

Dickinson Area Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where do we meet?

A: We meet in two places - if you wish to caravan with us to Dickinson, then we meet outside the Bismarck Heritage Center. If you're closer to Dickinson, we will meet you there at a specific gas station. Exact time and location will be sent out closer to the dig date.

Q: Can I take pictures?

A: Please do! We would love if you would be willing to share them with us as well, or tag us on social media @NDGSPaleo (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

Q: How strenuous is this dig?

A: This can vary, depending on the location we go to for the day. Be prepared for a lot of prospecting (hiking), and not a lot of sitting. We tend to be fairly exposed to the elements on all of our locations.

Q: If I get too hot, is there any shade?

A: No, unless you get lucky and find a random tree or rock outcrop. Your best bet is to stay hydrated and wear a good hat.

Q: What should I bring?

A: Please bring more water than you think you will need – it tends to get hot, and we don't want people becoming dehydrated. You will also need to pack your own lunch. Hat, sunglasses, and of course a camera. We will provide all the tools you will be using throughout the day. We ask that you not bring a giant cooler along, since you would need to haul it all the way to the site and back. We pack out what we pack in, so please take all garbage back with you. No littering!

Q: What types of fossils are we finding?

A: This depends on what location we go to for the day, which in turn depends on the weather. One site has a plethora of fossil leaves. Another has numerous crocodile remains. One site is known for 30 million year old mammals (*Mesohippus* (three-toed horse), *Dinictus* (cat-like nimravid), *Subhyracodon* (hornless rhino), etc.). Some have a mix of everything! The area used to resemble a savanna; vast plains with pockets of water. Grazing animals and their predators dotting the landscape.

Q: Wow! We can find a whole rhino?!

A: While it's possible to find a whole animal, most of what we are finding are parts and pieces. Imagine creatures dying in a river, sinking down, being eaten, walked by, disturbed - we find lots of single elements. A crocodile tooth here. A *Mesohippus* leg there. A rib from a turtle, or a skull from a rhino.

Q: Can we keep the fossils we find?

A: No – all fossils found will return to the State Fossil Collection in Bismarck, ND. Most of the land we search on is State, Federal, or Foundation land (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Teddy Roosevelt Medora Foundation, etc.), and the NDGS curates whatever is found. Feel free to take photos of whatever you find however! If you work on taking out a specific bone, let us know if you want to be contacted with photos of the finished product. This may be weeks, months, or even years later - so please be patient! Our To-Do list is constantly fluctuating.

Q: Is there a restroom?

A: No – we will be removed from any modern conveniences. Our standard is to hike a distance away from others, and find a comfortable spot.

Q: Will my cell phone work?

A: Maybe – the signal varies in the area, but we ask that as courtesy to the other diggers, if you are going to use your phone to chat, please head off site. It tends to get very distracting.

Q: Can I smoke?

A: Yes, but just like the cell phone use, as courtesy to the other diggers, we ask that you smoke off site. Please take your cigarette butts with you as well – we want to make sure we keep the area clean.

Q: I'm from out of town – where's a good place to stay?

A: Bismarck and Dickinson offer a plethora of hotels, motels, and the like – too many to list.

Q: Where can I find some grub around here?

A: Bismarck itself has exploded with food options. Anything from salad to steak, Japanese, Italian, Thai, fast food, etc. Dickinson also has a number of great pizza, bbq, and Thai restaurants. Just make sure to pack a lunch for the dig itself, since we will be out of range for pizza delivery.