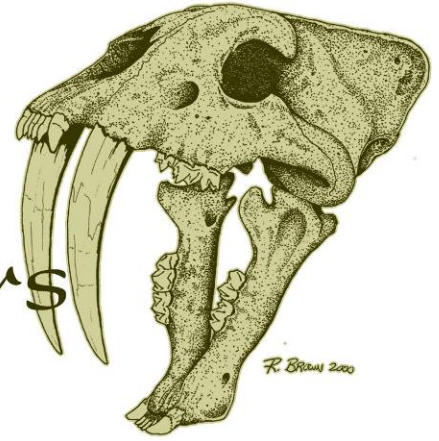


NEWS

Florida Fossil Hunters



Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc. dba/ Florida Fossil Hunters
Volume 21, Number 2

February 2011

From the Shark Room

I'd like to start with a mammoth-sized "THANK YOU" to all of the Florida Museum of Natural History personnel: Dr. Richard Hulbert, Collections Manager of Vertebrate Paleontology, Dr. Hongshan Wang, Collections Manager of Paleobotany and Palynology, and Alex Kittle, Curatorial Asst. for Invertebrate Paleontology. These professionals took time out of their day to meet us at Dickinson Hall for a fantastic "behind the scenes" tour.

We had an unexpected crowd of 48 members show up, some who had never been - nor even had heard of - this wondrous place. After greeting us, we separated into 3 groups, taking turns in each area.

Dr. Hulbert showed the prep-lab of the Vertebrate area and explained how fossils came in and what had to be done to prepare them for display in the museum or for use as educational specimens. He took us down aisles of shelves filled with trays of small bones, skulls (some partial, some whole), tusks, jaws, etc. Some specimens were so huge they took up several sections. Educational replicas peered down at us from the top shelves as we drooled and took pictures.

Dr. Hongshan Wang had a beautiful collection of fossil plants, flowers, seeds, and wood, from all over the world and dating from the Devonian to recent times, laid out on a huge table. He even had an ancient tiny fossilized flower set up in the microscope that we could all look at. He did a great job explaining how the plants were fossilized.

Alex Kittle took us on the tour of the Invertebrate section since Roger Portell, the Collections Manager, was in Cuba doing field work. Alex described the work being done on individual specimens, the collections that have been recently donated that they are cataloging, and showed us some of the shelves of Florida fossil ammonoids, corals, shells, crabs, etc. There was one particular grouping of echinoids, half in matrix, with their spines still intact that was breathtaking.

After the tour, many of us visited Powell Hall where the public exhibits are. As I've told you before, if you and your family have never been to the Museum....or if it's been a few years since you've seen it....you should make the trip to Gainesville. Anyone interested in Natural Science will be awed by what the Museum has to offer.

From the responses we've received, the trip was a huge success. Thank you to all who attended, to those who made the arrangements, and to our friends in Gainesville.

Russell Brown, President

Coming Events

UPCOMING MEETINGS at the Orlando Science Center

SUNDAY

February 20th, 2011

2:00pm Kids Fossil Blast

3:00pm Club Meeting

See page 2 for more info

Tuesday, March 8th

Next Board Meeting - 7 pm

Saturday, March 19, 2011

Orlando Science Center

Fossil Fest

Saturday, April 16, 2011

2:00pm Kids Fossil Blast

3:00pm Club Meeting

For more info...

www.floridafossilhunter.com

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Fragments | 2 |
| Kids Fossil Blast | 2 |
| Field Trips | 3 |
| Venture to Vulcan | 4 |
| Comments from our January Field Trip | 5 |
| Shows and Festivals | 5 |
| Dinosaur Discoveries Abound..... | 6 |
| Contacts and Membership Info | 7 |
| Calendar | 8 |

Looking forward...

February Mtg
Sunday,
February 20th
Date Change

February Field Trip
February 12th
Vulcan Mine
Page 2 more info

March Mtg
March 19, 2011
OSC Fossil Fest
Page 2 more info

Florida Fossil Hunters News

Fragments

Orlando Science Center's Fossil Fest 2011

March 19th, 12 noon to 4 pm

Calling for members to volunteer...this is your opportunity to bring the excitement of fossils and Florida's past to the public through our partnership with the Orlando Science Center.

We plan on having several educational stations/exhibits - the more, the merrier. Some displays are already in the cases there at the Orlando Science Center and members will be bringing additional fossils and replicas from their collections as well. Those of you who would like to bring items to display, contact us as soon as possible so we can reserve a table for you.

