

Fossils In North Dakota

FIND is a newsletter dedicated to helping young readers (in age or spirit) express their love of fossils and paleontology, and to help them learn more about the world under their feet. Each issue will be broken up into sections including Feature Fossils, Travel Destinations, Reader Art, Ask Mr. Lizard, and more!

Winter 2014, No. 15

Editor: Becky Barnes
North Dakota Geological Survey
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505

becbarnes@nd.gov

Next Issue: March 2015

Please e-mail us if you wish to receive the electronic version of FIND, or view past issues at:
<https://www.dmr.nd.gov/ndfossil/kids/>



Feature Fossil: Petrified Stumps & Log

-Jeff Person

The two large petrified stumps in front of the east entrance to the North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum were collected near Amidon, ND and placed on the capitol grounds near 4th Street in 1988 as a North Dakota Centennial Project. This project was sponsored by the Central Dakota Gem and Mineral Society. Two years later the remains of a large Paleocene (approximately 60 million years ago) tree were recovered on a beach of Lake Sakakawea. The North Dakota Geological Survey worked in concert with the North Dakota National Guard and the Central Dakota Gem and Mineral Society, to remove the sections of tree, which were on land managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Nearly 15 four- to eight-foot-long sections (almost 80 feet!) were brought back to Bismarck. These sections were placed



Ray Oliger, CDG&MS 1990

along the Arboretum Trail near the two large petrified stumps, and arranged to look like the tree had just fallen. It was on display at this location for 24 years before being moved, along with the stumps, to its new position in front of the Heritage Center and State Museum last September.



Tree and stumps moved with the cooperation of Straightway Construction.

V.I.P. (Very Important Preparator):

Dawna MacLeod, Royal Tyrrell Museum, Drumheller, Alberta



My name is Dawna MacLeod. I live in Drumheller, Alberta, Canada where I work at the Royal Tyrrell Museum as a preparator. I started preparing in January of 2003, as a volunteer. My back ground was in Office Administration and in April of 2003, the

receptionist at the Tyrrell was going on maternity leave. So the museum offered me the job until she returned. Once she was back I was moved down to the prep lab as Office admin/preparator. After 4 years of this position The museum recognized this experience as a University degree and therefore dropped the Administration portion of my job.

The first specimen that I got to work on was a beautifully preserved Daspletosaurus from the Milk River Area. This animal had hardly any crushing or distortion. The bones looked like he had just died a few month ago, not a few million years ago. The detail of the muscle tissue connections and the original shape is so well preserved. Because of this one specimen I have learned a lot about theropods. The majority of the specimens I have worked on are mostly theropods, ornithomimids and eggs. I love to do fine detail work and therefore I am always given the small finiky stuff to do, such a skin impressions, eggs and embryonic material. But my all-time favorite, besides, Daspletosaurus are feathered ornithomimids. I prepared both of the first feathered ornithomimids discovered in the Western hemisphere! And that is pretty exciting!

During the summer months, we go out into the field.

Working bonebeds and prospecting. My favorite is to sit in the middle of a micro site and search for tiny fossils.

Preparation is my favorite thing to do. It is always so satisfying to see your fossil completed. Even more so when it is put out on display! Keep in mind, that the average specimen, like the feathered ornithomimids, each take over a year and a half! The Daspletosaurus took me, 2 ½ years. I am currently working on a large boulder block that has 21 gar fish in it, and measured 8 feet across and weighed 6100 lbs when I first started it on May 9, 2013. Won't be completed for a couple years yet.

I have been fortunate enough to be sent to the Los Angeles Natural History Museum to prepare a shark they had in their collection. It was a great experience, meeting other preparators and seeing the different kinds of fossils they collect. I have since been back to volunteer there for a week, because I loved going there so much!

My signature gear is a wide brimmed straw hat, for fieldwork. I had the same one for 10 years but had to replace it this year. My Curator calls it my Beach Hat!

The only thing I do not like about my job is having to go out in the field on very hot days. It really drains my energy. But I take lots of water with me, and just take things slow when it is that hot.

Preparation is a job that you will either love or hate. Not everyone can do this type of job. There is a lot of eye/hand coordination involved, as well as patience. But I advise anyone to give it a try, it is quite the experience!!

Now Open!

The State Museum, Heritage Center, in Bismarck ND, had their Grand Opening on November 2nd, 2014. The event was attended by over 4,500 people. The Paleontology dept. provided childrens activities throughout the day, including mask-making, pet rocks, and "fuzzysaurs". A special dino-footprint-lock and *Tyrannosaurus* skeleton key, wielded by ND Governor Jack Dalrymple, were used to "unlock" the last remaining galleries.

