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GENTLE.NEWS

In Today's Edition

"Happiness [is] only real when shared"

— Jon Krakauer

Pelican Island: The First National Wildlife Refuge and Still a Jewel

Pelican Island: The First National Wildlife Refuge and Still a Jewel Jun 29, 2026 Image Details As part of the Flags Across America initiative for America's 250th anniversary, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is sharing stories from the places where our commemorative flags have traveled. From historic hatcheries to vibrant refuges, each stop celebrates conservation as an enduring American value. Join us as we highlight the lands, waters, and wildlife that connect our nation's past, present, and future. Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge rests just offshore from Sebastian, Florida. As the first national wildlife refuge national wildlife refuge A national wildlife refuge is typically a contiguous area of land and water managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the conservation and, where appropriate, restoration of fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. Learn more about national wildlife refuge in the United States, Pelican Island's surrounding 5,400 acres of protected lands and waters form a rich mosaic of mangroves, salt marsh salt marsh Salt marshes are found in tidal areas near the coast, where freshwater mixes with saltwater. Learn more about salt marsh , and open lagoon. Visitors arrive by way of the Historic Jungle Trail, finding themselves on a peaceful stretch of Florida's Atlantic coast where the wilderness feels close and alive. Image Details Established in 1903 to protect the last remaining brown pelican rookery on Florida’s east coast, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge now provides feeding, nesting, and roosting habitat for more than 130 species of birds and threatened species, including the southeastern beach mouse. From migratory white pelicans gliding across winter skies to wading birds like tricolored herons and wood storks feeding along the marsh edges, the refuge teems with life. Winter is a brilliant white spectacle as American white pelicans and waterfowl such as red-breasted mergansers, blue-winged teal, and northern shovelers gather in the warm Florida sunshine. Spring bursts with activity as at least 16 species, including brown pelicans, great egrets, roseate spoonbills, and wood storks, nest on Pelican Island proper. Summer slows the pace, with reptiles such as black racers and coachwhips basking in the late afternoon sun, and gopher tortoises lingering near their burrows. Fall migration brings the arrival of belted kingfishers, grackles, and blue-gray gnatcatchers, marking the turning of the seasons despite Florida’s lingering heat. Throughout the year, gopher tortoises, river otters, and even blue land crabs make their homes among the many habitats accessible by trail or visible from boats in the lagoon. "Strong support from local communities and partnerships combined with dedication and foresight of past and present refuge managers, staff, and volunteers have created a 'must see' gem within the National Wildlife Refuge System, and we are deeply honored to continue that legacy forward,” said Eric M. Verderber, acting project leader, Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge Complex and Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. The history of Pelican Island stretches far deeper than its founding as a refuge. Long before conservation laws existed, the Ais people lived in the region between 2000 BCE and the mid-1600s, relying on the lagoon's abundant resources. By the late 1800s, the island's bird populations were in grave danger as plume hunters slaughtered countless waterbirds for the fashion trade. Alarmed by the rapid decline of pelicans and other species, early conservationists fought to protect what remained. Image Details Their efforts succeeded when President Theodore Roosevelt signed an executive order in 1903 establishing Pelican Island as the first national wildlife refuge. It was a landmark decision that launched the entire National Wildlife Refuge System. Later, in 1970, Congress designated Pelican Island as wilderness, ensuring its long-term protection. Today, informational signs along the trails tell these stories, allowing visitors to connect with the people and decisions that shaped one of America's most important conservation achievements. Since its founding, staff and partners have been carrying out the mission of protecting these critical landscapes. Today, the refuge supports several habitat restoration projects, wildlife surveys, invasive species invasive species An invasive species is any plant or animal that has spread or been introduced into a new area where they are, or could, cause harm to the environment, economy, or human, animal, or plant health. Their unwelcome presence can destroy ecosystems and cost millions of dollars. Learn more about invasive species removal, and mosquito control that helps maintain a healthy lagoon ecosystem. And, on these public lands, interpretive trails guide visitors through various habitats and create a learning opportunity for everyone to understand how refuge management supports species survival, ecological balance, and public enjoyment of natural spaces. Image Details Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge continues to welcome birders, hikers, photographers, kayakers, and anyone who seeks a deeper connection to Florida's natural heritage. With its accessible Centennial Trail, panoramic observation tower, and miles of boardwalks and footpaths, the refuge acts as a living classroom, reminding visitors that natural beauty and biodiversity can thrive alongside human development when thoughtful stewardship is prioritized. Consider this your invitation to explore its quiet beauty, learn its history, and witness the wildlife that inspired a national movement. Come visit and become part of the continuing story of the American Conservation Story. Next up, we follow the flags to Welaka National Fish Hatchery , which maintains a 16-tank public aquarium, a nature trail, and an observation tower where wildlife and birds can be observed around the ponds. Stay tuned for the next chapter on this historic tour! Story Tags A250 Wildlife refuges Published Jun 29, 2026 History and Culture Facilities Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Latest Stories Snapshot: Staff Come Together to Search for Human History Before Restoration Groundbreaking Jun 29, 2026 Wildlife Wonders Our nation's nature Jun 29, 2026 Our Partners Two New Sentinel Landscapes Designated in Mississippi and Colorado Jun 29, 2026

Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

NASA’s Newest Wind Tunnel Builds on Legacy of Innovation

5 min read Preparations for Next Moonwalk Simulations Underway (and Underwater) The Flight Dynamics Research Facility, located at NASA’s Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, is the agency’s first major wind tunnel built in more than 40 years. NASA/Mark Knopp For more than 100 years, wind tunnels at NASA’s Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, have helped shape the future of flight. Now, two of NASA’s longest-serving facilities — the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel and the 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel — will pass the torch to the Flight Dynamics Research Facility (FDRF), the first major NASA wind tunnel built in more than 40 years. “The FDRF has a combination of features found in no other single facility in the world,” said Mike Fremaux, retired chief engineer for the Intelligent Flight Systems division at NASA Langley. “It’s a high-performance vertical wind tunnel with a large test section capable of conducting all manner of tests to assess the dynamics of flight vehicles.” When the FDRF opens later this year, it will provide enhanced versions of the capabilities offered by the two legacy facilities. The FDRF’s test section will allow researchers to drop models into a rising vertical airflow. This will offer researchers the ability to conduct spin tests of aircraft and free-flight tests of vehicles designed to re-enter Earth’s atmosphere from space. The FDRF will play an integral role in conducting research that supports NASA’s aeronautics, science, and space exploration

Source: NASA

missions. Like many NASA facilities, the FDRF's story is rooted in a history of innovation. A 1/12th scale model of the SBN-1 is tested in the 12-Foot Free-Flight Tunnel's test section in 1940. NASA 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel When the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel began operations in 1939, aviation looked very different than it does today. It was built for NASA's predecessor agency, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) to study the controllability of airplanes using free flight. Aircraft models flew unsupported in the wind it generated, instead of being mounted to supports. Multiple operators used rudimentary remote controls to operate the models in the tunnel. The facility that housed the tunnel boasted a unique design: a 60-foot diameter sphere. The configuration allowed the tunnel to move and adapt to the flight paths of free flying models. "Pilots" could use hydraulic actuators, pivoting the tunnel's test section to match the models' movements. The spherical design made it easy for air from the facility's fan to recirculate through the tunnel, regardless of the pitch angle of the test section. In 1958, NASA moved the free-flight tests to another Langley tunnel . The agency deactivated the 12-Foot's hydraulic actuators, fixing its test section into a horizontal position, and began using it for more conventional testing, looking at how aerodynamic force affected the stability and control of strut-mounted models. The 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel (left) and the 12-Foot Free-Flight Tunnel (later the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel) in 1946. NASA The 12-Foot supported major projects throughout its 86 years of service, from the transition from bi-planes to monoplanes between two world wars,

