



March 17, 2020

Dear Friends of the Natural History Institute,

We wrote you last week about changes in our programming, and promising to carefully monitor the public health situation surrounding the COVID-19 virus. As events have unfolded in the days since then, it has become clear that, for the good of all, we must take much more assertive action. **Effective immediately, we will be canceling all of our programs for the next two and a half months--through the end of May.**

This is not a decision we make lightly—indeed, we’re deeply disappointed to have to take this step – but we are absolutely clear this is the appropriate action. The health and safety of our community and staff, and of all the people we all interact with, is paramount.

We hope to be able to reschedule most of our programs in the future. But, of course, none of us can know what that future will look like, or when we will be able to do so. Besides offering wonderful natural history programming, the Institute has prided itself on creating an uplifting and resilient sense of community. We will do our best to foster this sense of connection between members of our broad-based community, and encourage you to keep in touch with those you’ve met through NHI programs, and, of course, with us.

The Institute exists because of our deep belief in the life-changing and life-affirming power that derives from the practice of attentive natural history. We have been at the forefront of a national movement to clarify the connection between natural history, medicine, and psychology—between nature and healing. Never has the healing power of natural history been more timely. We encourage you all to continue to explore your world—whether the bird feeder at your window, or on a hike through the forest. With awareness, this is one of the safest, most healing activities we can engage in right now. We will be exploring ways that we can support this remotely.

To summarize the changes in our programming:

- All programs—at our Prescott facility and in the field--are cancelled through May 31st. For those programs that had a fee, we will be in touch with participants directly regarding reimbursement.
- Our gallery will be closed until further notice.
- Our office will be closed to visitors until further notice; however, we will be monitoring and responding to email and phone messages, so don't hesitate to be in touch.
- Our Facebook page and our website will be actively updated.

Stay safe, everyone. Take care of yourselves and spread compassion. We will get through this.

Tom Fleischner
Executive Director