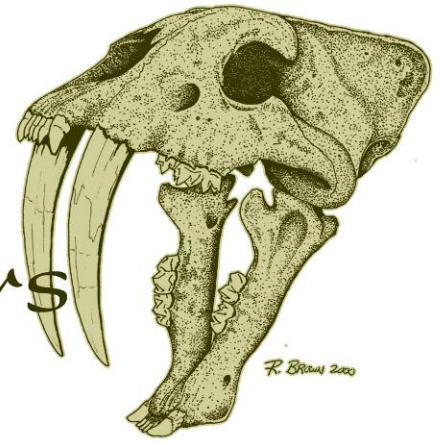


NEWS

Florida Fossil Hunters

Volume 20, Number 9

October 2010



Message from the President

We're entering my favorite season of the year. Autumn is the time when all the best finds from the summer dig season are prepped and polished and presented to the world with as much excitement and mystery as you felt the first time you saw the trailer for *Inception*. "What is this thing," we say to ourselves, "and it sure looks cool."

Take for example the not-at-all overencumbered *Kosmocerotops*, a four-legged beast whose fifteen curved horns served as the prehistoric version of owning a cherry-red Ferrari AND an Ed Hardy T-shirt. It's one of at least six new species of dinosaur named this year alone. (See more about this bizarre dino inside!)

I'm also excited because this is one of the times each year when we bring our message to the masses! You may be reading this for the first time at the 19th Annual **Florida Fossil Hunters Fossil, Gem & Mineral Show!** If so, you've probably already seen the incredible showing from all of our vendors and organizers. This is but a small piece of educational mission of the **Florida Fossil Hunters**. We want everyone to know that so long as they have a desire for knowledge, plus the will to seek it out (and it has to do with ancient dead things) then they are paleontologists, and they contribute to the future by committing to the past.

This year makes us feel particularly squishy inside, because October 13th is the dawn of a new national holiday: **It's National Fossil Day!** <http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/> Fossils discovered on the nation's public lands preserve ancient life from all major eras of Earth's history. Museums and parks from around the country are joining in on this day, celebrating the joy and wonder of bones turning to rocks, and animals turning into real estate.

If you are a guest of our event and have not considered joining us before today, then I urge you to look around, and see the glowing enjoyment on the faces of the young and old around you. Feel the energy of these ordinary folks bound by an extraordinary interest. If you are having a good time today, then join us, become a Fossil Hunter and let the excitement you feel today continue throughout the year.

Our next meeting date and time will be November 20th at 3:00 PM at Orlando Science Center. We'll have the pleasure of Mr. Chris Delorey of the Brevard Zoo, who has something really enticing planned for us. The meeting is preceded by a 1-hour Kid's Blast! Which introduces young paleo's (See above) to some of the freakiest fossilized creatures that ever called Florida home.

Happy Hunting!
Jimmy Waldron, President
Florida Fossil Hunters

Coming Events

MEETINGS SATURDAY

at the Orlando Science Center

FFH 2010 Fossil Fair

October 9th and 10th

See Page 3 and 4 for all the details.

November 20th, 2010

2:00pm Kids' Fossil Blast

3:00pm Club Meeting

For more info...

www.floridafossilhunter.com

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Fragments

Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society Sale

A member of the Society's collection, amassed over 40 years, of minerals and fossils is going to be offered for sale on November 12th through the 14th from 9 am to 4 pm, at 6936 - 40th Avenue West, St. Petersburg, FL. This collection is being offered by invitation only to rock club and fossil club members. *This is not a garage sale.*

It includes minerals, agatized coral, petrified wood, tumbled stones, slabs, fossils, etc. For more information, contact Sue Hazelden at sujagems1@aol.com or 727-321-5732.

Florida Museum of Natural History

A new exhibition opens on Nov. 13th, titled "Dugout Canoes: Paddling through the Americas". It features dugouts over time and includes the discovery of the 101 canoes at Newnans Lake near Gainesville.

The exhibit "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway" with Artist Ray Troll and Paleontologist Kirk Johnson will run from Feb 4th to Sept. 3, 2011. This exhibit combines some of the Florida Museum's paleontology specimens and the fossil-inspired artwork of celebrated artist Ray Troll to explore questions about evolution, extinction and early life on Earth.

