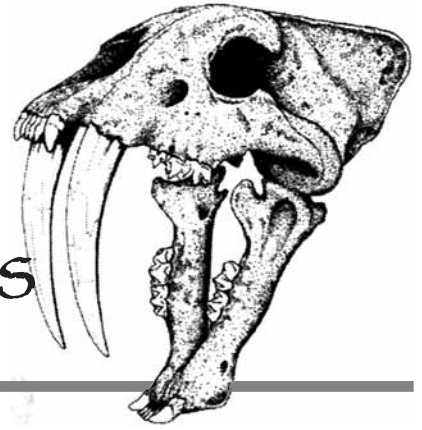


NEWS

Florida Fossil Hunters



Volume 16, Number 9

October 2006

Prez Sez

It's time for our Fossil Fair. Valerie reports that we are booked solid with vendors so there will be a good variety of fossils and minerals to look at and vendors to chat with.

The time that all of you volunteer for the fair is what makes it such a success. If you haven't signed up yet, just come and check in at the membership table and we'll find a spot for you.

Remember to bring in your Kids' Pit fossils and any items you have for the Silent Auction. T-shirts will be available at the membership table.

Our next meeting on Wednesday, October 18th will be at the College Park library at the corner of Lee Rd. and Edgewater Dr. Our November meeting will be there as well. Be sure to bring whatever you've found fossil hunting to share with the club. We love to see your stuff.

See you at the Fair and the meeting.

Dave Dunaway

Fossil Fair 2006

October 14 & 15

See how you can help on page 2.

Coming Events

October 18th

6:00pm Kids' Blast
7:00pm Meeting
at Edgewater Library

November 15th

7:00pm Meeting
at Edgewater Library

December - date tba

7:00pm Meeting
at Dave Dunaway's House

Mark your calendar

Florida Fossil Fair 2006

October 14 & 15

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Florida Fossil Hunters News

Fragments

Pleistocene Park?

A group of scientists and naturalists have suggested that some of the Mega-Fauna from prehistoric times be re-introduced in North America. Their contention is that man's arrival in North America upset the balance in nature that existed at that time and it ought to be restored. They want to start with Giant Land Tortoises and herds of wild horses. Later additions will be elephants, to replace the mammoths and mastodons, and cheetahs and possibly lions.

No mention is made of the fact that the climate was a big factor in the Mega-Fauna's demise.

This certainly brings back the cautions expressed in the movie Jurassic Park. Will we be restoring balance or unleashing a series of events impossible to control?

Kids' Fossil Blast

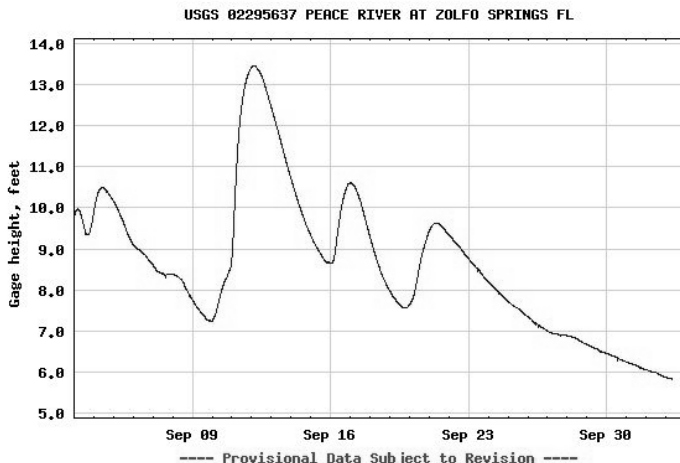
Do mice make you want to scream EEEK !

How about a rodent the size of a buffalo? Come find all about about the big and little rodents of the past and their fossils.

The next meeting of the Kids' Fossil Blast will be at 6 pm on Wednesday, October 18th, before our regular club meeting. It will be held at the College Park Library which is located in the strip of shops on the northeast corner of the intersection of Lee Rd. and Edgewater Dr.

