

THE FOSSIL RECORD

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Over the Wire:
SEARCHING FOR EVIDENCE

Woodburn Bison Uncovered

As a school project, science teacher David Ellingson at Woodburn High School unearthed part of a bison skeleton from Ice Age deposits next to the school last summer. Remarkably well preserved front and hind leg bones along with vertebrae and ribs were uncovered by a City backhoe operator working under David's direction. The bones were in an ancient water-saturated bog deposit about 12 feet under the surface. When we assembled them, we found that the animal was 8-9 feet tall! Even more remarkable was an apparently cancerous growth on the hind leg bones, which fused the joints and tripled the thickness of the leg at the ankle. The animal must have hobbled painfully for months before succumbing in the bog. Bone pathologies were common in large mammals at the time. David wants to make an exhibit of the skeleton at Woodburn High, and we are giving him direction on the assembly and exhibit of the specimen.

Laboratory Field Trip:
NORTHWEST PREHISTORY

OMSI Tour of Paleontology Laboratory

Triceratops and Whales

Date: Wednesday, December 10 at 5:30 pm

Cost: Free

Call: (503) 358-9030 for arrangements.

See the progress we have made at the paleontology laboratory at OMSI. We will meet at the front desk at OMSI, and then go from there to the laboratory. Take a close look at the giant tortoise and ancient whale specimens as well as the dinosaur fossils we are preparing.

In the Laboratory & the Field:
MUSEUM NEWS

Museum Volunteers

Volunteers at the paleontology lab at OMSI have been continuing with work on the Triceratops dinosaur. Sue Wu has done a wonderful job coordinating the work in the lab. The skeleton is taking shape, in no small part to the many preparators who have dedicated countless hours over the years. While we mention only a few here, we thank all for their dedication and hard work.

Hank Becker has been working on the 5 foot long Triceratops skull. It has been a laborious task grinding away the iron-enriched and very hard concretionary coating that encased most of the fossil, and Hank has made wonderful progress, especially in the last year. Richard Burt, working on the skull and other bones, has been continuously innovative, by developing new techniques and building equipment for our preparation needs. Bob Wyant has put in many hours with superb results, and we thank him for his tireless efforts. We also would like to acknowledge Randy King, who has focused on our ancient whale skull from Washington. This 5 foot long skull is remarkable as it shows exceptionally primitive characters, and most certainly is a species entirely new to science. Finally, we would like to acknowledge Pat McGuire and George Grill for their generous help, both in the field and the lab.

State Capitol Exhibit

An exhibit on Oregon History is under construction at the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem and is scheduled for completion this month. While the focus is on the last 150 years, some exhibits will take us back to our State's origins some 350 million years ago. We are excited to be working with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to provide Oregon fossils for one of the display cases.

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