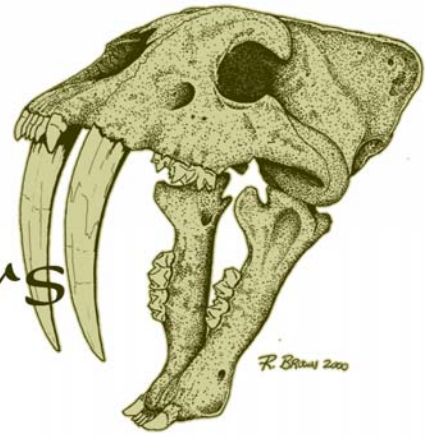


# NEWS

## Florida Fossil Hunters



Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc. dba/ Florida Fossil Hunters  
Volume 22, Number 3

March 2012

## OSC Fossil Fest #6

### March 17th

Fast approaching is the Orlando Science Center's Fossil Fest. This annual event is the Florida Fossil Hunters' 2nd biggest event each year, next to our Fossil Fair each Fall. This is our chance to do what we do best - educate and promote the collecting and preserving Florida's fossil past. There will be plenty of fossils on display. The Florida Paleontological Society and Chris DeLorey from the Brevard Zoo will be there along with other fossil related displays and activities.

If you haven't signed up to volunteer yet, email ([bjrb48@netzero.com](mailto:bjrb48@netzero.com)) or call (352-429-1058) Bonnie. This event is getting bigger and better every year, so come out and join the fun.

Russell Brown,  
President

**April 21st Speaker**  
Sean Roberts will give a talk on "Florida Caves and Cave Fossils"



## Coming Events

### UPCOMING MEETINGS at the Orlando Science Center

#### **March 17, 2012**

Orlando Science Center's  
Fossil Fest, No Club Meeting

#### **April 21, 2012**

2:00pm Kid's Fossil Blast  
3:00pm Club Mtg

#### **May 2012**

Peace River Trip  
info coming soon

*More events listed on back page*

## Table of Contents

*For more info...*

[www.floridafossilhunter.com](http://www.floridafossilhunter.com)

Fragments .....	2
Kids Fossil Blast .....	2
Looking for Volunteering Opportunities? .....	3
Crime Alert .....	3
Two New Extinct Camel Species Discovered at Panama Canal Excavation .....	4
Florida Artifact Bill #868 .....	5
Brevard Zoo and Dinosaurs .....	5
Vulcan Field Trip .....	6
Vulcan Mine, April 14th BBQ .....	6
Contacts and Membership Info .....	7
Calendar .....	8

## Fragments

### **Tampa Bay Fossil Fest**

Tampa Bay Fossil Club will hold its annual fossil & mineral show on March 24th & 25th, at the Florida State Fairgrounds near the intersection of I-4 and Hwy. 301, just east of Tampa. There will be vendors with fossils, artifacts, gems, minerals, & shells, as well as exhibits, workshops, kids' fossil mine, silent auctions, and more.

Cost is \$6 for adults. Kids age 12 and under can get in free. There is a charge for parking at the State Fairgrounds.

### **Cruisin' the Fossil Highway**

Florida Museum of Natural History

Feb. 4th to Sept. 3, 2012

Explore questions about evolution, extinction and early life on Earth through the fossil-inspired artwork of Ray Troll with insights from paleontologist Kirk Johnson. Watch Museum scientists prepare fossils from the field and see a giant ammonite and more.

Our own Russell Brown's artwork will be part of this display as well as that from other Florida paleo-artists.

.....and you get to go through the Hall of Fossils, too!

Admission is free to the Museum but there is a small charge for this traveling exhibit: \$4.50 for adults and \$4 for kids 3-17. For more info, go to [www.flmnh.edu.edu](http://www.flmnh.edu.edu)

### **Curious to Learn More About Fossils?**

The Museum of Natural History in Gainesville is having a free series of talks on fossils from some of their eminent paleontologists at 2 pm on the following Sundays:

March 11th - Fossil Primates with Jonathan Bloch, Ph.D., Assoc. Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology

April 29th - Florida's Fossil Horses with Richard Hulbert, Ph.D., Vertebrate Paleontology Collections Manager

The Museum will also have "Ask a Paleontologist" sessions from 1:30 to 3:30 pm on the following Sundays: Feb. 12, Mar. 4, Apr. 15, and May 6. Bring you fossils and questions and take advantage of this opportunity to talk with Museum paleontologists.

