

2018 Public Fossil Digs

We are gearing up for another summer of public fossil digs, which will have a number of opportunities for individuals and families to come experience North Dakota's prehistoric past. Many people have fossil digs on their bucket list – and this is a great way to either cross it off, or add it year after year. Budget constraints have resulted in cutbacks to the number of public dig locations we will offer in the summer of 2018, but we are trying to make up for that with more opportunities close to Bismarck. Due to those same budget issues, there will be a small cost associated with each of the digs offered this year. Registration for the 2018 dig season begins on February 1st, 2018 and usually fills up fast!

All digs accommodate 14 participants per day. We offer two types of dig experiences: full day digs and half day family digs. For full day digs the minimum age is 13 years, participants under 18 must have an accompanying adult, and each adult may accompany up to two children under the age of 17. Family days are divided into a morning and an afternoon session, so you can sign up for which ever best fits your schedule. Family digs are focused on the kids, so the following rules apply: the minimum age is lowered to 10; you must have someone under the age of 18 in your group to sign up; all groups are limited to half days only; and a maximum of two children under the age of 17 are allowed per adult.

Finally, while dinosaurs may be the first thing that comes to mind when you think "fossil dig," many of our digs are not dinosaur oriented. Only the Bismarck Area dig may contain dinosaurs. For more information on these digs, please visit <https://www.dmr.nd.gov/ndfossil/digs/>

Dickinson Area:

June 25-29, 2018; \$10 per person, per day fee.

This dig focuses on 30- to 40-million-year-old mammal sites and involves prospecting for new fossils, so bring your hiking boots. We meet in Dickinson each day and caravan out to the dig site. If the weather does not cooperate, we will have spaces for people back in our paleontology lab in Bismarck to work on fossil preparation and cleaning. You must provide your own transportation, food, and lodging (if needed), but all tools for the day will be provided.

Medora:

July 12-15, 2018; \$10 per person, per day fee.

After non-avian dinosaurs went extinct 66 million years ago, crocodiles became the dominant predator in North Dakota, and the environment turned swampy. In Medora, we will be digging in Sentinel Butte Formation rocks, 55-60 million years old. This North Dakota everglades environment

includes a variety of swamp denizens, including crocodiles, champsosaurs, giant salamanders, fish, clams, snails, birds, mammals, and more. The rugged badlands in the nearby Theodore Roosevelt National



Park may also be a draw for those in your party not interested in digging in the dirt. You will be staying in one spot working at an established fossil quarry, so no hiking will be required. Family day will be on Saturday, July 14th. Transportation between the dig site and Medora will be provided. You must provide your own food, water, and lodging (if needed). A shade tent, port-a-potty, and all tools needed for the day will be provided.



Bismarck Area:

July 19-21, 23-28, 2018; \$10 per person, per day fee.

We will be working at a handful of sites on the bluffs overlooking the Missouri River that preserve a plethora of Hell Creek creatures. Teeth from *Tyrannosaurus*, bones from *Triceratops* and *Edmontosaurus*, plus crocodiles and other creatures abound. This experience will include a combination of hiking around to discover new fossils and sitting and working to excavate at known sites depending on how the week goes. If the weather does not cooperate, we will have spaces for people back in our paleontology lab in Bismarck to work on fossil preparation and cleaning.

Transportation between the dig site and Bismarck will be provided. You must provide your own food, water, and lodging (if needed), but all tools for the day will be provided.



Pembina Gorge:

August 7-11, 2018; \$89 per person, per day fee.

We will be returning once again to the beautifully scenic Pembina Gorge in our ongoing search for sea monsters. This Pierre Formation locality is 80 million years old and holds some of the oldest surface rocks in North Dakota. This was a time when the state was covered by the Western Interior Seaway, and was home to large swimming reptiles called mosasaurs, giant squid, sea turtles, aquatic birds, large (and small) fish, snails, clams, and more. In previous years we found two partial mosasaur skeletons – and last summer we started on a third. Family day will be on Saturday, August 11th. Transportation between the dig site and Frostfire Ski Lodge near Walhalla, a shade tent, food, water, port-a-potty, a souvenir, and all tools needed for the day will be provided.