Even if you don't want to bring display items, we need volunteers who can help at the different displays to talk with guests and answer their questions. We plan on having different themes at different tables: shells & corals, marine mammals, sharks, carnivores, reptiles, other mammals, etc.

We've authorized Dave Dunaway to pay double fossil bucks for volunteers. With your help, we can make this year's event successful and have fun at the same time.

Thank you.

Russell & Bonnie | bjrb48@netzero.com | 352-429-1058

Members Welcome

Next Board Meeting - Tuesday, March 8th, 7 pm
Dave Dunaway's house, 600 Ferne, Longwood
407-493-4253

If you've ever wondered what a Board meeting is like or thought of becoming a Board member but were unsure what it entails....or maybe you have a great idea or would just like to have some input in the club's plans for the future...then please feel free to come to the Board meeting. We could really use some new perspectives. Thanks. Russell Brown

FPS Spring Meeting and Dig

The Florida Paleontological Society has scheduled the spring weekend event for April 9th through 10th. It will include a fossil hunting trip to a shell pit in Bradenton that has yielded some really good specimens...even some vertebrate fossils. It's a great opportunity to socialize with folks throughout the state that are just as intrigued by fossils and the past as we are. If you're not a member of FPS, visit www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fps for more info.

Piece on the Peace

The water may be cold but it's mostly low enough to hunt for fossils. Be sure to check the water level via the link on our website before you go.

FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20th

Our meeting is on **Sunday this month**... the Kids' Fossil Blast is at 2 pm and the regular meeting is at 3 pm.

We'll have a display day at the meeting....bring your interesting, unique or just favorite fossils and or minerals to share with everyone.

We'll have a volunteer sign-up sheet for the March 19th Fossil Fest at the Orlando Science Center as well as going over plans for that day...and the rest of the year.

The Orlando Science Center has changed their policy on parking in the garage. We have to pay \$5 for parking if we are not members of OSC. There is plenty of free parking at street level near the actual Science Center Building. You can enter on Level 1 at the cafeteria and go up to the meeting.

Mutant Planet

The Science Channel has been running a series of programs on unique examples of the power of evolution and the forces (including plate tectonics) that shaped the animals and plants. There are 6 episodes: New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Africa's Rift Valley, Madagascar, and Japan. Keep an eye out for reruns of these fascinating shows.

Dino Feathers

The National Geographic channel had a great episode of their Naked Science series titled "Dinomorphosis". Hopefully they will rerun it or you can download the episode. It's a great example of fossil detective work and very enlightening. Their February magazine issue also has an article on bird and dinosaur feathers.

Kids' Fossil Blast

Ever wonder why some fossil wood is "petrified" and some is not? Why some deposits have detailed fossils of fishes and other areas have a few scattered teeth? Why things fossilize at all???

We will try to find the answers to these questions and more at our Kids' Fossil Blast meeting on **Sunday, February 20th, at 2 pm.**

Future Kids' meetings are scheduled for April 16th and June 18th. For more info, email Bonnie at bjrb48@netzero.com or call 352-429-1058.

Field Trips

Vulcan Mine Field Trip

February's trip to the mine will be on Saturday, February 12th and will be led by Russell Brown & Bonnie Cronin. To sign up email Bonnie at bjrb48@netzero.com or call her at 352-429-1058 before 8 pm. Cell phone number for the day of the trip ONLY is 321-279-2592. This is one of the few places where kids are allowed in to fossil hunt. Be sure to stay with them since there are steep cliffs, sharp rocks, and small sinkholes.

*You **MUST** be a member of the club for insurance purposes to participate in this field trip.*

Meet on the driveway loop near the entrance to the Mine by 8:30am to sign releases before we are escorted into the mine around 9 am. We get to drive our vehicles in so you can have your coolers, snacks, and equipment handy while you hunt. They usually allow us to dig until noon and sometimes people can stay till 2pm.

All of the participants **MUST** be escorted into and out of the mine. Do not leave on your own since it is easy to become lost.

Directions: The trip will take approximately 2 hours from Orlando to Vulcan Mine. Be sure to allow for extra time to stop at a restroom before you get there. **THERE ARE NO RESTROOM FACILITIES AT VULCAN**, other than the boulders and the hills.

From Orlando take Hwy. 50 west (or the 408 west to the Fl. Turnpike, take exit 272 and then continue west on Hwy. 50) to Brooksville. Follow 50A/98 North through Brooksville and turn right on Ponce De Leon Blvd. (Hwy 98 North). Go approximately 10 miles. Vulcan/Cemex will be on your left. The address is 16313 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Brooksville, for those of you who want to download a map.