Source: NASA

through the development of supersonic aircraft. Revolutionary designs saw testing in the 12-Foot, from the forward-swept-wing X-29 and the X-31 Enhanced Fighter Maneuverability Demonstrator, to the more recent X-59 quiet supersonic research aircraft, and the aeroshell for NASA's Dragonfly , a unique rotorcraft designed to explore Titan, Saturn's largest moon. The 12-Foot closed in 2025, but its legacy will be both felt and seen at the FDRF. Six wooden fan blades and the central metal fan hub from the 12-Foot are on display inside the FDRF's control room. Researchers at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia test a Mercury capsule model in 1959. NASA 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel While the 12-Foot tested new ideas for aircraft and components, the 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel played a critical role in aviation safety. Opened in 1941, the Vertical Spin Tunnel was designed to study aircraft stall and spin characteristics. Its aim was to prevent deadly accidents in which an aircraft enters an uncontrolled spin. The vertical design allowed models to fall into the rising airflow, simulating how aircraft behave during a spin. Researchers hand-launched models into the tunnel's vertically rising airstream to evaluate those characteristics. The tunnel quickly became one of the most important spin-testing facilities in the world. Research supported commercial aviation, parachute design systems, NASA space missions, and the development of nearly every U.S. military aircraft designed since World War II. Models from many of those tests will be on display in the FDRF's lobby, a testament to the Vertical Spin Tunnel's rich history. "It is great to showcase the legacy of work that started in the

NACA days and will continue going forward for decades to come," Fremaux said. The lobby of the Flight Dynamics Research Facility, located at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, features a timeline that details the histories of the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel and the 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel. NASA/Mark Knopp New era of flight research The FDRF will continue NASA's commitment to world-class facilities and the unique expertise of the agency's workforce. "That's what kept those other facilities going," Fremaux said. "Not just the buildings, the fans, and the motors, but also the expertise associated with those facilities. You can't have one without the other." The FDRF will build not only on the history of the 12-Foot tunnel and the Vertical Spin Tunnel, but on their equipment, including many of their major test rigs, instrumentation, and data systems, were repurposed for use in the FDRF, reducing costs and development time. As NASA returns astronauts to the Moon through the Artemis program, the FDRF will play a vital role in testing the technologies for entry, descent, and landing that will ensure a safe return to Earth. Research within the FDRF also will support science missions to planets and moons with atmospheres, such as Venus and Saturn's moon, Titan. The 25,000-square-foot facility will play a major role in experimental research for NASA's development of X-planes, autonomous flight vehicles, and drones. "For me, seeing FDRF come alive and being prepared to begin supporting important agency missions, after 30 years of working on the concept behind the scenes with formal and informal teams of motivated, innovative coworkers, is the most rewarding

Source: NASA

capstone I could have in my career,” Fremaux said. Just as the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel and the 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel supported decades of aerospace innovation, the FDRF is ready to shape the future of flight. Kimiko Booker NASA Langley Research Center Share Details Last Updated Jun 29, 2026 Related Terms Langley Research Center Aeronautics General Explore More 6 min read Mapping Earth’s Observations, featuring Betsy Ford Article 18 hours ago 3 min read NASA Announces Winners for 2026 Human Lander Challenge Article 4 days ago 3 min read This is How NASA Flight Tests New Technology Article 7 days ago

