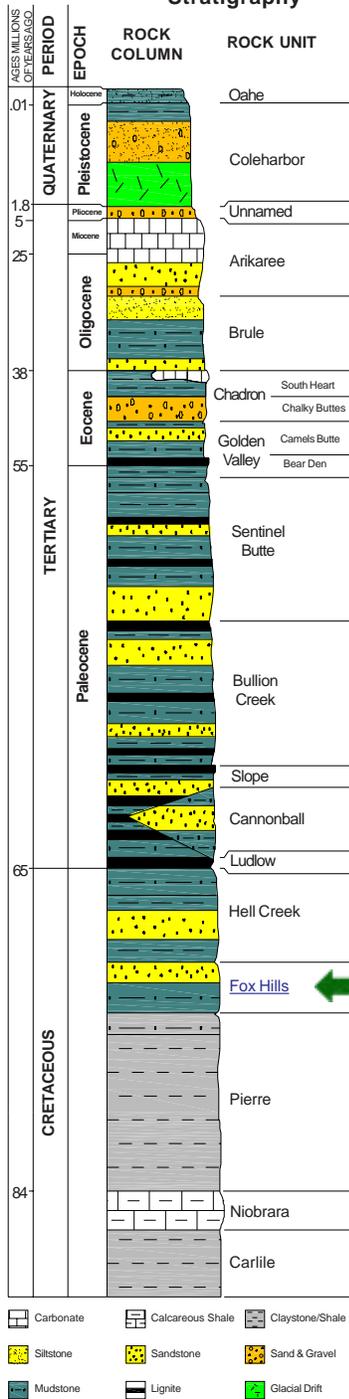
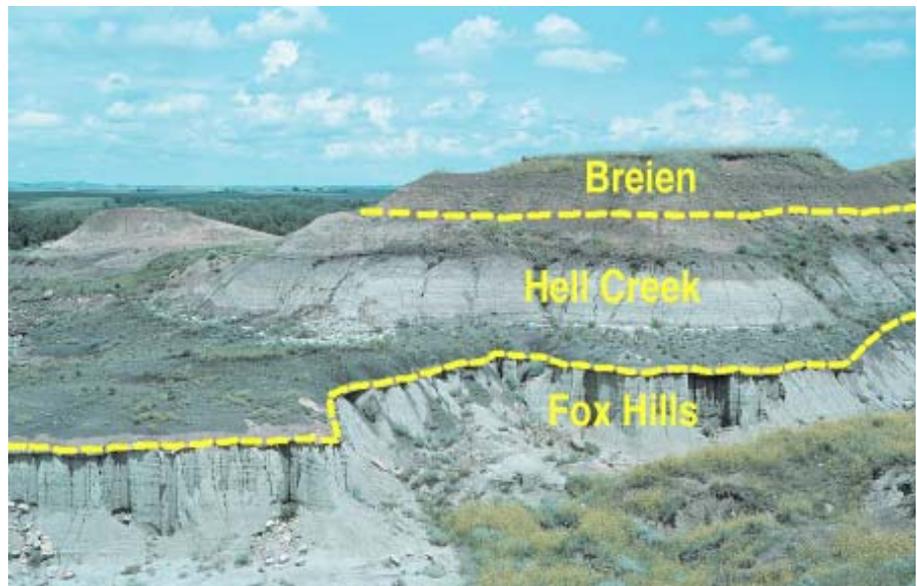


## North Dakota Stratigraphy



## NORTH DAKOTA'S THE HELL CREEK DELTA

During the Cretaceous, about 65 million years ago, a well drained lowland corridor existed between the rising Rocky Mountains and the Western Interior Seaway to the east. Sediments eroded from the Rocky Mountains were carried to this western North Dakota lowland by rivers and streams and were deposited in a huge delta, the Hell Creek Delta. These sediments, now turned into sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone, are called the Hell Creek Formation. Woodlands, ponds, and swamps that existed on this subtropical, deltaic coastal plain provided habitats for many kinds of exotic plants and animals including several species of dinosaurs such as *Triceratops* and *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Freshwater fishes, salamanders, lizards, turtles, crocodiles, birds, snails, clams and small mammals coexisted with the dinosaurs. Fossils of animals, including sharks, rays, and mosasaurs (large marine lizards) that inhabited shallow marine waters adjacent to the delta are found in the [Fox Hills](#) Formation and Breien Member of the Hell Creek Formation. The species of dinosaurs that existed at this time were the last dinosaurs to ever live.



Outcrop in Sioux County showing the [Fox Hills](#) Formation (Cretaceous) overlain by the Hell Creek Formation (Cretaceous). The marine Breien Member of the Hell Creek Formation caps the hill. Outcrop is 35 m thick. View is to the northeast.