IF you follow the truck route for Hwy. 50, you have to turn right onto 41, and then take the fork to the left to hook up with Ponce De Leon Blvd/98. There are several fast food places on 41 where you can take advantage of the bathroom facilities before getting to Vulcan. Be sure **NOT** to keep following 41 north. You want to take 98 north from Brooksville.

This is mostly surface collecting with occasionally a little digging to pry out a specimen. Bring a small trowel or screwdriver or rock hammer, and a bucket to put your fossils and rocks into. You may want to bring small containers and tissue for fragile fossils.

Wear a hat, sturdy shoes, long pants (some of the rocks are sharp), and sunscreen. Bring lots of water and/or drinks and some snacks or lunch to eat.

We find mostly echinoids and sometimes sea urchins, pieces of bone, or other fossils are found. We also find chert rocks. This is the material that the Indians used to make their arrowheads and tools.

Ruck's Pit Dig, Ft. Drum

When: Saturday, February 26th,
arrive 7 am to 9 am

Cost: \$30 per person (\$20 per person if more than 20 people participate)

If you've never collected the incredible calcite crystals in fossil shells before, here is your opportunity. Fred Hendershot of the Tampa Bay Fossil Club has invited our members to participate in the dig they've scheduled.

You are allowed one large landscape piece. i.e. coral, clams & crystals in matrix, etc. and one 5 gal bucket full of smaller finds per person.

Bring: a hose nozzle, a "y" connection with some more hoses if you want to share a hose with someone. Early birds get access to the hoses. Rock hammers, bucket, tissue or something to wrap fragile pieces in. Of course, bring the usual water, drinks, food, hat, sunscreen. Shoes/clothes to change into after you get yours muddy. They have upgraded the facilities and now have restrooms!

Directions: From Orlando, take the Florida Turnpike (or 441) south to Yeehaw Junction. From there take 441 south to Ft. Drum. There will be a convenience store on your right. Soon after that, turn left onto 304th Street, go 3 miles and Ruck's Pit Crystal Mine will be on the left.

Venture to Vulcan...

*“Why did you climb the mountain, when you knew it was certain death?
I didn't go there to die, I went there to live.”*

- Reinhold Messner, Everest

This was my first excursion to the Vulcan Mine in Brooksville. I had heard a lot about the site, notably the lack of bathrooms and vertebrate material and had kept it firmly “pencilled-in” on my list of things to do.

Around the time of our Christmas party, Bonnie asked me to lead the trip. Not just go, but lead the expedition. It would be a chance to join the ranks of Roy Chapman Andrews, Luis Chiappe, and that other guy!

So here's where *that* went wrong...

In today's society, you can order groceries on the internet and have them delivered. Your cell phone can remotely start your car, and if you buy a cup of coffee in Orlando, your high school sweetheart in Illinois will hear about it and “like it.” We've made a great many advancements, but as the earliest philosophers and 1980's stand up comics will tell you: Men still don't ask for directions.

When a computer picks a map, it goes by the shortest possible route—but rarely does it account for little things like washed out roads, fallen road signs or spontaneous repavings of the streets for an entire rural town.

On the plus side – Boiled P-Nuts.

So, due to unforeseen circumstances, my 1h ,45m sunrise cruise to Bone Valley became a 3hr, 20m trek akin to the Oregon trail. The fearless leader was the last one to show up!

Thankfully, all of our participants were welcomed in to the mine on time and happily begin digging. When I arrived, I met with Alan, a miner at the Vulcan property. While our families and friends were chipping away at chert and clay, Alan was showing me some of the great finds that had been recovered.

I gently picked through modest case of prehistoric sea urchins, shark's teeth and stingray plates, their barbs and points still surprisingly sharp. We talked about how the fossils that are recovered here are so dense and hardy because of all the phosphorus in the ground. Adding phosphorous (found in a very high concentration in this

part of Florida) to calcium (found in teeth and bones) makes the thing rock solid, preserving much more intricate detail than is found in river or sand digs.

As I drove in, I gazed in awe at the massive, 300-foot walls of rock and mineral that surrounded us on all sides. Something of a small ecosystem had formed in the base of this human-engineered crater, with plants, water, and perhaps even animals thriving in a lush, isolated world of fossils and firma.

“...a small ecosystem had formed in the base of this human-engineered crater, with plants, water, and perhaps even animals thriving in a lush, isolated world of fossils and firma.”

