

ISSUE 50



SPECIAL EDITION

British Columbia Paleontological Alliance

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On the cover:



The logo of the British Columbia Paleontological Alliance, originally designed by Stephanie Meinke.

You are encouraged to submit reports, articles, and artwork with a paleontological theme.

The deadline for the next issue is April 1, 2009.

Please send your submissions to the editor:

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Submissions may be edited for length, and will be edited for spelling and grammar.

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British Columbia Paleontological Alliance Newsletter

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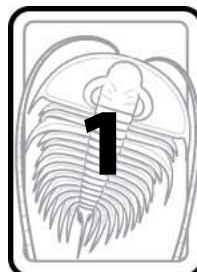


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Letter from the editor

Welcome to the fiftieth issue of the BCPA Newsletter. The bulletins that would evolve into the BCPA Newsletter were distributed in 1992-1993 (see page 12). In March of 1994, the first issue published under the name of the Newsletter was circulated. This special edition is thus not in honour of the anniversary of these dates, though it will soon be fifteen years since the inaugural Newsletter, but rather a celebration of the semicentennial issue. Within the BCPA and its member societies have been given a chance to reminisce and record their labours over fifty newsletters.

Fifteen years have brought many changes to palaeontology in British Columbia, and not all of them changes for the better. Declining volunteerism has left its toll on the membership of all the BCPA's member societies. Many of the personalities who were so important in defining the early evolution of palaeontology in the province have moved on to other things. More than two decades of concentrated collecting has left many famous localities all but stripped of fossils, and it is harder than ever for beginning collectors to gain the experience they need to inflame their interest and inform their future collecting. The perennial conflicts between amateur and professional interests, and between scientific and commercial collecting, continue to divide palaeontological efforts throughout the province.

I do not make these points to place blame, nor to advocate for hopelessness, but rather to highlight the challenges that now face us. This is an extremely exciting time to be part of palaeontology in British Columbia. True, the sunlit honeymoon years are over, and it's now time for the less agreeable job of making this 'relationship' work. We must not allow ourselves and our societies to stagnate, but seek out the next generation of fossil enthusiasts and pass on our passion and our experience. It is not enough just to observe from the sidelines, we must all be part of this process. If we throw in the towel, disgusted at the course events have taken or despairing of the way things "used to be," the science of palaeontology is what ultimately suffers. There is still so much to learn!

The BCPA Newsletter has served as a chronicle of many things over the years, from educational items, to announcements of discoveries, to flights of fancy and comedy. I would like to thank all the past editors for their contributions to this enduring legacy: Tim Obear, Maria Box, Rolf Ludvigsen, Joe Morin, Dirk Meckert, Dan Bowen, Rob Lundquist, Ken Naumann, and John Leahy. To all the contributors, far too numerous to name, thank you also for making this newsletter a reality. It is to all of these people, named and nameless, that I dedicate this special issue.

Back issues of the Newsletter?

Copies of past issues are available from the BCPA Treasurer at \$6.50 per copy, or \$200 for a complete set, or for orders of more than 30 issues.

These prices include postage. Please send a list of issues needed, and a cheque for the appropriate amount, made out to the BCPA, to:

BCPA
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Box 1779
Prince George, BC V2L 4V7

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British Columbia Paleontological Alliance

Jim Haggart



British Columbia Paleontological Alliance

The British Columbia Paleontological Alliance (BCPA) has indeed come a long way since its inception in the early 1990s! The organization has grown from just a couple of local societies at its start to seven, and now includes groups located in Courtenay, Qualicum Beach, Victoria, Vancouver, Kamloops, Prince George, and Tumbler Ridge. Our breadth has truly become province-wide!

Museum. During the winter of 1993, Rolf Ludvigsen and Ann Zambilowitz petitioned members of the broader paleontological community in BC to create the BCPA. At Rolf's suggestion, they then subsequently organized the first BC Paleontological Symposium, which was held in Courtenay, and the rest is history!

