



Fact Sheet

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Backgrounder

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonder of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits, and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of earth science, space science, and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

Mission Statement

The mission of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is to educate, inspire, and evoke a sense of wonder about the universe, our planet, and space exploration.

Fast Facts

- Built in 1968, the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium (Planetarium) was a gift from lumber magnate H.R. MacMillan to the citizens of Vancouver. Since its opening, more than 5.5 million people have visited the venue.
- Since the beginning, the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre (Space Centre) has shared its facilities with the Vancouver Museum.
- In 1979, the Gordon MacMillan Southam Observatory was added through a grant from Mr. and Mrs. G.T. Southam.
- In 1997, the Planetarium evolved into the Pacific Space Centre after completing a successful \$9 million expansion project. The expansion included renovations to the Planetarium Star Theatre and Star Deck, state-of-the art programming, and exhibits including the GroundStation Canada multimedia theatre, Virtual Voyages™ (BC's first full-motion simulator), and the Cosmic Courtyard interactive exhibition gallery.
- On February 23, 2000, in recognition of the contributions of H.R. MacMillan and his family, the facility formerly named the Pacific Space Centre was renamed the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre.
- The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit organization and a registered charity. Charitable Registration #10681 2183 RR0001.
- The Space Centre is largely self-funding, with only 25% of its annual budget coming from public funds. The Space Centre's Society's Board of Trustees oversees the operations and finances of the centre.
- Board President, Dr. Mark Frein; Executive Director, Mr. Rob Appleton.
- The H. R. MacMillan Space operates under a lease agreement with the City of Vancouver.
- The H. R. MacMillan Space Centre's annual visitation is 240,000 made up of children, teens, adults, and seniors. More than 73% of the Vancouver population has visited the facility.
- Released in the first edition of *Frommer's Vancouver with Kids*, the Space Centre is listed as one of the top ten attractions in Vancouver for families with a three-star "exceptional" rating, the highest rating that can be awarded.
- As a Vancouver tourist attraction, the Space Centre can be found on several national and international websites.

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Public Programs

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre features state-of-the-art, interactive exhibits, shows, and demonstrations:

- **H.R. MacMillan Star Theatre:** The cutting-edge technology of the Zeiss projector creates a 360-degree view where people can view the night sky and be entertained with changing multi-media productions including original shows created by the Space Centre.
- **Virtual Voyages™ Motion Simulator:** The full-motion simulator combines science and drama animating the excitement of space travel. Visitors climb aboard a 30-seat spacecraft, strap on their seatbelts, and soar past earthly and heavenly spectacles.
- **Cosmic Courtyard:** Visitors journey through several spheres of the universe, with Earth at the centre. They can enjoy their own personal look into space through video games, audio-visual presentations, news updates, and facts.
- **GroundStation Canada:** A series of shows combine live and audio-visual presentations. Programs provide regular updates of space news with special highlights of Canada's role in space.
- **Gordon Southam Observatory:** The Observatory features a ½ metre telescope used for public viewing on clear nights.

School Programs

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre recognizes that greater science literacy allows for informed decision making on the issues that affect our planet and our economy. Studies in education confirm that people learn more and retain what they learn when they are focused and engaged, and are participating and sharing the experiences. The Space Centre seeks to develop a culture that values science and encourages young people to seek careers in science and technology. Activities at the Space Centre achieve these goals through a blend of interactive, entertaining, and educational programs.

- The Space Centre acts as an interpreter for astronomy and space sciences to the broad public audience through exhibitions, presentations, and educational programs for children and youth.
- Programmes enhance the Ministry of Education curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- 40,000 plus students participate in school programs annually
- 1,000 different schools from around the province participate each year
- The Space Centre features 2,000 + school shows per year in the Planetarium Star Theatre and in GroundStation Canada.
- More than 6,000 school brochures are distributed to schools throughout the province each year.
- The year 2004 has seen the development of highly interactive, videoconferencing programs for students living in remote communities.

Laser Light Shows

Laser light shows are set to music by pop and rock artists using the technology of the Planetarium Star Theatre projector to create a cosmic display of light and sound.

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Our Vanishing Sky

Our Vanishing Sky is H.R. MacMillan Space Centre's new multi-layered, interactive exhibit that examines the issue of light pollution and the problems it creates for animals, human beings, the environment, and viewing the stars. Our Vanishing Sky consists of educational text panels, looped video presentations, interactive activities and a Planetarium show demonstrating the before-and-after impact of night light pollution on major cities. Not only does Our Vanishing Sky educate visitors about light pollution, it also tells them what steps they can take to help reduce it in their immediate environment.

- Light pollution is light that is not needed or wanted, including lighting that is too bright.
- Light pollution endangers the lives of birds, turtles, moths, and other creatures by disturbing the natural rhythms of light and darkness on which so many species depend.
- Light pollution also impacts the sleep cycle in human beings, causing other health problems.
- Light pollution lightens the sky, making it nearly impossible to see many constellations and star systems.
- Light pollution unnecessarily drains energy and, in many areas, depletes natural resources, increases greenhouse gases, and pollutes the environment.
- The good news about light pollution is that, unlike noise and air pollution, the measures to correct it are readily available and not necessarily expensive.

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