



SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

Three-year-old Madalyn Roseler and her father, Matthew, of Pulteney, look at a school of Pumpkinseed Sunfish under a pier in Lake Ontario in the new Ithaca's Watershed Journey permanent exhibit at the Sciencenter in Ithaca.

Sciencenter adds virtual underwater video exhibit

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Visitors to the Sciencenter in Ithaca can now take a high-definition virtual underwater tour from the headwaters of Cascadilla Creek to the Atlantic Ocean.

"Ithaca's Watershed Journey," a new permanent exhibit, investigates the waters from a seasonal pond above the Cornell University campus through Cayuga Lake to Lake Ontario and out to the St. Lawrence and the ocean.

Created for The Sciencenter by Ithaca videographer David

Brown, the work is displayed in an intimate space on a 32-inch monitor. A simple control wheel allows even the youngest visitors to take a self-guided tour pausing on any frame to examine the crisp details.

Brown follows a water snake through Cascadilla Creek, records a pumpkin seed sunfish guarding its nest in Cayuga Lake near Taughannock Falls State Park, and captures a school of the sunfish glinting in the light underneath a pier in Lake Ontario. The colors of sea stars and cold-water anemones jump out as his

dive light scans the bottom of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and harbor seals come and go as they investigate him in the Atlantic.

The video was gathered over the last year, and the project was funded by a \$30,000 grant from the Park Foundation.

"The diversity of habitats and the diversity of life along this journey are just amazing," said Tim Scott of Ithaca, the deputy director of the Sciencenter.

There is a total of one hour and 15 minutes of footage, but the control wheel allows visitors to

see as much or as little as they like at their own pace.

"Every time I go through this I find something new or see something flash off in the corner and you say, I didn't see that before," Scott said.

In 2015 the Sciencenter hopes to improve the adjacent touch tank exhibit by rebuilding it with bigger tanks, using molds of rock from Maine to form an integrated ocean gallery area with the watershed journey exhibit.

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