

THE FOSSIL RECORD

A publication of the Northwest Museum of Natural History • December 2016

Field Trip:

THE HISTORY OF THE NORTHWEST

Newport

Marine Fossils of the Oregon Coast

Date: Saturday, March 18, 2017.

Cost: \$15 for non-members & \$25 for families, free for members.

Call (503) 358-9030 or write Blitz124@comcast.net for arrangements.

We have not had a trip recently that focuses on fossils, so here is an opportunity to find and collect a variety of fossilized shells and remains of other organisms on the Oregon Coast. Late winter is the perfect time to search for fossils on the beach. By mid-March prior winter storms will have pounded the seashore and washed much of the sand off the beach, exposing the richly fossiliferous Nye and Astoria formations we will examine. Low tide March 18th will be around noon, so our access to exposures should be especially good.

MUSEUM NEWS

December 12th Association Meeting

Our upcoming meeting includes review of this past year, upcoming projects, and the election of officers. The slate of proposed officers includes: George Grill (President), Scott Schaffer (Vice President), Bret Richards (Secretary), and Alison Stenger (Treasurer). All welcome to participate. Meeting will be at McMenamins in Hillsdale, 3:00 pm.

Association Website

We are pleased to announce that we have just recently launched a website for the Association. You may see it by typing the address: nwmuseum.org. We look forward

to fleshing out our new site with upcoming new projects and activities.

In the Laboratory & Field

While work continues at OMSI on our Triceratops and a whale skull mentioned in prior letters, volunteers have been working on other specimens as well.

Preparators have recently finished cleaning some bones of a Jurassic age sauropod (or “long-necked”) dinosaur, among the largest of animals to have walked our Earth. The specimens were uncovered originally on Wyoming ranchland. A recently completed neck vertebra now preserved as glistening black stone is not massive, but buttressed, in part for lighter weight while maintaining necessary skeletal support. Its buttressed structure is not unlike that of birds - dinosaur descendants.

This last summer we worked in eastern Oregon in a collaborative effort with colleagues from the University of Geneva, Switzerland to sample ancient ash beds from fossiliferous Lower Jurassic marine rock sequences. The colleagues include the head of the geochronology laboratories at the University as well as a Ph D student, who is taking the lead on the project. The geochronology laboratory at the University uses cutting-edge technology to produce exceptionally refined age dates from zircon grains from the ash beds to analyze radioactive decay in the Uranium-Lead series. These dates will be calibrated with the fossil time scale. We will use this information in an attempt to bracket and characterize an early Jurassic (Toarcian) extinction event, and thereby try to understand better the duration, magnitude, and cause of the extinction.

2017

Stay tuned as we expand our activities to enhance our program and attract greater public interest.

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