Organization

According to Mike Trask, "who was there," the creation of both the BCPA and the Vancouver Island Paleontological Society (VIPS) were motivated by Ann Zambilowitz, of Courtenay. In 1991, Ann had encouraged the formation of the VIPS while working on the elasmosaur quarry. That fall, Mike presented a short evenings-and-weekends course on the local fossils at North Island College, which was attended by both Ann and her husband, Dr. Joe Zambilowitz. Five minutes into the course's first field trip, Joe discovered a few small but articulated vertebrae; those vertebrae, along, with their brethren, are now known as the type materials of the mosasaur *Kourisodon puntledgensis*. Of course, the class was now hooked!



Many people wonder why they are members of their local societies and not just members of the BCPA instead?

This is due to the political makeup of the BCPA. As registered with the Province of British Columbia, the Board of Directors of the BCPA includes consists of approximately 20 directors. Each of the seven local societies sends two societal representatives to the BCPA Board, for a total of 14 Societal Directors. This group of 14 directors then identifies other individuals from institutions around the province with important paleontology programs, such as the Royal BC Museum, the University of British Columbia, and the Peace Region Palaeontology Research Centre, and asks them to serve on the Board as Directors-at-Large.

Another team member, Tim O'bear, subsequently spent countless hours (and was blessed with countless curses from the staff of NIC!), photocopying Mike's then-meager collection of research papers on the local fossils. The group held a few informal meetings to gather paper, then decided to open up to the public. Mike recalls that the first general meeting was likely held in March of 1992, at the Courtenay and District

Each two years, the appointment of these Directors-at-Large is reviewed by the Societal Directors. Also each two years, the assembled Board selects a Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as a Secretary and a Treasurer, and these individuals form the Executive of the Board. In essence, the BCPA is an umbrella group under which the various paleontological societies of the province are joined. It sounds complicated but it really

isn't, and the arrangement provides for efficient flow of information transmission from the Board downward to the members of each of the BCPA's constituent societies, as well as outward from the societies and directors to other agencies.

Education

British Columbia is endowed with one of the most diverse and plentiful fossil records of any region of the Earth. Indeed, fossils of British Columbia are known from the late Precambrian time, about a billion years ago, all the way to the Pleistocene, less than a million! Consequently, a very important goal of the BCPA is to encourage education about the province's paleontological resources both within the general citizenry of the province as well as its leaders, including legislators and the representatives of the Provincial Government's ministries that implement policy.

The BCPA disseminates educational materials about the province's fossils in many ways. First and foremost is through the BCPA Newsletter, which is produced three times per year. A few contributions to the newsletter are written by the professional community, but the great majority are written by the amateur members of the paleontological societies, people just like you! Newsletter articles describe field trips taken by the societies, new fossil finds from within BC and elsewhere, paleobiology of fossil types, recent news in paleontology around the world, book reviews, essentially anything to do with paleontology! Want to see something in the newsletter? Then write it up yourself - chances are good that someone else is interested in the same things fossil that intrigue you!

One of the more popular educational contributions that the BCPA has produced is the beautiful full-colour poster *Travel Through Time with BC's Beautiful Fossils*. The poster highlights important fossil types from around the province and discusses why they are important. Many of the concept vignettes contained in the poster originated in the paleontology class at University of Victoria, and the BCPA subsequently obtained a financial grant to bring these together into the poster format. The grant also allowed the BCPA to distribute a copy of the poster to every secondary school in British Columbia. Several years later, the poster is still selling several hundred copies a year - better get yours before the supply is exhausted.