You can find out more at www.flmnh.edu/exhibits

National Fossil Day, October 13th

National Fossil Day is a celebration organized to promote public awareness and stewardship of fossils, as well as foster a greater appreciation of their scientific and educational values.

For more info, go to

<http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/index.cfm>

You can also celebrate by taking your favorite fossil to lunch.

Kids' Fossil Blast

"Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam....."

Our next Fossil Blast on Saturday, November 20th, at 2pm at the Orlando Science Center, will explore the rise and spread of grasslands and how that changed the animals.

Kids Fossil Blast is a fun, hands-on way for kids mainly 4 through 14 (adults who are kids at heart are welcome, too) who want to learn more about fossils and the animals that left them. Each meeting we focus on a different type of fossil, animal, or group of animals using real fossils, replicas and printed materials. Our future Kids' Fossil Blasts will be on January 15th, March 19th, April 16th, and June 18th.

For more info, contact Bonnie Cronin @ bjrb48@netzero.com

Chris DeLory, November's Speaker

Chris DeLory, the Director of Education at Brevard Zoo, will be our speaker for the November 20th meeting. Chris is an avid fossil collector.....he was recently spotted arriving at an airport out West to participate in a dig there....., an expert in animals and their anatomy, as well as an advocate for education and conservation. He is sure to amaze us with his wealth of knowledge.

Be sure to check out his tables at our Fossil Fair.

Orlando Science Center

A new exhibit titled "Charlie and Kiwi's Evolutionary Adventure" opens October 2nd at the Science Center. It features the story of Charlie, whose curiosity leads to understanding how evolution works. While you're there at the Science Center, check out Valerie First's exhibit of hominid skulls, as well as Russell's whale fossils from Lulu Creek aka/ the Winter Garden Ditch.

December's Club Holiday Party/Auction

(This was supposed to run in September's newsletter but the editor goofed) August's meeting at Orlando Science Center was a great success, thanks to all who attended. We're always grateful to have a great guest speaker from the Florida Museum of Natural History. Looking forward to next year, we plan on having more speakers like Alex Hastings to come down and speak on their research.

During the business part of the meeting, there was discussion on the final price of having a December dinner/ auction catered at the Orlando Science Center. The cost would have been in the \$2,000 range. At the board meeting it had already been brought up that attendance may not be high enough to justify spending this much of the club's money on the dinner event. And they're right. If we only had about 20 or 30 club members show up, it wouldn't be smart spending. Even if we charged \$20 per person, it wouldn't defray the cost by much....and charging members for the dinner would probably further reduce the number attending.

So I sit here down-hearted to say that the Xmas dinner/ auction in the Hall of Fossils is no longer planned for December. I wanted to have a club function, there among the fossils we love so much, for the members who take time from their schedules to do club stuff...such as, fossils auctions, volunteering at Orlando Science Center, handling the club business, carrying our books, working on the Fossil Fair, holding meetings at their house, arranging programs for meetings, helping with field trips, etc. I wanted this to be a thank you for all their work.... not only for this year, but for all the club members that have stepped up to make this club what it is now.

This could have been an event like no other that we've had before and we certainly wouldn't do it every year..... maybe next year. - - Russell Brown

Be sure to check the membership table for the info Sara Morey has for alternate plans for the December meeting/ auction. We want your input.

Vulcan Mine Field

There will be a field trip to Vulcan Mine near Brooksville on Saturday, November 13th. Dave Dunaway will be the Trip Leader. 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: From Orlando take Hwy. 50 west to Brooksville. Follow Hwy. 50 through town. **Do NOT** take the bypass 50/truckers route. Turn right onto US 98 north and go approximately 9 to 10 miles. Vulcan will be on your left (There is a Cemex sign at the driveway). The address is 16313 Ponce De Leon Blvd., Brooksville, for those of you that want to download a map.

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.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the Fossil Fair, or you can call Dave Dunaway at 407-493-4253 to sign up or get additional information.

Piece on the Peace

River level was inching downward...until the latest tropical depression moved in. So we'll have to wait a little longer for water levels to get down to the 5 to 6 foot depth at Zolfo Springs gauge, so we can dig and sift again this year.