The walls around us reminded me of the mountain digs in Wyoming, with clear striations and definitive markings of the layers of Florida's time. You could have written the dates on the rocks themselves!

After encountering a number of unnecessary-but-easily avoidable hazards in the quarry—including quicksand, impassible mountains and immense rivers, we set our sights upon a destination in the farthest reach of the pit: the Black Mountain, where Alan had mentioned a Saber cat jaw was recovered.

At the end of our dig day, we returned with some beautiful calcite that deceptively resembles petrified wood, some incredibly well preserved marine material, some mysteriously colored stones, and memories which will last us years to come.

If you feel like I've left out the important details of the trip, like the digging or the many discoveries that awaited us, then I'm afraid you're mistaken. You simply haven't written that part yet. But you will, if you join us next time.

Happy Hunting
- Jimmy Waldron



Comments on the Dickinson Hall tour from our members:

"I felt especially lucky to be able to view the collections at Dickinson Hall. I really appreciated that the scientists there took their time to show us around and talk with us. I learned a lot. The variety of different creatures and the size of some of them was amazing to see.

Then the museum! My whole family loved it and we hope to go back again. I am also planning to take my class there." J.A.

"We appreciated the lab opening for our group to come and enjoy. The presenters were informative and eager to answer questions in an engaging manner from adults and children alike. It was exciting for the kids to get a behind-the-scenes look at a university research lab, and to see first hand some of what a researcher's job is.

After taking a tour of the campus (our 16 yr old is beginning to look at colleges), we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves at the Museum of Natural History. We all want to return." H.W.

"We had a wonderful time. It truly was a privilege to meet the experts and see their collections. I am beyond thrilled that our boys were allowed to come along. Know that the seeds of knowledge are being planted! Thank you over and over again. This club is so cool!" A.P.

Shows, Festivals, etc...

Tampa Bay Fossil Fest 2011 Fossil and Mineral Show

Saturday, March 12th, 9 am to 6 pm
Sunday, March, 13th, 10 am to 4 pm

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds, near the intersection of I-4 and Hwy. 301, just east of Tampa. Enter via the gate on Martin Luther King Blvd. Parking is \$5 per car, \$10 per RV.

What's there: Displays and vendors with fossils, minerals, gems, artifacts, and shells. Kids' games, kids' fossil mine, raffles, door prizes, silent auction, workshops

Admission \$3 per person; children 12 and under get in free. For more info go to www.tampabayfossilclub.com.

Venice Shark Tooth Festival

Friday, April 8th, 4 pm to 9 pm
Saturday, April 9th, 10 am to 9 pm
Sunday, April 10th, 10 am to 5 pm

Where: Venice Municipal Airport festival grounds on Airport Ave. across from Sharkey's Pier. From Sarasota, take Rt. 41 south to Rt. 41 Bypass in Venice. Look for signs along the Bypass directing you to the Municipal Airport festival grounds.

What's there: Fossil.. especially fossil shark teeth...vendors, arts & crafts, food vendors, entertainment, and kids' activities.....and then you can go to the beach and look for fossils, too.

Admission is \$3 per person. Children 12 and under get in free. Parking is free.

Suncoast Gem and Mineral Show

Friday, March 4th, 10 am to 6 pm
Saturday, March 5th, 10 am to 6 pm
Sunday, March 6th, 10 am to 5 pm

Where: Minnreg Bldg, 6340 126th Ave., N., Largo, FL 33773

For more info, check out their website www.sgams.com

Central Brevard Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show

Saturday & Sunday,
February 12th & 13th, 10 am to 5 pm
Admission: Adults \$3

Kiwanis Island Park, Merritt Island (north side of 520 between Merritt Sq. Mall & Walmart)
For more info, go to www.BrevardGems.com

Dinosaur Discoveries **Abound**

The Early Generalists:

A new fossil bed has been discovered in South America that has been precisely dated to 230 million years ago, thanks to periodic eruptions of volcanos in that area of then continent of Pangea. It contained the fossils of a small creature, estimated to weigh about 10 lbs., dubbed Eodromaeus, Dawn Runner, that was an early member of the T. Rex family. It lived alongside another small plant-eating dinosaur named Eoraptor. Eoraptor's descendents would eventually include the huge sauropods. At this point in history, there were more reptiles of other kinds than of dinosaurs so this site opens a window into the stretch of time that encompassed the beginning of the dinosaurs and their slow rise to dominance.

