

Medora - Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where do we meet?

A: We will be meeting in the Life Skills Center – specific time will be sent out in an e-mail closer to the dig date. You are welcome to eat breakfast at the buffet, or before you come – regardless, we will be showing a short PowerPoint about the site at that time.

Q: Can I take pictures?

A: Please do! We would love if you would be willing to share them with us as well. We enjoy social media posts, and can be tagged @NDGSpaleo (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

Q: How strenuous is this dig?

A: We lovingly call Medora our frou-frou dig. We drive nearly up to the site, with very little hiking. This is a quarry site, meaning we return year after year to the same location to sit and dig. No prospecting (wandering the hillsides) needed. You may be asked to do a little shovel or pickaxe work, but not a lot.

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

A: We do indeed have a shade tent, and chairs. There is not shade on site for multiple reasons: as the sun shifts, we would need to shift the shade; in order to anchor the shade, we would risk damaging fossils still under ground.

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 there will not be a lot of extra room in the passenger van. 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: Medora was a very swamp-like environment 55 million years ago. We find anything from crocodile bones, fish, salamanders, turtles, champsosaurs, bald cypress branches and cones, snails, clams, mammals, and birds.

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

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 swamp, sinking down, being eaten, walked by, disturbed - we find lots of single elements. A crocodile tooth here. A gar-pike jaw there. A rib from a turtle.

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!

Q: Is there a restroom?

A: Yes! Medora is one of the few sites we work that has a port-a-potty.

Q: Will my cell phone work?

A: Yes, there is good signal 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 back to where we park the vehicles. 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 back where we park the vehicles. 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: There are numerous places in Medora. Some of them include:

- Campground
- Roughrider Hotel
- Red Trail RV campground
- AmericInn
- Bunkhouse

Q: Where can I find some grub around here?

A: There are numerous places in Medora to eat. Some of them include:

- Boots Bar & Grill
- Elkhorn Café
- Cowboy Café
- Roughrider
- Missouri River Saloon & Dining Room