For those of you are unfamiliar with the Peace River, it is a treasure trove of fossils from the Miocene to the present. The river erodes the fossils out of the layers deposited and concentrates them in the river bed. You only have to find an area with gravel, dig and sift, and you will find fossils of the many animals that have lived here for the past millions of years.....horses, camels, tapirs,

Withlacoochee Field Trip

North Florida

Where: Withlacoochee River, near Jasper in North Florida

When: Saturday, October 23rd

Trip Leader: Shelley Zimmerman, 407-891-1260

Canoe or john boat required. They will put in and paddle to the collection site. Once there you can dive, snorkel or surface collect to find the agatized coral and they say there is a lot of it. You will also need a rock hammer to crack open the coral heads, buckets for collecting, food, water, insect repellent, sunscreen, hats, and the usual clothing for wet collecting: old gym shoes or dive boots, etc.

Motorcade will leave the Orlando area at 6:30 am and arrive at the site around 10 am. Call Shelley to sign up and get specific directions on where to meet. If you wish to spend the night up there, she recommended the Days Inn in Lake Park, GA.

Report on September Vulcan Field Trip

We were well cooked at Vulcan today. A small turnout for our club: Dave Dunaway and Mike Myers and his daughter Heather. There were no clouds and no breeze, so it was pretty bad. I think everyone left at 12:00. Just found the usual things. A few of us went to the gypsum hill because they are moving it and it may be gone by Nov.

About 11:00 am, a Disney bus arrived with some geologists in town for a convention. I guess Vulcan was one of their field trips. Two of the authors of "Roadside Geology of Florida" were in the group. The road down was pretty rutted, so the bus parked at the top and they walked down to look at the walls of the mine. I think they left right after us.

Kathy Munroe

sloths, armadillos, turtles, mammoths, crocs and gators, manatees, and, of course...sharks. You will find LOTS of shark teeth.

The sections from Bowling Green to Arcadia have many spots where it there are gravel bars and it is low enough to stand in. It's best to canoe to spots that are a distance away from the boat ramps but fossils are still found by those folks who just wade in at the river near the ramps and parks along the river.

You can monitor the depth of the river via the link on website www.floridafossilhunters.com

Dwindling Green Pastures Might Have Killed Off the Mammoth: What Killed the Megabeasts, Revisited

A massive reduction in grasslands and the spread of forests may have been the primary cause of the decline of mammals such as the woolly mammoth, woolly rhino, and the animals that preyed on them, according to Durham University scientists.

Their study looked at ancient pollen records and they also simulated developments in vegetation and habitat linked to climate change, during and following the last Ice Age, 21,000 years ago. The team used data for a vast geographic area including Eurasia, and the area of the Bering land bridge that connected Alaska and the Yukon to Siberia at the height of the last glacial event.

They found the post-glacial warming of the planet coupled with an associated change to a moister climate and with increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, resulted in the proliferation of trees and the subsequent decline in grasslands - the staple diet of large herbivores. The decline in herbivores led to the decline of the large carnivores, as well.

The elephants do not have a four-chambered stomach like the deer, bison, and cattle, and so are less efficient at digesting vegetation. If the grassland available were less productive, they simply had fewer calories available. Add to that, their long reproductive rate and being hunted by humans, and their extinction is really no mystery.

More on this study can be found at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/08/100817211052.htm

On a side note.....nanodiamonds have been found in the Greenland ice sheet dating to around 12,900 years ago. (The nanodiamonds have also been found in Michigan and the islands off California) This brings life back into the theory that a comet impact into the North American ice sheet caused a huge release in fresh water into the Atlantic via the St. Lawrence River. This stopped the movement of the the warm Gulf Stream in the Atlantic which triggered the sudden cold weather we call the Younger Dryas or Little Ice Age. This rapid climate change from warmer and moister to colder and dryer put further stress on the species of animals already struggling to survive.

More on the Greenland nanodiamonds can be found at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/09/100914143626.htm

Changing World

It was a different North America during the Late Cretaceous. Sea levels were extremely high world-wide and the seas had covered the interior of North America dividing it in two for millions of years. On the West was Laramidia, stretching from the Arctic Sea to Mexico and where what is now Utah, Colorado, and Arizona, was seashore. More dinosaur fossils have been found in Laramidia than almost anywhere else in the world.