Source: NASA

Meet EcoBOT: The Autonomous Lab Standardizing Plant-Microbe Research

To harness biological systems (plants and microbes) for next-generation energy production and advanced materials, researchers are looking to beneficial plant-microbe interactions . Because these are complex systems, it has proven difficult to reproducibly control exactly which microbes are present. And, subtle differences in materials, methods, or even the hands of the researchers themselves can lead to inconsistent results. This makes it difficult to replicate previous work, significantly slowing the leap from scientific discovery to practical application. Researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) are overcoming this bottleneck by addressing a multi-layered challenge: building reliable physical hardware, engineering accurate visual sensors, and developing predictive algorithms. Their solution, EcoBOT, stands out from typical plant phenotyping facilities by integrating these distinct components into a reliably automated workflow under strictly sterile conditions. EcoBOT takes specialized growth chambers, called EcoFABs , and integrates them with machine-learning tools that autonomously guide the discovery cycle. This system uses advanced imaging to regularly scan the entire plant—from the tips of its leaves to the bottom of its roots. By using Gaussian Process models and AI analysis tools, it can quickly analyze and model this visual data to calculate the most informative next steps. This directs

Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

the automated hardware to determine exactly how plants adapt to environmental stressors, establishing the crucial microbe-free baseline needed to eventually study plant-microbe interactions and engineer better bioenergy crops. “Even with a simple biological system, the number of potential variables in an experiment can be overwhelming. If two different researchers tweak even a minor parameter, they could get completely different results,” said Peter Andeer, a researcher in the Environmental Genomics and Systems Biology (EGSB) Division who contributed to the design of EcoFABs and EcoBOT. “EcoBOT gives us speed, but more importantly, visibility. Without a system to keep track of the big picture, you just end up with disconnected observations, and no one can make sense of it.” EcoBOT’s algorithmic engines To illustrate how EcoBOT couples continuous measurement, adaptive modeling, and experimental redesign, the Berkeley Lab researchers used the system to observe how the model grass Brachypodium distachyon responds to environmental stressors such as nutrient deprivation and copper toxicity. In a traditional workflow, researchers might test a random spread of copper concentrations and wait weeks to measure the results. But inside EcoBOT’s compact cabinet, a robotic arm can autonomously manage over 150 individual EcoFABs simultaneously across three shelves. This robotic hardware doesn’t just automate the process; it intentionally maintains a highly controlled physical environment, providing the necessary foundation for the system-level modeling and downstream adaptive decision-making. Historically, extracting continuous data from that many biological environments would have been a grueling, manual task prone to human error. To solve this, researchers equipped EcoBOT with a suite of Berkeley Lab-developed deep learning tools that serve as the system's digital eyes. Addressing this sensing challenge required developing sophisticated new computer vision algorithms capable of reliably translating complex, noisy biological imagery into precise measurements. Below ground, a tool called RhizoNet serves as an automated root tracker. Rather than relying on inconsistent manual interpretation of root images, RhizoNet uses neural-network-based segmentation to digitally separate fragile plant roots from the noisy background of the hydroponic fluid in a standardized and reproducible way. In validation tests, it successfully standardized the analysis of thousands of images , precisely tracking root growth dynamics across all the different copper treatments. Above ground, a computer vision tool called EcoSpec scans the plant's shoots and analyzes complex, multi-wavelength hyperspectral images to monitor plant health . This tool has demonstrated high accuracy in high-throughput monitoring—while maintaining consistency across longitudinal measurements. The EcoBOT becomes a true self-driving laboratory through the continuous interaction between its physical infrastructure, sensing systems, and adaptive modeling framework. The robotic hardware stabilizes the experimental environment, the imaging systems convert plant behavior into quantitative measurements, and gpCAM uses those measurements to identify where uncertainty is highest and determine which experiments should be performed next. Using Gaussian-process-based modeling, gpCAM analyzes preliminary experimental results, estimates uncertainty across the experimental landscape, and calculates the next copper concentrations that are likely to be most informative. By iteratively targeting these knowledge gaps, this autonomous approach improved the predictive accuracy of the plant biomass models by more than thirty percent. Training and processing the complex visual data for these advanced machine learning models requires massive computational power, which the team accesses using supercomputers at the National Energy Research Scientific Computing Center (NERSC) . “This level of automation now positions us to go after our long-term goal of using it to help elucidate beneficial plant-microbe interactions,” said Andeer. “I was actually collecting data while on the other side of the country, just by logging in and hitting ‘go.’ We no longer have to arrange for a team of research assistants to take individual measurements and hope they are recorded consistently. EcoBOT feeds those measurements directly into our models. And because it all happens inside the sterile EcoFAB environment, we can guarantee there are no outside microbes influencing the results, which is impossible in a greenhouse.” Andeer notes that Berkeley Lab’s culture of team science was essential to realizing this vision. Bringing the self-driving lab to life required a collaboration of plant biologists, robotics engineers, and mathematicians from the Lab’s CAMERA team. “We originally built gpCAM as open-source software because researchers at massive experimental facilities were simply drowning in data,” said Marcus Noack, a researcher in the Applied Mathematics and Computational Research

