

# More information about the Medora Dig

## The Site:

The Medora dig is located close to Medora itself, so participants could stay in one of Medora's hotels or campground, or travel in from nearby Dickinson or Belfield. We leave from and return to Medora every day. The site is on private property, so to prevent excess traffic, wear and tear on the road, as well as driving offroad, we will be taking participants out in a van. We want to make sure we are invited back in future years, so please make sure that all trash is picked up off the site.



Participants clearing down to the quarry level



*Champsosaurus* bones



Prospecting on "The Flats," looking for microfossils

The Medora site has been worked nearly continuously since 2005. In 2004 an Oil & Gas field inspector discovered a partial skeleton of a champsosaur (a crocodile-looking reptile) on Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation property. In cooperation with the Foundation, the NDGS crew opened up a small quarry in the Paleocene rocks which contain remains from various swamp creatures like crocodiles, fish, turtles, lizards, salamanders, trees, clams, snails, and more. The site is a good example of what western North Dakota would have looked like 60 million years ago, after the extinction of the dinosaurs.



Participants working the quarry



A large crocodile coprolite (poop)



We can get pretty close to the site with our van, so the remaining walk is quite short. There will be a porta-potty set up “upstairs” where we park the vehicles, and a shade tent “downstairs” closer to where we dig. We need the sunlight to dry out the site and to make the fossils easier to spot – so the shade tent is NOT set up directly over where we dig. It is a short walk away, with folding chairs.

Right: Shoveling overburden off from the lower quarry layer.



This is a quarry site, so after a brief orientation on what is expected, participants can find their own spot and get right to digging. Some shoveling and pickaxe work may be necessary. If it rains and we cannot dig, your tickets will be refunded. Rain turns the road and site into soup – if we cannot drive up the hill, the day will be cancelled.



Rain turns the road to soup, and the site back into a lake.



A small fossil, plastered.



A chamosaur jaw, still mostly buried.