### **Venice Shark Tooth Festival**

The 20th annual celebration of sharks and their beautiful teeth will be held at the Venice Airport Festival Grounds, 120 E. Airport Ave., Venice, FL 34285, on April 13th through the 15th. Hours are: Fri.- 4pm to 9pm, Sat.- 10am to 9pm, Sun.- 10am to 5pm. Admission is \$3 but kids 12 & under can get in free.



## Kids' Fossil Blast

I want to thank all the kids (and their parents) for bringing in their collections and talking about them. It was good to see how excited they are about the fossils and minerals they've found and how much they have learned about them.

The next Kids' session will be on Saturday, April 21st, at 2 pm. We'll talk about the Epochs - why paleontologists divide the past into those time periods, why we find fossils from some but not others, about how fossils get buried and exposed.

Everyone will get to make their own Fossil Time-line and mark where the fossils they've collected are on it.

### **Piece on the Peace**

- GO MAN GO - Water levels throughout the state are reporting record lows. Levels so low that there's probably more people at the Peace River than at your local Walmart. Old-timers and first-timers are getting their gear together and heading to favorite spots throughout the state. Don't delay .... plan to take your family to the Peace River and take advantage of the low water.

### **Daytona Beach Mastodon Update**

The first attempt at dating the mastodon found in Daytona Beach has failed. The collagen from the femur fragment was too degraded. So now Zach Zacharias, senior curator of education and history at the Museum of Arts & Sciences, has sent one of the teeth to be tested. Teeth with their hard covering of enamel are often good sources for carbon dating.

## Looking for Volunteering Opportunities?

In this busy.... and getting more busy .... culture we have created, it's often easier to look the other way and let someone else do it. Helping out is something I try to do, wherever I go. Everyone does this to some degree - it may be just helping a neighbor or being kind to a stranger. Sometimes people volunteer because they like the feeling of being part of something besides work. A lot of time is volunteered for our families, especially our children.... in scouts, at school, at churches, for sports, and other activities and interests.

Volunteering for our club can be as little as showing up early to help set-up for the meeting and the Kids' Blast programs (which sometimes grow quite large for Bonnie) or can be as big as taking on a station at the Fossil Fair. Every little thing done greatly reduces the burden and helps create a feeling of family in our club.

There are plenty of good organizations throughout the state and countless ways to help in zoos, museums, nature centers, and special events. Check your local newspapers or the internet for ideas that will let you experience different activities while helping the community and could open your and your children's minds to something that could change you forever.

You can find volunteer opportunities at the Orlando Science Center's website [www.osc.org](http://www.osc.org) or drop by the front desk.

## Extra 2011 Fossil T-shirts

I have a limited number of 2011 yellow fossil t-shirts that were ordered but never paid for. They will be sold on a "first come" basis. I'll have them at the April 21st meeting. The youth shirts and shirts without pockets are \$10 each. The shirts with pockets are \$12.

**W/O Pocket:** Youth med: 2, Adult : M - 2, Lg - 1  
tan, XL - 3 & 1 tan, 2X - 1, 3X - 1

**Adult w/pocket:** Med - 1, Lg - 1

## CRIME ALERT

The two officers pushed cautiously through the thick vegetation, listening and worried about what they might encounter. A report had gone out of strange activity down in the ditch, along the West Orange Trail. "Probably transients" said one officer to the other. "We've had problems with them before." They looked out into the woods and could hear the trickle of water below. "Don't move. Stay right where you are", said a voice from the dense foliage. Looking around, the larger officer hollered, "Who's there? Show yourself." They could see movement about 100 ft. away in the ditch. Two men approached them...one with a beard, the other wore glasses. Both looked like they had just crawled out of a dumpster... dirty, wet, and carrying something that looked like a rifle and a large bag. The officers readied themselves, unsnapping the holsters on their guns and grabbing their nightsticks. "What are you doing?", asked one officer. "Hunting sharks teeth", was the reply. Both officers looked at one another. They had grown up in the Winter Garden, and neither had heard about any sharks in the area. Tightening his grip on his nightstick and looking suspiciously at the men, he said, "Tell me again what you two are doing." His partner moved around the two, ready for a fight. Then they noticed the men were carrying shovels, backpacks, and wooden frame boxes. Grinning now, the large officer said again, "Tell me about you hunting shark teeth," while tapping his nightstick on his open palm.

At this point, things weren't looking too good as far as having a good day, so I gave him my I.D. After introducing myself and my digging buddy John, I explained that we were hunting fossilized sharks' teeth, left here about 1-1/2 million years ago, and this so-called ditch, was actually Lulu Creek. That it was once spring-fed and through the years of eroding through the layers of soil, it had exposed a Pleistocene layer holding not only marine animals but strange elephant-like animals called gomphotheres that had four tusks instead of two. I went on telling about hemipristis serra, seven-gilled cow sharks, and all the other things found there.

