

CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Dr. Mary Janecka Appointed as New Director of Powdermill Field Station and Nature Reserve

Pittsburgh, PA (July 8, 2025) — Carnegie Museum of Natural History is pleased to announce Dr. Mary Janecka as the new Director of [Powdermill Field Station and Nature Reserve](#), the museum's research station and environmental education center located in the Laurel Highlands of southwestern Pennsylvania. Janecka joins Powdermill from the University of Texas at El Paso, where she was an Assistant Professor of Evolutionary Biology and Curator of Ichthyology and Parasitology. She will begin her position at Powdermill on August 18, 2025.

As director, Janecka will manage all Powdermill operations, strengthen its partnerships with external organizations, and bridge Powdermill with the museum campus in Pittsburgh through scientific, educational, and administrative collaboration. Additionally, she will leverage the station's unique avian, terrestrial, and aquatic resources to strengthen Powdermill's role as a multidisciplinary research center. Janecka will also finalize and implement a strategic action plan that situates Powdermill within the museum's ten-year vision.

Powdermill was founded in 1956 as a 'living museum' to complement Carnegie Museum of Natural History's extensive collection of 22 million specimens and artifacts. Today, Powdermill encompasses approximately 2,200 acres and includes the Richard P. Mellon Avian Research Center, which is home to the longest continuously operating, year-round bird banding station in North America. The center is now located in a purpose-built, LEED-certified building that opened in 2022. Additional facilities and amenities include both Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and DNA laboratories, a LEED Gold-certified nature center with classrooms and exhibits, miles of publicly accessible walking trails, and several residential cabins. Powdermill is a member of the Organization of Biological Field Stations (OBFS), the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA), and has been designated as a site of "Global Significance" in a 2021 assessment by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program.

"For decades, Powdermill has played a vital role in advancing Carnegie Museum of Natural History's mission to support scientific research and inspire public scientific learning," said Gretchen Baker, Daniel G. and Carole L. Kamin Director of Carnegie Museum of Natural History. "As both a researcher and educator herself, Janecka brings a clear vision of how Powdermill can successfully achieve these goals, and we are thrilled to have her join us."

Throughout her career as a PhD student, postdoctoral fellow, and assistant professor, Janecka has successfully developed, secured funding for, and led several large, cross-institutional projects both within the United States and internationally. During her postdoctoral fellowship, she collaborated with the Hamgel Field Station in Trinidad to develop a strategic growth plan that expanded their molecular and training capabilities. She secured funding to accomplish these goals through a co-written National Science Foundation (NSF) Organismal Systems and Infection Biology (OSIB) grant. Janecka was previously an independent National Science Foundation

postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, which gave her direct experience with the research opportunities available at Powdermill. She holds a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, an M.S. from the University of Texas-Pan American, and a B.S. from Emporia State University.

“Powdermill Nature Reserve is an institution that holds significance for me, having played a pivotal role in my research over the years and serving as an extensive resource to both the scientific community and the general public since 1956,” said Janecka. “I am honored to be appointed as Powdermill’s new Director and look forward to leading the team as we work together to advance the station’s scientific research, applied conservation efforts, and public outreach initiatives.”

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About Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Carnegie Museum of Natural History, one of the four Carnegie Museums, is among the top natural history museums in the United States. It maintains, preserves, and interprets an extraordinary collection of millions of objects and scientific specimens used to broaden understanding of evolution, conservation, and biodiversity. Carnegie Museum of Natural History’s mission is to deepen wonder and advance understanding of our natural world—past and present—in order to embrace responsibility for our collective future. To learn more, visit carnegiemnh.org.