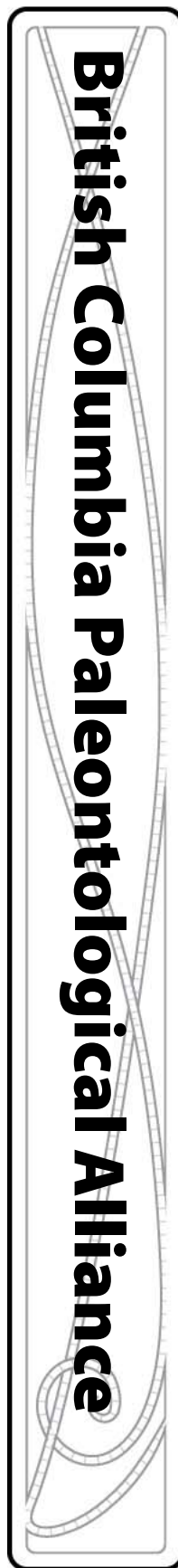


The BCPA also produces more formal reports on BC fossils on a less frequent basis. These include the various field trip guidebooks that are used in the bi-annual symposia, as well as Miscellaneous Reports that have been produced for specific purposes, such as the series of reports that the BCPA prepared for the BC Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) process in the 1990s.

Perhaps the most exciting of the events that the BCPA hosts is the BC Paleontological Symposium, held every other year. This symposium is one of the premier meetings of paleontologists in Canada, and participants have traveled from across Canada, the United States, and Japan to contribute to the symposium. The symposium is spread out over several days and includes scientific presentations in the form of talks and posters contributed from the professional community as well as the ranks of the amateurs. In addition, there are workshops, displays, a fossil art show, and, in some years, the presentation of the



British Columbia Paleontological Alliance



Rene Savenye Award for Contributions to British Columbia Paleontology by an Amateur. In past years, the BC Paleontology Symposium has even met jointly with the Canadian Paleontology Conference. Attendance at the symposium is typically 100-125 people, making it one of the best-attended paleo meetings in North America. Plan to attend the 8th Symposium, being held this May in Vancouver!

discussions are twofold: first to promote the best management of the province's fossil heritage for scientific research and educational initiatives; and second, to ensure that the amateur community is allowed to continue to collect fossils and maintain stewardship of those fossils in their collections in the interest of making them available for scientific study and educational initiatives.

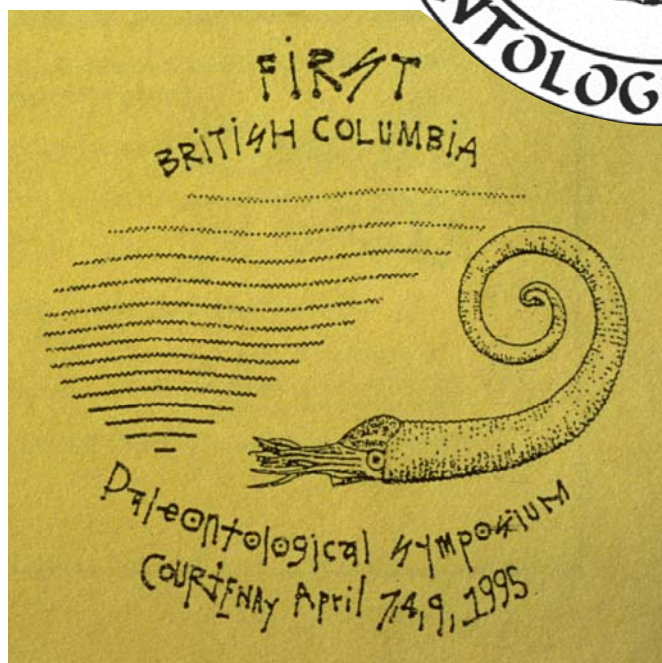
Fossil Protection

Another important issue that the BCPA works hard to address is that of fossil protection and management of paleontological resources in the province. In this context, the BCPA has provided advice about fossil management to policy advisors of the Provincial Government, when asked, and has participated in fossil management planning workshops with local communities and government representatives. The BCPA's objectives in these

With regard to endangered fossil sites in the province, the BCPA nominated approximately 3 dozen sites as No-Staking Reserves (NSRs) across the province, in order that the sites could not be claimed for their fossil content. It is hoped that the Provincial Government will ultimately move to bring these NSRs into more formal protected status in the near future.



Finally, the BCPA has been active over the past decade in lobbying for better management of fossil resources in the province, first through letter-writing campaigns to provincial legislators and Ministry representatives, and then, more recently in direct discussions with government representatives. In no small way, the current initiative of the Provincial Government to establish a management framework for fossil resources is a direct result of the lobbying efforts of the BCPA Board of Directors on behalf of paleontology. As well, the recent agreement on the management of the McAbee fossil site was supported by the BCPA as a first step forward in securing better scientific oversight of this important fossil locality.