The two officers looked at each other; then back at me and John. The larger of the two reached out, shook my hand, and said, "Well, Mister Brown, I believe you. Anybody who could come up with such a wild story, has got to be telling the truth. Ya'll just be careful and have a nice day." Then they both climbed back up the hill. I could hear them say on the way out, "who would want to be in such a trash and worm-filled polluted ditch?" Laughing, they disappeared.

Sad to say, it's true. Lulu Creek was, and still is, just a drainage ditch to Lake Apopka. Made me think of my first time there, years earlier. It was traveling back in time....to a jungle-like place that was nothing like I had experienced before.

*I remember.....*

# Two New Extinct Camel Species Discovered at Panama



*ScienceDaily (Feb. 29, 2012) — The discovery of two new extinct camel species by University of Florida scientists sheds new light on the history of the tropics, a region containing more than half the world's biodiversity and some of its most important ecosystems.*

Appearing online this week in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, the study is the first published description of a fossil mammal discovered as part of an international project in Panama. Funded with a grant from the National Science Foundation, UF paleontologists and geologists are working with the Panama Canal Authority and scientists at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute to make the most of a five-year window of excavations during Panama Canal expansions that began in 2009.

The discovery by Florida Museum of Natural History researchers extends the distribution of mammals to their southernmost point in the ancient tropics of Central America. The tropics contain some of the world's most important ecosystems, including rain forests that regulate climate systems and serve as a vital source of food and medicine, yet little is known of their history because lush vegetation prevents paleontological excavations.

*University of Florida geology doctoral student Aldo Rincon displays a lower jaw of *Aguascalietia panamaensis*, a newly described species of ancient camel. Rincon and other researchers at the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus described two new ancient camel species online this week in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*. The 20-million-year-old specimen was recovered from the Las Cascadas formation in Panama. (Credit: Florida Museum of Natural History photo by Jeff Gage)*

"We're discovering this fabulous new diversity of animals that lived in Central America that we didn't even know about before," said co-author Bruce MacFadden, vertebrate paleontology curator at the Florida Museum on the UF campus and co-principal investigator on the NSF grant funding the project. "The family originated about 30 million years ago and they're found widespread throughout North America, but prior to this discovery, they were unknown south of Mexico."

Researchers described two species of ancient camels that are also the oldest mammals found in Panama: *Aguascalietia panamaensis* and *Aguascalientia minuta*. Distinguished from each other mainly by their size, the camels belong to an evolutionary branch of the camel family separate from the one that gave rise to modern camels based on different proportions of teeth and elongated jaws.

"Some descriptions say these are 'crocodile-like' camels because they have more elongated snouts than you would expect," said lead author Aldo Rincon, a UF geology doctoral student. "They were probably browsers in the forests of the ancient tropics. We can say that because the crowns are really short."

Rincon discovered the fossils in the Las Cascadas formation, unearthing pieces of a jaw belonging to the same animal over a span of two years, he said.

"When I came back to the museum, I started putting everything together and realized, 'Oh wow, I have a nearly complete jaw,'" Rincon said.

The study shows that despite Central America's close proximity to South America, there was no connection between continents because mammals in the area 20 million years ago all had North American origins. The Isthmus of Panama formed about 15 million years later and the fauna crossed to South America 2.5 to 3 million years ago, MacFadden said.

Barry Albright, a professor of earth science at the University of North Florida who studied the early Miocene fauna of the Gulf Coast Plain, said he was surprised by the similarity of the Central American fauna.

"To me, it's slightly unexpected," Albright said. "That's a large latitudinal gradient between the Gulf Coastal Plain and Panama, yet we're seeing the same mammals, so perhaps that tells us something about climate over that interval of time and dispersal patterns of some mammals over that interval of time."

Camels belong to a group of even-toed ungulates that includes cattle, goats, sheep, deer, buffalo and pigs. Other fossil mammals discovered in Panama from the early Miocene have been restricted to those also found in North America at the time. While researchers are sure the ancient camels were herbivores that likely browsed in forests, they are still analyzing seeds and pollen to better understand the environment of the ancient tropics.

"People think of camels as being in the Old World, but their distribution in the past is different than what we know today," MacFadden said. "The ancestors of llamas originated in North America and then when the land bridge formed about 4 to 5 million years ago, they dispersed into South America and evolved into the llama, alpaca, guanaco and vicuña."

