

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History welcomes millions of visitors each year to its historic, neoclassical building. Constructed in 1910, its monumental frontage along the National Mall features a grand staircase that has long presented accessibility challenges for visitors. The purpose of this project was to improve the Museum's visitor entry experience.

Landscape Architects led the documentation and realization to introduce flanking sloped walkways that allow universal access to the Museum's primary entrance. These walkways facilitate visitor queuing while also obscuring parking below. Native planting adds to the museum's interpretive program with the continuation of its urban bird habitat.

The design elegantly integrates into the existing historic entrance plan and elevation while maintaining a contemporary flair, as it serves as one of the first impressions of the Museum. Stone type was carefully selected to be sympathetic to the building without projecting a false sense of historicity. The contemporary design of the bronze railing evokes grasses and is harmonious with the neoclassical detailing of the Museum.

In review, the US Access Board identified the project as "...a great example for other museums and historic buildings on the National Mall to follow in providing more accessibility for the American public."



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## **An Entrance for All – National Museum of Natural History**

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Smithsonian Institution

*National Museum of Natural History*



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Tufted Titmouse



Cedar Waxwing



American Goldfinch



White-eyed Vireo



Ruby Throated Hummingbird



Carolina Wren



Southern Wax Myrtle  
*Myrica cerifera*



Downy Serviceberry  
*Amelanchier arborea*



Eastern Bluestar  
*Amsonia tabernaemontana*



American Sweetgum  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*



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- United States Access Board review of the project