For more info, see the full article at:

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110113141611.htm



The Later Specialist:

Then the Cretaceous deposits in China have given us a new weird little dinosaur, Linhenykus monodactylus, that was a couple feet tall, and had only one finger on each upper appendage. It's theorized that it used the finger to dig into insect nests.

For more info, see the full article at:

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110124151717.htm



The Survivors:

The fossil bone of a Hadrosaur found in New Mexico has been dated with a new dating method called U-Pb (uranium-lead). It has been determined that this particular dinosaur lived 700,000 years AFTER the asteroid impact/extinction event. This will cause a rethinking of the extinction processes of the dinosaur.

For more info, see the full article at:

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110127141707.htm



Florida Fossil Hunters

is a fun and educational group whose goal is to further our understanding of the prehistory of Florida. We encourage family participation and welcome explorers of all ages.

Membership is \$17 per year. Other household members may be included at no charge.

Meetings are usually held on the third Saturday of the month but may vary with club activities. Check the website for the date and location of the next meeting or call one of the officers.

Officers:

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| President | Russell Brown | (352) 429-1058 |
| Vice President | Dave Dunaway | (407) 493-4253 |
| Secretary | | |
| Treasurer | Sara Morey | (407) 353-8675 |

Chairs:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Education | Melissa Cole | (407) 834-5615 |
| Field Trips | | |
| Fossil Fair | Valerie First | (407) 699-9274 |
| Fossil Auctions | Dave Dunaway | (407) 493-4253 |
| Fossil Bucks | Dave Dunaway | (407) 493-4253 |
| Fossil Lotto | Ed Metrin | (407) 321-7462 |
| Auctioneer | Roy Singer | (407) 645-0200 |
| Historian | Valerie First | (407) 699-9274 |
| Librarian | Kathy Munroe | (407) 301-6773 |
| Membership | Bonnie Cronin | (352) 429-1058 |
| Newsletter | Bonnie Cronin | (352) 429-1058 |
| | Elise Cronin-Hurley | (407) 929-6297 |
| Photography | John Heinsen | (407) 291-7672 |
| Webmaster | Elise Cronin-Hurley | (407) 929-6297 |
| | elise@liseydreams.com | |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Board of | Paul Bordenkircher | (407) 687-3843 |
| Directors: | Melissa Cole | (407) 834-5615 |
| | Ed Metrin | (407) 321-7462 |
| | John Jelks | (407) 568-5558 |

Membership Application

Names: _____

Associate Members: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

____ New ____ Renewal

Please list any interests, experience, talents or just plain enthusiasm, which you would like to offer to the club:

Membership is \$17 per year. Our membership year runs from January to December. All renewals are done in December and January.

Please make your checks payable to:

Florida Fossil Hunters
Post Office Box 540404
Orlando, Florida 32854-0404

Associate members are people in the same household, included at no extra charge, 2 adult votes per household.

Newsletter Policy

Articles must be submitted by the first of the month to be included in that month's newsletter. These can be mailed to the above Post Office Box or e-mailed to: elise@liseydreams.com. Articles can be sent as text in the e-mail or in Microsoft Word files (*.doc).

Please note in subject of email 'FFH'.

Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc.
dba/ Florida Fossil Hunters

Florida Fossil Hunters News

Florida Fossil Hunters Mark Your Calendar

See page 2-5 for more information on events.

Saturday, February 12th
Vulcan Mine

February 12th & 13th
Central Brevard Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show

**February MTG -
SUNDAY, February 20th**

2:00pm Kids Fossil Blast
3:00pm Club Meeting
See pg 2 for more info

Saturday, February 26th
Ruck's Pit Dig, Ft. Drum Field Trip

March 4 - 6th
Suncoast Gem and Mineral Show

Tuesday, March 8th, Next Board Meeting - 7 pm

March 12 and 13th
24th Annual Tampa Bay Fossilfest, pg 2

Saturday, March 19th
Orlando Science Center Fossil Fest, pg 2

April 8 -10th
FPS Weekend, pg 3

April 8 - 10th
Venice Shark Tooth Festival

April 16, 2011
2:00pm Kids Fossil Blast
3:00pm Club Meeting

Be Green

Email Bonnie at bjrb48@netzero.com to receive the newsletter via email.



Join Our Facebook group, Search:

[Florida Fossil Hunters](#)

TIME TO RENEW
your Florida Fossil Hunters
2010 Membership.

Visit us online at www.floridafossilhunters.com

Articles and comments should be sent to: elise@liseydreams.com

Florida Fossil Hunters

Post Office Box 540404

Orlando, Florida 32854-040



Florida Fossil Hunters News