

## Party pulls dinosaur from rock

By Marge Barrett  
Curry Staff Writer

**GOLD BEACH** — The sound of hammers hitting stone formed millions of years ago combines with the gentle roar of the surf near Cape Sebastian as scientists strike "fossil gold" in the excavation of the only known dinosaur bones in Oregon.

Dave Taylor, a Portland paleontologist is supervising the dig that continues this weekend. He believes the fossilized bones are remains of a duckbilled dinosaur — a creature that roamed parts of the North American continent 70 million years ago.

"This dinosaur probably lived in northern California — and was washed into the sea and buried in sandstone. Then the sand turned into rock and entombed the dinosaur skeleton. When the land (now part of Cape Sebastian headlands) split up and floated north the fossil ended up in this location," Taylor says.

Millions of years of sea and weather erosion eventually exposed the bones of the ancient reptile and 25 years ago a group of students from the University of California at Berkeley reported finding dinosaur bones embedded in a rock plateau on a remote section of southern Oregon coast.

The find was for the most part kept within scientific circles for fear of vandalism. It was made public Thursday when Taylor led a field trip that included a group of about 30 people to the site as part of a Port Orford Heritage Society sponsored look at geology and paleontology in Curry County.

Taylor and a small team of volunteer paleontologists began the excavation Thursday evening, working carefully with a variety of hand tools to free the fragile fossil from surrounding rock.

The group hopes to remove the fossil and the rock around it in one piece — and carry the 100 to 150 pound skeleton from the isolated beach in "some sort of tarp and pole sling."