The Kids' Fossil Blast is a fun, hands-on way to find out about fossils for kids mainly ages 4 to 14 yrs. Each meeting we focus on a different type of fossil using real fossils, replicas and printed materials. Sometimes the kids even get to take real fossils home. We meet every other month at 6 pm check the website for the location..

Hope to see you there. Bonnie Cronin



Help at the Fossil Fair

Friday, October 13th

Dealer set up is from 3 to 7PM. We need people to participate in setting up the children's pit, bringing kids pit material (fossils), bringing and laying out extension cords, moving chairs, hanging posters, etc. We still need someone (or two) for the Friday night security.

Saturday, October 14th and Sunday, October 15th

Sharon Lynes, our membership person, will have the sign up sheet at the September meeting but if you want to just show up, before or during the fair (especially during the fair), there will be plenty to do. We need people at the door to collect admission and raffle donations, silent auction workers and membership information workers, and we need people to help in the kids pit. We will also need people to help put the signs up near the fairgrounds and then take them down after the show.

If anyone has a place to hang flyers, such as their local library, it would be good to do it this month. If you do not have a flyer, they may be obtained from our club web site.

Valerie First

Florida Fossil Far 2006 -- October 14 & 15

A Piece on the Peace

Grab your shovels and sifters, boys and girls! The Peace River is low enough to hunt in for fossils again. It hit 6 ft. at the Zolfo Gauge station on Tues. , Oct. 3rd and should probably continue to go down unless we have a big rain event in the area.

Russell and I braved the slightly higher water on the Sunday before and found the current to be strong but digging was possible closer to the banks. *Who knows what treasures await us after this summer of rains.*

For those of you who haven't been to the Peace River before:

It holds many fossils from the Miocene to recent times. Some of the fossils found are shark teeth (including the incredible Megalodon), teeth and sometimes bones from prehistoric horses, tapirs, peccaries, capybaras, bison, mammoth, mastodon, sloth, etc. Also found are turtle shells, scutes (hard bony parts under the skin) from alligators, giant armadillos and glyptodonts.

To hunt you can dive or snorkel and fan the bottom or you can dig and sift.

The best hunting is accessed by taking a canoe down the river until you find a shallow area with gravel. If you can't get a boat, you can walk in just south of the park at Wauchula or in Arcadia.

To get to the Peace River take Hwy. 17 south out of Bartow and put in anywhere from Bowling Green south to Arcadia.

Happy hunting.

FLORIDA FOSSIL HUNTERS 2006 FOSSIL FAIR

FOSSILS, GEMS, MINERALS, ARTIFACTS

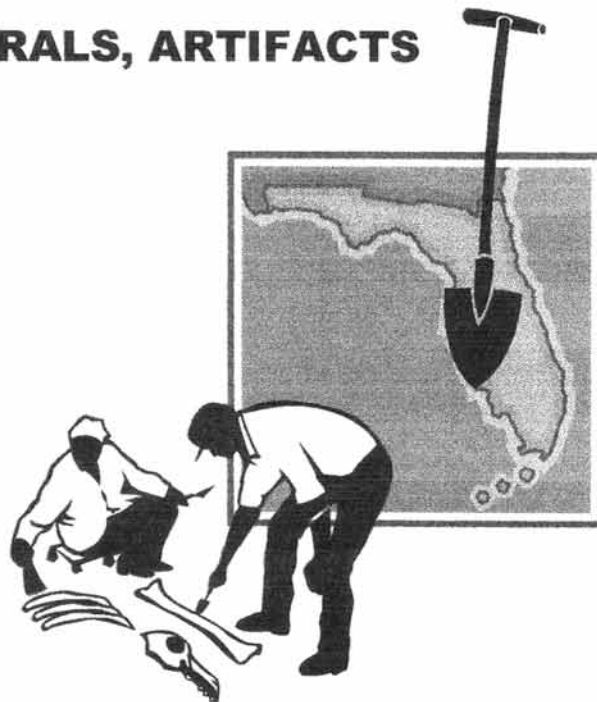
Learn to dig Florida and see what can be discovered!