The logo of the First British Columbia Paleontological Symposium, held in Courtenay in spring of 1995.

Over the past 15 years, the role of the BCPA in British Columbia paleontology has continued to grow. Why not consider becoming active in the BCPA through participating as a Societal Director representing your society?

Northern British Columbia Paleontological Society

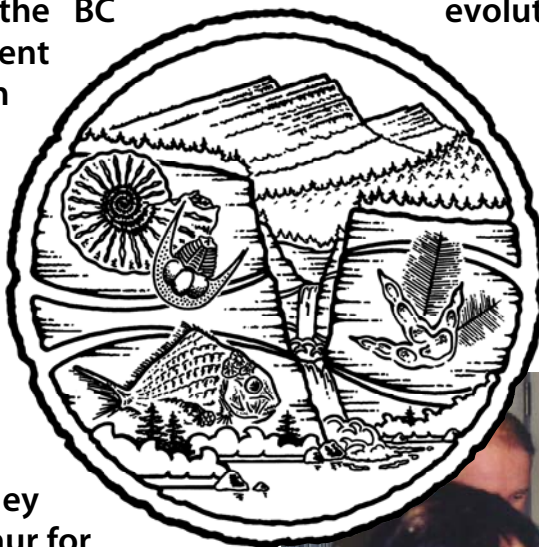
Bob Campbell

The Northern British Columbia Paleontological Society (NBCPS) was incorporated in the year 2000, joining the five existing societies under the BCPA umbrella. Having recently moved from Alberta, I was very interested in the BCPA's professional/amateur cooperative structure and its initiative to lobby the BC provincial government to develop protection for fossil resources.

The first public meeting held at The Exploration Place in Prince George drew 60 people, many eager to be shown where they could dig-up a dinosaur for their mantelpiece. The fact that the BCPA has ethical standards and expectations of ongoing stewardship of collections quickly reduced the number to around 20. The long travel distances to reach fossil sites in the Prince George area has slowly brought our numbers down to a small core group of families.

Dan Moore and Mark Zagwyn have been the most active in discovering new localities for us all to investigate. Mark may be the luckiest fossil collector in the province but we still talk to him. Many of the members have donated wonderful specimens to The Exploration Place's collection.

A highlight for the NBCPS was hosting the joint proceedings of the 6th British Columbia Paleontological Symposium and the Canadian Paleontology Conference in 2005 at Prince George. Keynote speaker Dr. Luis Villarreal challenged us all with his address on the role of viruses in evolution.



Bob Knechtel, Jim Hawk and Rich McCrea inspect a fresh cast of a dinosaur trackway from the Mist Mountain Fm. in south-eastern BC for use in Rich's research.



NBCPS member Mark Zagwyn collecting at McDonnell Lake .



NBCPS members constructing the sauropod *Mamenchisaurus* at The Exploration Place.



Northern British Columbia Paleontological Society

Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation Charles Helm

Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation

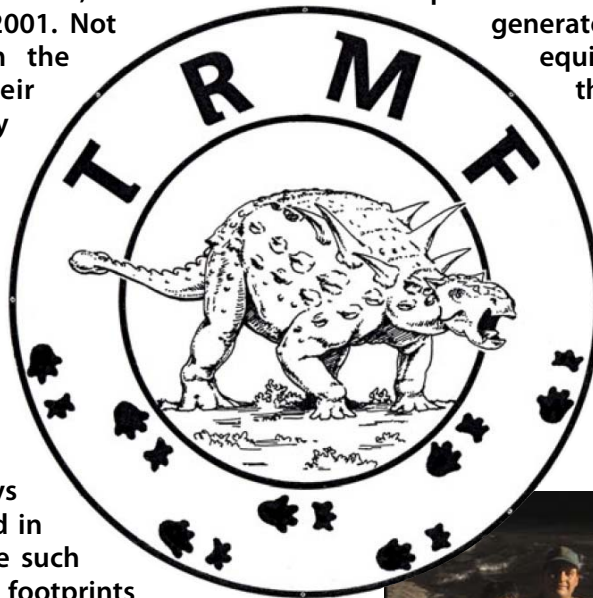
The history of the TRMF dates back very specifically to a summer's day in 2000. Mark Turner (11) and Daniel Helm (8) were tubing down Flatbed Creek just below Tumbler Ridge, when they came off in some rapids, struggled to shore, and correctly identified a dinosaur trackway in the bedrock. Challenged with convincing healthily skeptical local adults, they persevered. Contacting Phil Currie, they were put in contact with Canada's dinosaur footprint researcher, Rich McCrea.