(AMCR) Division and CAMERA, as well as the developer of gpCAM. "When you are exploring a vast, uncharted experimental landscape, measuring everything is impossible. Instead, gpCAM allows the instrument to calculate its own uncertainty and pinpoint the exact data points needed to complete the map. Whether you are scanning a 2D material or testing copper toxicity in an EcoFAB, the AI actively steers the experiment so we can learn as much as possible, as efficiently as possible." Reliable hardware and reproducible results The success of EcoBOT's AI is actually built on years of work by the Department of Energy-funded TEAMS project to help address the reproducibility crisis—the frustrating reality that an experiment in one laboratory often yields conflicting results when attempted in another, simply due to invisible environmental shifts or human handling. By using standardized EcoFABs, researchers in the EGSB Division and the Joint Genome Institute (JGI) led the team that successfully demonstrated the ability to replicate plant-microbiome studies in five independent laboratories across three continents. The collaborators were tasked with running the exact same synthetic microbiome experiment. Using the EcoFABs, all five observed identical changes in plant growth, root chemistry, and bacterial community structure. They consistently replicated how a specific bacterium, Paraburkholderia, shifted the microbiome —proving that when the environment is perfectly controlled, complex biology can be reliably reproduced anywhere in the world. EcoFAB 2.0 devices can be accessed at no cost by scientists through the JGI's Community Science Program and the Facilities Integrating Collaborations for User Science (FICUS) call, which are proposal-based initiatives that select projects based on scientific merit and Department of Energy relevance. “This entire platform is a great example of multi-disciplinary team science,” said Trent Northen, EGSB Deputy Division Director, who also serves as principal investigator of the m-CAFEs Science Focus Area, and co-developer of the EcoFAB and EcoBOT systems. “By using robotics and AI to standardize plant-microbe studies, we are building the foundational tools to accelerate science to address pressing DOE Missions and global challenges.” By accurately modeling how plants and microbes interact in these standardized environments, Northen says researchers can learn to harness microbiomes to improve soil health and boost agricultural productivity. Reflecting the true collaborative nature of this work, in addition to Andeer and Noack, Northen credits the platform’s success to critical contributions from a multifunctional team of researchers, including Benjamin Bowen (EGSB), Vlastimil Novak (EGSB), Jamie Sethian (AMCR/CAMERA), Daniela Ushizima (AMCR/CAMERA), John Vogel (JGI), and Petrus Zwart (Molecular Biophysics and Integrated Bioimaging Division/CAMERA), as well as current JGI Lab Automation Staff members LT Cornmesser and Joseph Zorzi. The development of EcoBOT was supported by several Department of Energy Biological and Environmental Research (DOE-BER) program projects over the years. It was originally developed by the TEAMS initiative, and is now supported by m-CAFEs , the JGI , and TWINS . JGI and NERSC are DOE Office of Science User Facilities. “By using robotics and AI to standardize plant-microbe studies,

Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

we are building the foundational tools to accelerate science to address pressing DOE Missions and global challenges." – Trent Northen ### Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) is committed to groundbreaking research focused on discovery science and solutions for abundant and reliable energy supplies. The lab's expertise spans materials, chemistry, physics, biology, earth and environmental science, mathematics, and computing. Researchers from around the world rely on the lab's world-class scientific facilities for their own pioneering research. Founded in 1931 on the belief that the biggest problems are best addressed by teams, Berkeley Lab and its scientists have been recognized with 17 Nobel Prizes. Berkeley Lab is a multiprogram national laboratory managed by the University of California for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science. DOE's Office of Science is the single largest supporter of basic research in the physical sciences in the United States, and is working to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time. For more information, please visit energy.gov/science . Tags: AI Frontier Computing Microbes Article AI EcoFABs Could Help Fuel AI in Agriculture Article AI Cracking the Code: Using AI to Solve Difficult-to-Map Proteins Q&A AI Berkeley Lab Leads Effort to Build AI Assistant for Energy Materials Discovery

Source: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

USGS Remote Sensing Data Tracks Coastal Change from Hurricanes Helene and Milton

USGS Remote Sensing Data Tracks Coastal Change from Hurricanes Helene and Milton By Coastal and Marine Hazards and Resources Program June 29, 2026 In response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the USGS collected and released aerial imagery covering over 250 kilometers (155 miles) of the west coast of Florida. Explore the data The survey documented coastal change from Honeymoon Island to Naples, Florida following the back-to-back storms, including heavily developed communities such as Captiva Island, Sanibel Island, and Fort Myers Beach, as well as undeveloped areas like Cayo Costa and Lovers Key State Beaches. Imagery was acquired on October 1-4, 2024, shortly after Helene made landfall near Big Bend on September 26, and again on October 16–22, 2024, after Milton came ashore near Sarasota on October 9. Flights were timed to capture immediate storm impacts before substantial cleanup and repairs began. Researchers in the Remote Sensing Coastal Change (RSCC) project contracted an aircraft to fly along the shoreline, collecting thousands of overlapping photographs. Using Structure-from-Motion photogrammetry, they produced high-resolution orthomosaic images (map-like aerial views) and three-dimensional digital elevation models, enabling detailed measurement of landcover type and surface elevations. By comparing these products with pre-storm data collected in spring 2024, scientists can assess how the coastline changed and evaluate the accuracy of USGS coastal change forecasts. Show only left Show only right Sources/Usage: Public Domain. View Media Details Download Images Aerial images of Milton Pass pre-Hurricane Helene and post-Hurricane Milton. Show only left Show only right Sources/Usage: Public Domain. View Media Details Download Images Aerial images of Midnight Pass pre-Hurricane Helene and post-Hurricane Milton. Using these remote sensing techniques, the USGS can efficiently collect time-sensitive data to map and measure hurricane impacts along affected coastal regions, including: Documenting infrastructure damage Identifying overwash and barrier island breaches Mapping land cover changes Calculating erosion and sand deposition Updating coastal elevation metrics that indicate vulnerability In the short term, the information assists partners, such as state agencies and the National Park Service, with response and recovery. Over the long term, it improves understanding of coastal dynamics, refines predictive models, and strengthens forecasts for future storms. These data have been released under USGS Emergency Use Data authorities for data that have immediate or time-sensitive relevance to public health and safety. The aerial photos that were used to build these topographic data are published and available in the USGS Remote Sensing Coastal Change Simple Data Service , where you can also view raw aerial photo thumbnails and full-size browse images in KML finding aids. Related Science August 31, 2022 Remote Sensing Coastal Change We use remote-sensing technologies—such as aerial photography, satellite imagery, structure-from-motion (SfM) photogrammetry, and lidar (laser-based surveying)—to measure coastal change along U.S. shorelines. By Natural Hazards Mission Area , Coastal and Marine Hazards and Resources Program , Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center , Big Sur Landslides Remote Sensing Coastal Change August 31, 2022 Remote Sensing Coastal Change We use remote-sensing technologies—such as aerial photography, satellite imagery, structure-from-motion (SfM) photogrammetry, and lidar (laser-based surveying)—to measure coastal change along U.S. shorelines. Learn More Related Science August 31, 2022 Remote Sensing Coastal Change We use remote-sensing technologies—such as aerial photography, satellite imagery, structure-from-motion (SfM) photogrammetry, and lidar (laser-based surveying)—to measure coastal change along U.S. shorelines. By Natural Hazards Mission Area , Coastal and Marine Hazards and Resources Program , Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center , Big Sur Landslides Remote Sensing Coastal Change August 31, 2022 Remote Sensing Coastal Change We use remote-sensing technologies—such as aerial photography, satellite imagery, structure-from-motion (SfM) photogrammetry, and lidar (laser-based surveying)—to measure coastal change along U.S. shorelines. Learn More