Educational displays, vendors,
Silent auctions, raffles,
KIDS DIG PIT. \$.50

Oct 14 and 15

Central Florida Fairgrounds
4603 W. Colonial Dr
Orlando Florida 32808

Sat 9:00AM to 5:00PM
Sun 10:00AM to 4PM
\$3/ Adult & \$1/child



Directions: From Tampa: I-4 to Colonial Dr (Hwy 50) exit. Go west just past Mercy Dr. Fair is on the north side (on the right)

From Daytona: I-4 to Colonial Dr (Hwy 50) in Orlando. Go west on 50 just past Mercy Dr. Fair is on the north side (on the right).

www.floridafossilhunters.com
407-699-9274

Ancient Birds Flew On All-Fours

The earliest known ancestor of modern-day birds took to the skies by gliding from trees using primitive feathered wings on their arms and legs, according to new research by a University of Calgary paleontologist.

In a paper published in the journal *Paleobiology*, Department of Biological Sciences PhD student Nick Longrich challenges the idea that birds began flying by taking off from the ground while running and shows that the dinosaur-like bird *Archaeopteryx* soared using wing-like feathers on all of its limbs.

"The discussions about the origins of avian flight have been dominated by the so-called 'ground up' and 'trees down' hypotheses," Longrich said. "This paper puts forward some of the strongest evidence yet that birds descended from arboreal parachuters and gliders, similar to modern flying squirrels."

The first fossil of the Jurassic-era dinosaur *Archaeopteryx lithographica* was discovered in Germany in 1861, two years after Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution in *On The Origin of Species*. Since then, eight additional specimens have been unearthed and *Archaeopteryx* is considered the best evidence that birds evolved from dinosaurs since it had both feathers and a bird-like wishbone, along with classic reptilian features of a long bony tail, claws and teeth.



Although scientists immediately noticed feather-like structures on the hind limbs, they were dismissed as insulating body feathers that didn't play a role in the animal's flight. It wasn't until several four-winged dinosaurs in China were described in 2002 that researchers began to re-examine *Archaeopteryx*'s legs.

"The idea of a multi-winged *Archaeopteryx* has been around for more than a century, but it hasn't received much attention," Longrich said. "I believe one reason for this is that people tend to see what they want or expect to see. Everybody knows that birds don't have four wings, so we overlooked them even when they were right under our noses."

Under the supervision of professor Anthony Russell, Longrich examined *Archaeopteryx* fossils and determined that the dinosaur's leg feathers have an aerodynamic structure that imply its rear limbs likely acted as lift-generating "winglets" that played a significant role in flight.

Illustration of Archaeopteryx.

(Credit: Nick Longrich / Courtesy of University of Calgary)

Researchers Find Evidence Of The Earliest Writing In The New World

Research published this week details the discovery of a stone block in Vera Cruz, Mexico, containing a previously unknown system of writing. The stone itself which is composed of the mineral serpentine weighs 26 lbs. and is about 14.5 inches long and 8.5 inches wide. It was discovered in a pile of debris near the community of Lomas de Tacamichapa in the late 1990's. Surrounding the piece were ceramic shards, clay figurine fragments. With the history of the regional archaeology and those items, the experts have dated the stone to the San Lorenzo phase of the Olmec civilization. ending about 900 B.C. That's 400 years before writing was thought to have first appeared in the Western Hemisphere.

The incised text consists of 62 signs, some of which are repeated four times. Because of its distinct elements, patterns of sequencing, and consistent reading order, the team says the text "conforms to all expectations of writing."

Did They Waddle?

The world's oldest fossilized webbed footprints of birds were found in a geological stratum created 110 million years ago on Changseon, a South Korea island.

Each print measures 1.8 inches by 2.0 inches.

So while birds were walking in the mud in Korea during the Cretaceous period, those huge sauropods were stomping around in Patagonia. Ahhhhh....diversity is the spice of life.

Field Trip

Vulcan Mine, Brooksville

When: Saturday, November 11th. Meet at the guard gate by 8:30 am. Everyone must sign a release form prior to participating.

Directions: From Orlando, take Hwy. 50 west to Brooksville. Turn right onto US 98 and go north approximately 10 miles. Vulcan Mine will be on your left. For those of you using a GPS, the address is 16301 Ponce De Leon Blvd.