Correspondence ensued, followed by a personal visit in 2001. Not only did Rich confirm the importance of their ankylosaur trackway find, but he also discovered a dinosaur bone right beside it. At the time this was only the second dinosaur bone in the province. Rich taught interested locals what to look for, and soon dinosaur tracks and trackways were getting discovered in numerous canyons. One such canyon held enough footprints that Rich was invited back for another field visit in 2002. During this action-packed outing, rocks containing twenty four dinosaur bones were found, with turtle bone nearby. These 95 million year old dinosaur bones were the oldest known in Western Canada, from an age (Turonian) that was known to be globally poorly endowed with such material.

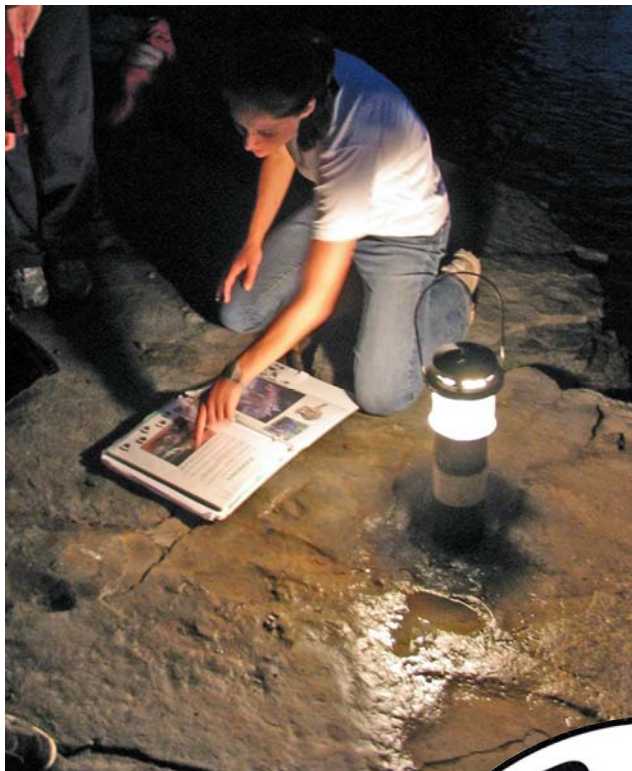
Tumbler Ridge at the time was a small, remote community on the brink of extinction, following the closure of both of its coal mines. The dinosaur discoveries helped place it in a positive light at a critical moment in its history, and helped the town survive. Meantime, Rich and the passionate group of locals realized that they had a major problem: there was no institution in the province with the expertise or motivation to do justice to the magnitude of the discovery. Previous significant finds in

BC's northeast had typically been researched by, and removed to, other provinces.

There was only one solution for these volunteers: to take on the challenge, form the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation, and do their best, with enthusiasm and drive as their main defences against the long odds that were stacked against them. BC's first dinosaur excavation became the initial focus, and \$60,000 was quickly raised to finance the first year of the dig. The steep-walled canyon provided its own challenges, as generators and precious field equipment were lowered to the site by long-line. Rich led the excavation, and brought in BC-born palaeontologist, Lisa Buckley, to assist. Thus commenced a long liaison which has resulted, amongst many other positive outcomes, in marriage.



Mark Turner, Rich McCrea and Daniel Helm (from left to right) at the initial discovery site in 2001.