On the east was Appalachia. Fewer dinosaur fossils have been found on this ancient landmass...probably because the glaciers in the later Ice Ages scoured those geologic layers to fine dust.

Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas were part of the great Tethys Sea which girded the planet east to west.

North America became one landmass again in the Paleocene/Eocene. By that time there were entirely different animals populating the continent.

Amazing New Horned Dinosaurs



Two remarkable new species of horned dinosaurs have been found in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. The giant plant-eaters were inhabitants of the "lost" continent of Laramidia, formed when a shallow sea flooded the central region of North America, isolating the eastern and western portions of the continent for millions of years during the Late Cretaceous Period. Utah was located in a subtropical swampy environment in the southern part of Laramidia, which has yielded far fewer dinosaur remains than the fossil-rich north.

The bigger of the two dinosaurs, with a skull measuring 7 feet long, is *Utahceratops gettyi*. In addition to the large horn over its nose, *Utahceratops* had short and blunt eye horns that projected strongly to the side rather than upward, much more like the horns of a bison than those of *Triceratops*.

Second of the new species is *Kosmoceratops richardsoni*. It also had sideways oriented eye horns, although much longer and more pointed than in *Utahceratops*. In all, *Kosmoceratops* possessed a total of 15 horns....one over the nose, one atop each eye, one at the tip of each cheek bone, and ten across the rear margin of the bony frill. This makes it the most ornate-headed dinosaur known.

For more on these new dinosaurs and other discoveries there, check out the full article at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/09/100922121943.htm

Fossil of Giant Bony-Toothed Bird from Chile Sets Wingspan Record

A newly discovered skeleton of an ancient seabird from northern Chile provides evidence that giant birds were soaring the skies there 5-10 million years ago. The wing bones of the animal exceed those of all other birds in length; its wingspan would have been at least 17 ft. Although other partial or crushed fossils of birds thought to have been larger have been found, we can only estimate the size of their wings.

Fossils of bony-toothed birds are found on all continents, but such remains are usually fragmentary because most birds have fragile bones that often do not survive the fossilization process. This new specimen, which is 70% complete and uncrushed, provides important new information about the size and anatomy of these strange birds.

This new bird, *Pelagornis chilensis*, belongs to a group known as pelagornithids...bony-toothed birds. They are characterized by their long, slender beaks that bear many spiny, tooth-like projections. Such "teeth" likely would have been used to capture slippery prey in the open ocean, such as fish and squid.

For the complete article, go to www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/09/100918210719.htm



PREHISTORIC PINE HILLS

Prehistoric Pine Hills, Part Two: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Digging at Pine Hills became a habit...some people call it "shark fever". Every chance I had to go, I'd be there hunting for sharks teeth to add to my shoebox collection. Mike Trapp, Jeremy Smith, and myself would go to the Pine Hills Pit and see others that came down to dig and look for fossils.

A local newspaper ran an article in 1992, featuring this feller named, Dean Sligh, talking about prehistoric Florida and Pine Hills. It showed a picture of him holding a 4" megalodon tooth. I didn't know it at the time but this man, who I'd meet later, was the founder of Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc. which became Florida Fossil Hunters.

The Hubbard Pit was no stranger to anyone who lived in west Central Florida. We saw people walking dogs, kids on bikes or motorcycles, and guys flying model airplanes. There was even an area in the back where people came to shoot their guns into a 30 ft. clay wall. Unfortunately, people also came there to drink and start trouble. Dumping trash became a problem.

Sometimes people would come down to the area where people had dug holes just to see what they could find. It was kind of heartbreaking to return and find that the area you had been digging in for 3 or 4 days had been cleaned out by someone else, leaving only beer bottles and footprints. I was there and saw firsthand, a group come down late in the day, as it was getting dark and I was preparing to leave. The man in front was telling the others that it was best to come down in the evening, look for where somebody had dug down to the layer, and just start there. This stranger jumped into the hole that Jeremy had been working on for couple days and in 2 minutes, he pulled out a 4" to 5" meg tooth. I stayed and watched these people for about 30 minutes before they left. I had learned a hard lesson and the problems that arise...looters.

