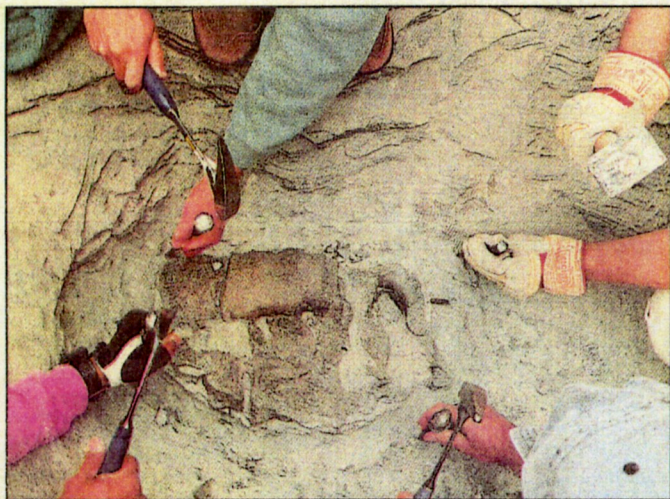


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JOHN GRIFFITH/for The Oregonian

Workers free a fossil embedded in sandstone. The fossil is believed to be the sacrum and three additional vertebrae of a duck-billed dinosaur.



JOHN GRIFFITH/for The Oregonian

Dave Taylor of the Northwest Museum of Natural History Association, a nonprofit Portland organization, and volunteers take a break from their dinosaur fossil exploration near Gold Beach.

Fossil find

Scientists remove dinosaur bones entombed in sandstone on the southern Oregon coast

By **JOHN GRIFFITH**
Correspondent, The Oregonian

GOLD BEACH — About 100 million years ago — give or take probably 25 million years — a duck-billed dinosaur was minding its own business when, suddenly, it fell into a river. Or maybe, a flood came along and swept it out to sea.

Either way, that's probably how it started a journey of about 75 million years that carried it to Cape Sebastian on the southern Oregon coast. Its mode of transportation? Shifting plates of Earth's crust from what is now California.

Now, old duckbill is getting ready to hit the road again — as soon as some scientists and their helpers can free what is left of it from a chunk of

sandstone near Gold Beach.

The work, which began Thursday, is being headed up by Dave Taylor, 47, executive director of the Northwest Museum of Natural History Association, a Portland nonprofit group.

Tentatively named CSD-1, for the first Cape Sebastian dinosaur fossil, the bone is solid brown rock embedded in sandstone on the tip of the wave-washed cape nine miles south of Gold Beach.

"I've decided there will be no CSD-2, this rock is so hard," Taylor joked Saturday.

Taylor and 25 volunteers planned to have the fossil free of the rock by Sunday and packed off the cape and across Myers Creek Beach by Monday.

After that, Taylor said, the fossil

will join the association collection stored at a private location near Portland State University. The association does not have a public museum. It functions more as an educational tool, Taylor said.

The fossil is believed to be the sacrum and three additional vertebrae of a duck-billed dinosaur. The sacrum is six fused vertebrae. Humans have a sacrum. Ours is at the rear of our pelvis.

The duck-billed dinosaur lived in the Cretaceous Period, from 140 million to 60 million years ago. It was a vegetarian and probably rather common, Taylor said. The fossil is about 32 inches long and an estimated 70 pounds.

He and participants of an association field trip worked all day Friday

OREGON'S DINOSAUR

■ **OREGON'S ONLY:** The fossil found at Cape Sebastian is the only dinosaur fossil found in Oregon. It is believed to be the sacrum, or six fused vertebrae, plus three additional vertebra of a duck-billed dinosaur.

■ **HOW BIG IS IT?** The fossil is 32 inches long and an estimated 70 pounds. It is thought to be about 75 million years old, having originated in what is now California and been shifted north by the movement of plates of Earth's crust.

■ **WHO FOUND IT?** It was found by a crew from the U.S. Geological Survey, according to Dave Taylor, executive director of the Northwest Museum of Natural History Association, a Portland nonprofit group. The fossil's location and preliminary identification were confirmed by a group of scientists from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1969.

■ **WHAT NOW?** It will become a part of the Northwest Museum of Natural History Association collection, which is not available for public viewing. It eventually may become part of a traveling exhibition.

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Dino: Volunteers aid 1st dinosaur dig

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to chip a gutter a few inches deep around the fossil.

Taylor said the fossil has not been positively identified. Once it is out of the sandstone rock that holds it, he and other experts will do their best to confirm its identity.

Taylor was a student at the University of California, Berkeley, when he heard about the fossil. He said Berkeley legend is that it was found by a crew from the U.S. Geological Survey.

Taylor said that in 1969, two Berkeley professors and a group of students inspected the fossil and confirmed it was part of a dinosaur.

A number of amateur and professional paleontologists knew of its whereabouts, but nobody made an attempt to excavate it until now, Taylor said. He had to get a permit from the state Parks and Recreation Department to do the work.

The fossil appeared in grainy, brownish-gray relief, like a rock inlay, in the otherwise light gray slab of sandstone at the tip of the cape. At low tide on a calm day, it was about 15 feet above the crests of the gently rolling swells. Just above it, the forested nose of the cape rose sharply toward U.S. 101.

Taylor said he and his colleagues believe the sandstone may have shifted 200 miles or more north from where it was formed under pressure at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

After the dinosaur came up out to sea, the millenia added their load of silt and microscopic husks of plankton to form a natural cement of stone, Taylor explained.

Most on the field trip were from Portland and its suburbs. Half a dozen were children. Everyone brought tools. They were serious about being part of the first dinosaur excavation in Oregon. Some wore dinosaur clothes.

"I thought it was going to be bigger," said Jenny McAdoo, 10, of West Linn. She wasn't disappointed by the fossil, she said, but added that she came to work —



JOHN GRIFFITH/for The Oregonian

Dinosaur fan Michael Scheinman, 6, of Portland brought his own dinosaurs to the Cape Sebastian dig. He accompanied his brother, Daniel, and father, Ted, on the field trip.

and no more than four people could crouch beside the fossil and chip sandstone at a time.

Jenny wants to be an archaeologist when she grows up, or an oceanographer. She's done a little excavating before, at Fossil, "But they were only leaves and stuff," she said.

Michael Scheinman, 6, of Portland wants to be a movie director. In fact, he was directing his father, Ted Scheinman, as videographer in his first movie, a documentary on his dinosaur fossil dig.

Michael, who wore a dinosaur cap to the excavation, said he already has a piece of dinosaur bone that came with a computer program called "Dino Dig."

Joseph Puckett, 14, of Portland

got a head start up the beach Saturday, to get to the fossil first. When the rest arrived, they found him chipping sandstone, a sack of Jolly Rancher candies at his elbow for sustenance.

When Taylor arrived, he gave a quick lecture, which didn't deter Joseph from his joyous toil, and divided the group into fourths. They took shifts swinging hammers against chisels. Those off shift fanned out to explore nearby tidepools and look for shell fossils on the cliff face.

"I don't want to promise anything before it's done," Taylor said. "We will exhibit it somewhere, but I don't know where yet. It would be nice to bring it back to this part of the coast as part of a traveling exhibit."