What we find: echinoids, sea urchins, sand dollars, chert (the rock that Indians used to make points) and the occasional shark teeth and bones.

This is surface collecting and shallow digging.

You will need: buckets, small containers for fragile fossils, trowels or small shovels or rock hammers.

Bring lots of water and drinks and food.

Wear sturdy shoes, hats, sunscreen and gloves.

Children are permitted and most love the experience of fossil hunting and seeing a working mine. However, they must be under adult supervision at all times. Some of the areas have steep slopes and sharp rocks. Also there are usually very large trucks hauling material.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the Fossil Fair and the October meeting. For more information, email Bonnie Cronin at bjrb48@netzero.com or call 352/429-1058 or cell 321/279-2592.

New Ichthyosaur Discovered Under Ping Pong Table

Strange but true.....for 25 years the bones of a marine reptile lay stored in boxes under the table in the science undergraduate lab until renovations were made and they were rediscovered by Michael Caldwell, paleontologist at the University of Alberta. They had been originally excavated by a group of undergraduates and a technician at the University.

Caldwell soon learned the bones were from the Lower Cretaceous, or about 100 million years ago. This finding was significant since it bridged a huge gap in the fossil record. The Loon Lake collection was also the most northern record of ichthyosaur remains from Canada.

"What was really interesting was that at this point in history the ichthyosaur starts going extinct," said Caldwell. "So anything from this time is going to be very important. When we opened it up, we found material in three dimensions and

very finely preserved. Then it turned out that one was pregnant with two embryos. It was amazing."

Over the course of evolution, the front limbs were modified as paddles while the pelvis and hind limbs were reduced in size. These changes over time make it improbable that these aquatic animals could have crawled out onto land to lay eggs.

Ichthyosaurs, like most reptiles, continuously replace their teeth. But while pregnant, most ichthyosaurs are also completely toothless, giving up the calcium from their own teeth and bones to the developing embryo. This dramatically illustrates the high price animals pay to give birth to live, fully formed young.

The Loon River ichthyosaurs have been found to be a distinct species which they named *Maiaspondylus lindoei*.

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 held the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm, check the website for the location.

Officers:

President Dave Dunaway (407) 786-8844
 Vice President Paul Bordenkircher (407) 687-3843
 Secretary
 Treasurer Sara Morey (407) 834-0281

Chairs:

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 Field Trips Shelley Zimmerman(407) 891-1260
 Fossil Fair Valerie First (407) 699-9274
 Fossil Auctions Dave Dunaway (407) 786-8844
 Fossil Bucks Dave Dunaway (407) 786-8844
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 Auctioneer Roy Singer (407) 645-0200
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 Jeremy Smith (407) 293-9391
 Roy Singer (407) 645-0200
 Ed Metrin (407) 321-7462
 Tom Tomlinson (407) 290-8474

Florida Fossil Hunters

Membership Application

Names: _____

Associate Members: _____

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

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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

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 messages in the e-mail or in Microsoft Word files (*.doc).

Scientists find 2nd red panda specimen

GRAY, Tenn. - Scientists uncovered a second fossil of a red panda species first discovered at the Gray Fossil Site two years ago. Researchers from East Tennessee State University found a lower jawbone from a red panda of the *Pristinailurus bristoli* species last week.

"The nice thing about it is that it's confirmation," Dr. Steven Wallace, ETSU's lead paleontologist at the site, said Wednesday. "You hate to have a one-shot wonder."

The species was discovered in January 2004 when ETSU researchers found a panda tooth and other skeletal fragments. Only the second panda fossil found on the continent, the remains turned out to be a previously unknown species in the red panda family.

Scientists believe the jawbone is from a second specimen of the same species of red panda because the teeth are older than the first tooth found.