Source: U.S. Geological Survey

A250: America’s pop culture, a worldwide export

This story also appears in the May/June issue of the Library of Congress Magazine , which focuses on America 250. Baseball, basketball, football, blues, jazz, rock, Hollywood, Broadway, comic books — what would the planet look like without the great spewing fountain of American pop culture? Never mind the economic, dance floor and movie theater impact of America’s entertainment industry. When the Cold War came down to it, the United States had what Soviet kids wanted most: blue jeans and rock ’n’ roll. Who could compete with Levi’s and Elvis? Likewise baseball, first codified in New York in 1845, was America’s much beloved national pastime — but then became a cultural mainstay in nations as diverse as Castro’s Cuba and post-World War II Japan. A 1933 baseball card of Babe Ruth , one of the stars who helped make baseball “America’s Game.” The Library’s collections preserve much of this history in multiple formats. In the early 20th century, once modern recording and film technologies took hold and broadcast and mass distribution outlets proliferated, American creativity rocketed not just from Key West to Honolulu but around the world. The global impact of American films, television, theater, music (blues, jazz, rock, rap), comic books and even fast food can’t be quantified — but much of it can be catalogued. The Library’s baseball holdings are exhaustive. The National Audio-Visual Conservation Center holds millions of items documenting film, music, television and radio history,

Source: Library of Congress

perhaps best recognized in the National Film Registry and the National Recording Registry. The Stephen A. Geppi Collection of Comics and Graphic Arts is home to iconic editions of heroes such as Spider-Man, Wonder Woman, Batman, Superman and so many more. The Music Division holds the entire collections of titans such as George and Ira Gershwin , Leonard Bernstein , Stephen Sondheim, Oscar Hammerstein II and Billy Strayhorn . But it’s always the individual items that take the breath away. The first storyboards featuring Mickey Mouse, in “ Plane Crazy, ” from 1928. From The Stephen A. Geppi Collection of Comics and Graphic Arts. Prints and Photographs Division. The first storyboard of a Mickey Mouse cartoon , before anyone had seen anything by Walt Disney. The 1899 sheet music of Scott Joplin’s “ Maple Leaf Rag, ” sent in for copyright deposit, before “ragtime” was the name of an era or before the word “jazz” even existed. And there’s Ruth Graves Wakefield’s 1939 recipe for a little creation she served at her restaurant in Whitman, Massachusetts. You, and the rest of the world, now know it as the chocolate chip cookie . Sometimes American history can be just that sweet. Subscribe to the blog— it’s free!

Source: Library of Congress

Activity Time - Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Words go across or down only.

Words to Find:

N	P	F	C	H	L	F	M	R	J	J
W	W	D	P	G	D	C	L	S	U	A
N	C	H	Q	Y	A	J	H	K	M	L
U	P	L	K	L	V	T	Z	L	A	W
O	G	S	K	L	V	X	G	P	P	M
E	O	W	Y	A	J	F	K	V	Q	E
J	A	Y	B	E	J	C	O	B	J	Z
M	W	Q	R	V	T	A	S	Q	M	L
R	L	L	H	R	V	F	G	V	S	W
Y	U	N	J	I	K	Z	M	Q	O	D
B	K	J	C	J	K	U	D	K	P	K