The hole that Jeremy was working in and slowly making larger had this giant slab of rock that had tilted upright...about 7 ft. tall and weighing several tons. We all joked about how one day it would fall and entomb him in the hole he was digging. One day while we were there, he was chipping a small meg tooth from the rock and chipping off other pieces to see what was there. Later, as we were showing each other our fossils, I noticed a scallop shell impression on a piece of rock in his bucket. It wasn't much to Jeremy so I asked him if I could have it and took it home.

As our friendship grew, we spent many a day out in the woods... snake catching, running through the fields, creek

jumping...and digging at Pine Hills. One day while I was digging, I found something unusual. It was strange looking and I knew I had found something different.

Jeremy came down that afternoon and saw it in my box of fossil bones and teeth, and said, "Hey, Man. This is a cow shark tooth."

"Cool", I replied. Something new to add to my collection (now in 3 shoe boxes)...always a treat.

Pine Hills Pit had its defenses. There was sticky clay, rocks that cut, mosquitoes, ticks, red ants.....everywhere, red ants. If we bumped into a tree, it would rain ants on us. Mats of red ants floated on the water we had to wade through. Even once we had dug down to this thin (sometimes up to a foot thick) layer with our shovels, we had to bail out water that seeped in as we dug. We'd feel around for the "big" stuff, scooping out handfuls to sift for the smaller fossils. Some of the fossils were as hard as rocks and well preserved. Others would fall apart in our cupped hands like freshly baked brownies. After a few hours of hand-raking, our fingers were bloody and so sore it hurt to hold a cotton ball.

But it was all worth it. My collection was growing. I was researching through every book I could get and my knowledge grew with my collection.

Mike had been pestering me and Jeremy about this club he was in, Florida Fossil Hunters, which met down at Robert E. Lee. I guessed we'd have to go and see what it was about. Jeremy already had an article and picture in the paper. Even though Pine Hills Pit had become a dumping ground, we would visit there now and then. Years would go by before construction would bring us back.

Besides, I heard tell of a place called the Winter Garden Ditch..... Russell Brown

Utility Workers Uncover Fossils

A utility company preparing to build a new substation in a canyon southeast of Los Angeles stumbled across a trove of fossils dating back 1.4 million years ago. The well preserved cache contained nearly 1,500 bone fragments from prehistoric animals, including a giant cat that was the ancestor of the saber-toothed cat, ground sloths the size of bears, small rodents, two types of camels, and new species of deer, horse and possibly llama.

Workers also uncovered signs of plant life that indicate it may have been a marsh or muddy lake bed.

Since the bones found are 1 million years older than the famous La Brea Tar Pit fossils, these fill in gaps in the record. For the complete article go to www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/09/21/tech/main6887368.shtml

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	Jimmy Waldron	(386) 212-5814
Vice President	Russell Brown	(352) 429-1058
Secretary	Glory Kerr	
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	Joanne Maio	(407) 375-3635
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
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Board of	Paul Bordenkircher	(407) 687-3843
Directors:	Russell Brown	(352) 429-1058
	Melissa Cole	(407) 834-5615
	Dave Dunaway	(407) 493-4253
	Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
	John Jelks	(407) 568-5558
	Roy Singer	(407) 645-0200

Membership Application

Names: _____

Associate Members: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: Zip: _____

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 2-3 for more information on events.

Fossil Fair

October 9th and 10th

October 13th

National Fossil Day

October 15, 16, and 17

Fall FPS Meeting

Saturday, October 23rd

Withlacoochee Field Trip

November 20, 2010

2:00pm Kids' Fossil Blast

3:00pm Meeting

November 13, 2010

Vulcan Mine field trip

See page 2 for more info

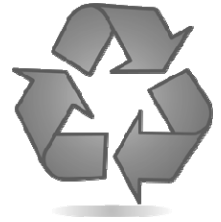


Join Our new facebook group:

Search [Florida Fossil Hunters](#)

Be Green

We are *emailing* the newsletter each month. If you want to participate, just email Bonnie at bjrb48@netzero.com or sign up at the meeting. If you want to continue to receive a paper newsletter in the mail, you don't have to do anything.



Visit us online at www.floridafossilhunters.com

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

Florida Fossil Hunters

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Florida Fossil Hunters News