow the clues and use artifacts on display to collect data to solve a problem as they explore the exhibition. It is suitable for all ages and facilitated by volunteers.
- **Interactive Tours**—Visitors can engage with volunteers to learn more through an interactive tour of the exhibition.
- **Themed Maps**—Distributed by volunteers at both exhibition entrances, large laminated maps will highlight different exhibition themes and select objects, giving visitors a variety of tools that inspire and start conversations.
- **Conversation Starters**—Volunteers will be available at key locations throughout the exhibit to engage in conversation, answer questions, guide visitors to areas of interest and communicate additional resources.
- **Lecture Series and Panel Discussions**—Lectures and informal discussions will provide visitors a way to learn and engage on a more in-depth level with noted scientists in the field of human origins and on topics such as building the Hall of Human Origins.
- **Potts’ Perspective**—Rick Potts, director of the Human Origins program and curator of the Hall of Human Origins, will discuss his new book *What Does It Mean to Be Human?*.
- **Field Trips for Students**—We will pique students’ curiosity, or perhaps inspire a future anthropologist, with a field trip to the Hall of Human Origins. A Field Trip Guide to the exhibition and suggested student activities pre- and post-visit will be available online.

Engaging Online

- **“The Scientist is Online”**—A bi-weekly program, “The Scientist is Online” will feature the museum’s scientists and their colleagues, sometimes live from the field, engaging visitors in online conversations through Twitter about their ongoing research and new discoveries in Human Origins.
- **A Digital Dig**—Visitors can dig deeper online through the Human Origins Web site to learn about, explore and discuss the science of human evolution. The Web site will feature the Human Origins research program, collections and field sites (including podcasts and diaries from the field); showcase new and exciting discoveries worldwide; focus on the relationship between human origins research and findings and visitors’ own lives; and give opportunities for visitors to engage in dialogue with scientists.

- **Neanderthal Meets New Media**—Visitors can become a [Facebook Friend of Human Origins](#), check out the [YouTube video](#) of priceless artifacts or bronze statues of human ancestors being unpacked from their crates, see behind-the-scenes photos of [scientists in action on Flickr](#) and [tweet](#) it out with scientists in the field.
- **Tweeting**—A hash-tag will be set up for comments, questions and ideas pertaining specifically to the exhibit. Magnets on the Exhibit Expedition stations, badges on volunteer uniforms, and other signage can be used to invite visitors to tweet live about their experiences.

Educators

- **Educators' Resource Center**—The Human Origins Web site will provide a wealth of useful resources for educators, including activities for students before, during and after the exhibit; well-vetted classroom activities; and a private forum for teachers and other educators facilitating discussion on best practices in teaching human evolution.
- **Multi-day Webinar**—Designed exclusively for educators, our Webinar will provide teachers with a perspective of the Human Origins program, the content and excitement of the exhibition and provide a forum for discussion on issues that may arise in the teaching of evolution and human evolution. Also covered in the Webinar will be suggested curricula as well as Web-based and other teaching resources to enrich the classroom experience. The Webinar will be offered via [LearningTimes.org](#), an online community of education and training professionals.

In addition to these programs for the opening, other programs will be developed over time to experiment with new tools for enhancing personal interactions and dialogue in the exhibition. For the most up-to-date listing and calendar of Human Origins public events, visit: <http://humanorigins.si.edu/>.

About the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W. in Washington, D.C., welcomed more than 7.4 million visitors in 2009, making it the most visited museum in the United States. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. More information about the museum is available at www.mnh.si.edu or by calling (202) 633-1000, TTY (202) 633-5285. In addition to the Web site, learn more about public programs and get the latest updates and access to insider videos and images via [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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