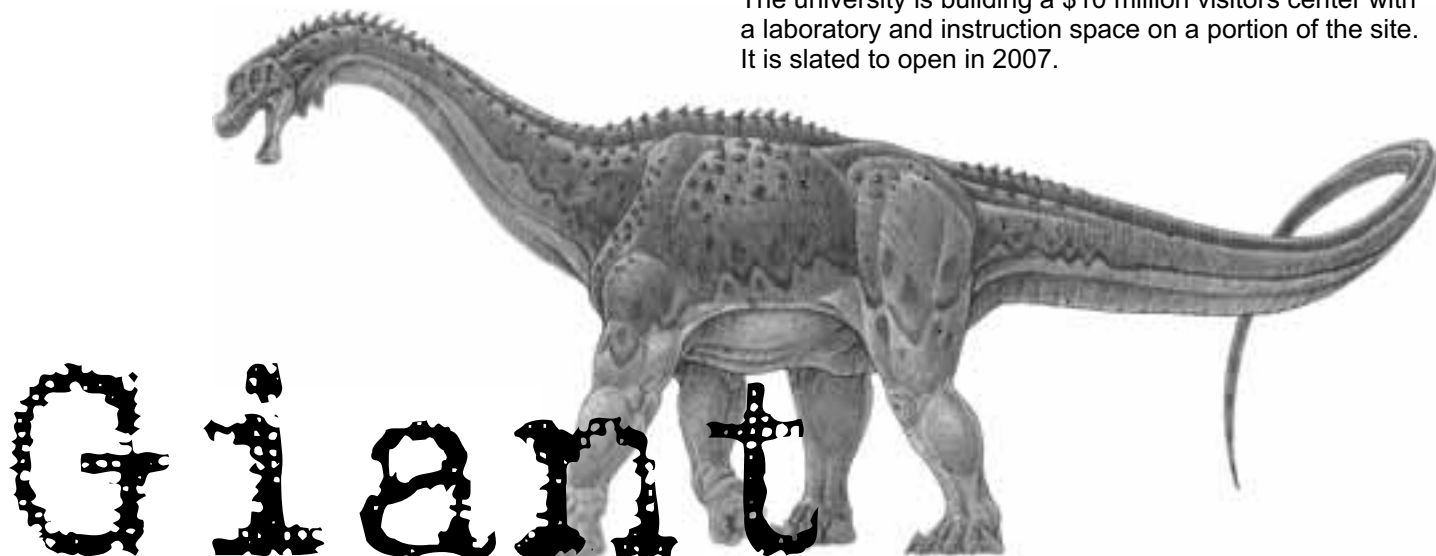
"The first tooth was virtually unerupted. It had no wear," Wallace said. "This was from a much older adult that had full wear on all its teeth."

Although the jawbone was found in two pieces, it is nearly complete.

"What it's missing are the little front premolars, which are really tiny and often fall out, but other than that, it's a really nice specimen," Wallace said.

The Gray Fossil Site near Johnson City was discovered during the widening of a highway in 2000 and is estimated at 4.5 million to 7 million years old.

The university is building a \$10 million visitors center with a laboratory and instruction space on a portion of the site. It is slated to open in 2007.



Sauropod Dinosaur Discovered in Argentina

Argentinean scientists have discovered gigantic neck, back, and tail bones from one of the largest dinosaurs ever to roam the earth.

Puertasaurus reuili is estimated to have been 115 ft. to 131 ft. long and weighed between 88 and 110 tons. The estimates are based on the size of the bones. The back vertebra measures 3.48 ft. tall and 5.5 ft. wide.

This find also extends the era when large titanosaur plant-eating sauropods roamed the earth. It was previously believed that the really

large sauropods went extinct 90 to 100 million years ago. These bones have been dated to 70 million years ago so now we know that they existed until the end of the Cretaceous.

70 million years ago southern Patagonia where these bones were found was periodically inundated with seawater from both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, since the Andes hadn't formed yet. Large fossilized logs have also been found in the same layers indicating the region was once forested.

Mark Your Calendar

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7:00pm Meeting
at Edgewater Library

November 15th
7:00pm Meeting at Edgewater Library

December - date tba
7:00pm Meeting at Dave Dunaway's House

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Visit our website www.floridafossilhunters.com

Articles and comments should be sent to: elise@liseydreams.com

Florida Fossil Hunters

Post Office Box 540404
Orlando, Florida 32854-040



Florida Fossil Hunters News