Researchers will continue excavating deposits from the Panama Canal during construction to widen and straighten the channel and build new locks, expected to continue through 2014. The project is funded by a \$3.8 million NSF grant to develop partnerships between the U.S. and Panama and engage the next generation of scientists in paleontological and geological discoveries along the canal. Study co-authors include Jonathan Bloch of UF, and Catalina Suarez and Carlos Jaramillo of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

## Florida Artifact Bill #868



The Florida Senate has a Bill in committee which would outlaw artifact hunting and collecting. The original Bill stated that collecting "on any lands" would be illegal and people could be prosecuted for it. Based on that wording, people could conceivably be fined or jailed for having an old collection in their house!

They have modified the wording to "any State owned or local political entity owned lands" as well as zones around designated archaeological landmarks. It does however include any submerged land..... this covers rivers, lakes, and the seacoast.

Keep an eye on the progress of this bill so they don't change the wording again before they vote. You can access the bill info at [www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0868](http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/0868)

It would be a good idea to use this opportunity to let your state senator know that we advocate the reinstatement of the the Isolated Finds Policy. This allowed information to be shared between amateurs and professionals about the occasional find of an artifact while in a river or at the beach.

You can find out who your state senate or house representative is at [www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives)

---

### *Brevard Zoo and Dinosaurs - Dead or Alive*

Our club members will tour the Zoo and the Dino exhibit on Saturday, April 28th. Chris DeLorey has graciously arranged for us to get the education discount and to give a personally-guided tour of the Dinosaur exhibit. We'll meet at the entrance gate at 9:15 am. They'll let us in at 9:30 am and the Zoo will close for the day at 3 pm. This will give us plenty of time to see all the incredible animals that live there, too.

The education rate is \$9 per person for admission to the Zoo and the Dino exhibit. The regular price for this would be \$19.50 for adults and \$15.50 for kids ages 2 to 12. This is a real bargain, folks.

You MUST sign up and pay for your admission by our meeting day of April 21st. This is the only way we can get the group education rate. You can email or phone to sign up and pay me at the meeting or mail it to the post office box at least 10 days prior to the trip. Checks should be made out to Florida Fossil Hunters.

There will be additional information on directions and hotel accommodations in April's newsletter.

## Vulcan Field Trip

### March 10th

There will be a field trip to Vulcan Mine near Brooksville on Saturday, November 12th and the Trip Leader contact is Dave Dunaway, ph [407-786-8844](tel:407-786-8844), home phone: 386-426-6374. For the day of the field trip only, his cell phone is: 386-689-4581.

This is one of the few places where kids are allowed in to fossil hunt. Be sure to stay with them since there are steep cliffs, sharp rocks, and small sinkholes.

**You MUST be a member of the club for insurance purposes to participate in this field trip.**

Meet on the driveway loop near the entrance to the Mine by 8:30 am to sign releases before we are escorted into the mine around 9 am. We get to drive our vehicles in so you can have your coolers, snacks, and equipment handy while you hunt. They usually allow us to dig until noon and sometimes people can stay till 2 pm.

All participants MUST be escorted into and out of the mine. Do not leave on your own since it is easy to become lost.

Directions: The trip will take approximately 2 hours from Orlando to Vulcan Mine. Be sure to allow for extra time to stop at a restroom before you get there. **THERE ARE NO RESTROOM FACILITIES AT VULCAN**, other than the boulders and the hills.

From Orlando take Hwy. 50 west (or the 408 west to the FL Turnpike, take exit 272 and then continue west on Hwy. 50) to Brooksville. Follow 50A/98 North through Brooksville and turn right on Ponce De Leon Blvd. (Hwy 98 North). Go approximately 10 miles. Vulcan/Cemex will be on your left. The address is 16313 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Brooksville, for those of you who want to download a map.

If you follow the truck route for Hwy. 50, you have to turn right onto 41, and then take the fork to the left to hook up with Ponce De Leon Blvd/98. There are several fast food places on 41 where you can take advantage of the bathroom facilities. Be sure NOT to keep following 41 north. You want to take 98 north from Brooksville.

This is mostly surface collecting with occasionally a little digging to pry out a specimen. Bring a small trowel or screwdriver or rock hammer, and a bucket to put your fossils and rocks into. You may want to bring small containers and tissue for fragile fossils.

Wear a hat, sturdy shoes, long pants (some of the rocks are sharp), and sunscreen. Bring lots of water and/or drinks and some snacks or lunch to eat.

We find mostly echinoids and sometimes sea urchins, pieces of bone, or other fossils are found. We also find chert rocks. This is the material that the Indians used to make their arrowheads and tools.

### Vulcan Mine, April 14th BBQ

**This year sadly will be the last of collecting at Vulcan Mine in Brooksville.** Vulcan Mine Materials, through all the years that I can remember, has been kind enough to open their mine to collectors of fossils, rocks, minerals, etc. This company has one of the greatest public outreach policies of all the mining operations that I've known. Vulcan Mine has allowed scout troops, school groups, and children of club members (which is very rare) to come in and collect. On the second Saturday of April, I've worked it out with Alan Pagels to take our club to an area where we will have a cookout on site, during which you and your children can run around, collect, and explore. I'm asking for members to bring a covered dish to go with the hot dogs that the club will provide.

Vulcan Materials will be shutting down for good this summer. I believe June is the last time to hunt for fossils. If you haven't been to the mine before, (or if you want to go "just one more time") you have just a few more opportunities.

If you plan to attend this event please email Bonnie at [bjrb48@netzero.com](mailto:bjrb48@netzero.com) or call 352-429-1058, so we know how many to plan for. Also, if you'd like to help out, we could use a couple more grills and tarps

# Florida Fossil Hunters

is a fun and educational group whose goal is to further our understanding of the prehistory of Florida. We encourage family participation and welcome explorers of all ages.

Membership is \$17 per year. Other household members may be included at no charge.

Meetings are usually held on the third Saturday of the month but may vary with club activities. Check the website for the date and location of the next meeting or call one of the officers.

**Officers:**

President	Russell Brown	(352) 429-1058
Vice President	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Secretary	Bonnie Cronin	(352) 429-1058
Treasurer	Sara Morey	(619) 302-4863

**Chairs:**

Education	Bonnie Cronin	(352) 429-1058
Field Trips	<b>OPEN</b>	
Fossil Fair	Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Fossil Auctions	Dave Dunaway	(407) 493-4253
Fossil Bucks	Dave Dunaway	(407) 493-4253
Fossil Lotto	Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Auctioneer	Roy Singer	(407) 645-0200
Membership	Bonnie Cronin Nicole Barr	(352) 429-1058
Newsletter	Bonnie Cronin	(352) 429-1058
	Elise Cronin-Hurley	(407) 929-6297
Photography	John Heinsen	(407) 291-7672
Webmaster	Elise Cronin-Hurley	(407) 929-6297
	elise@liseydreams.com	

**Board of Directors:**

Melissa Cole	(407) 834-5615
Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Dave Cass	(407) 409-9095
Shelley Zimmerman	(407) 891-1260
Marge Fantozi	
Marcia Wright	

# Membership Application

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Members: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renewal

Please list any interests, experience, talents or just plain enthusiasm, which you would like to offer to the club:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Membership is \$17 per year. Our membership year runs from January to December. All renewals are done in December and January.

**Please make your checks payable to:**

Florida Fossil Hunters  
Post Office Box 540404  
Orlando, Florida 32854-0404

*Associate members are people in the same household, included at no extra charge, 2 adult votes per household.*

# Newsletter Policy

Articles must be submitted by the first of the month to be included in that month's newsletter. These can be mailed to the above Post Office Box or e-mailed to: elise@liseydreams.com. Articles can be sent as text in the e-mail or in Microsoft Word files (.doc or .docx).

*Please note in subject of email 'FFH'.*

**Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc.**  
**dba/ Florida Fossil Hunters**

# Florida Fossil Hunters News

# Florida Fossil Hunters Mark Your Calendar

See inside for more information on events.

- March 10th: **Vulcan Mine Field Trip**
- March 17th: **Orlando Science Center's Fossil Fest**
- March 24th & 25th: **Tampa Bay Fossil Fest Annual Fossil & Mineral Show**
- April 14th: **Vulcan Mine Field Trip**
- April 13th - 15th: **Venice Shark Tooth Festival**
- April 21st: **Kid's Fossil Blast 2:00pm Club Meeting 3:00pm**
- April 28th: **Brevard Zoo & Dinosaurs Field Trip**
- May 2012: **Peace River Field Trip**



**TIME TO RENEW**  
your Florida Fossil Hunters  
2012 Membership.

## Be Green

Email Bonnie at [bjrb48@netzero.com](mailto:bjrb48@netzero.com) to receive the newsletter via email.



Join Our Facebook group, Search:

[Florida Fossil Hunters](#)

facebook

Visit us online at [www.floridafossilhunters.com](http://www.floridafossilhunters.com)

Articles and comments should be sent to: [elise@liseydreams.com](mailto:elise@liseydreams.com)

## Florida Fossil Hunters

Post Office Box 540404

Orlando, Florida 32854-0404



Florida Fossil Hunters News