A TRMF tour guide conducting a nocturnal lantern tour to the Wolverine dinosaur footprint site.

Initial exhibits in the Tumbler Ridge Community Centre led to the need for a larger public-accessible facility. The Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, adjoining the PRPRC, was the result, with a formal opening ceremony by the local MP and MLA in 2007. The TRMF joined the BCPA in 2005, and was formally welcomed at the BCPA Conference in Prince George in 2005, followed by a field trip to Tumbler Ridge.

The scope and variety of the region's fossils continues to amaze and inspire. From Cambrian to late Cretaceous, there is an astonishing age range of accessible material. Many of the discoveries have been made by volunteers. In what has become something of a tradition, kids continue to be responsible for a seemingly disproportionate number of finds.

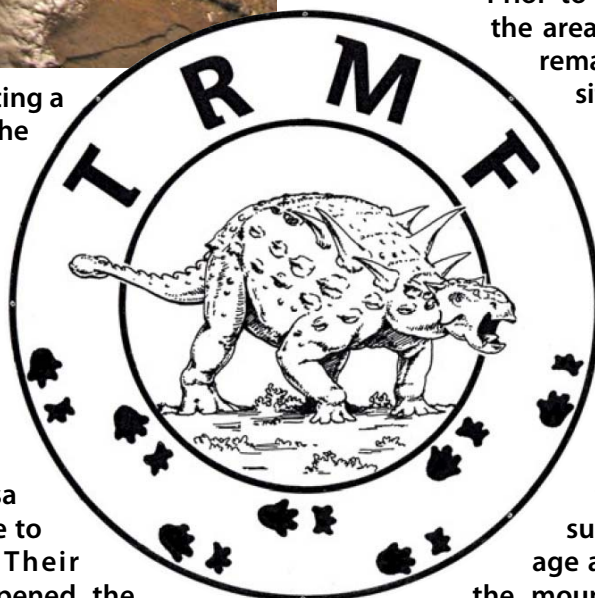
Prior to the dinosaur discoveries, the area had been known for the remarkable Fossil Fish Lake site south of Wapiti Lake.

Here Triassic fossil fishes and marine reptiles had been discovered in abundance in 1947, and laborious museum collecting trips to this remote locality had resulted over the intervening decades, often with the help of float planes and mules. It was evident that surface rocks of the same age and formation occurred in

the mountains closer to Tumbler

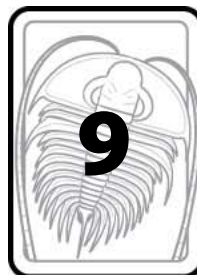
Ridge. TRMF volunteers organized annual field trips to these areas, initially returning with hernia-inducing, weighed-down backpacks filled with exquisitely beautiful specimens for the museum. Serendipitously, an extensive seismic program was undertaken by industry (CGGVeritas), and in a most generous move, large amounts of helicopter time were made available for fossil recovery. In the summer of 2008 alone, 500 such specimens were found and transported to the PRPRC.

On the dinosaur footprint front, there has been a steady stream of discoveries, including two substantial bedding plane exposures with potentially thousands of footprints and trackways. One, south of Tumbler Ridge, is in Kakwa Provincial Park, on a steep face at high elevation. Despite its magnificent surroundings, it is unlikely ever to



The results of the first year of excavation were promising enough, and the further potential of the area so great, that Rich and Lisa soon decided to relocate to Tumbler Ridge. Their permanent presence opened the way for numerous projects. Funding possibilities from federal, provincial, municipal and private sources were tapped, resulting in a total of well over \$1M raised to date.

The Peace Region Palaeontology Research Centre (PRPRC) was developed in a warehouse facility in town, with a small preparation lab and an expanding collections department that soon included precious holotypes. Research articles emanating from the PRPRC have since become a regular phenomenon. Educational programs were developed, centering on the week-long Dinosaur Camp, which has been offered since 2004. Dinosaur Footprint Tours were offered to two of the track sites closest to town, including the unique nocturnal lantern tour to the Wolverine site, where numerous skin impressions are visible.



Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation

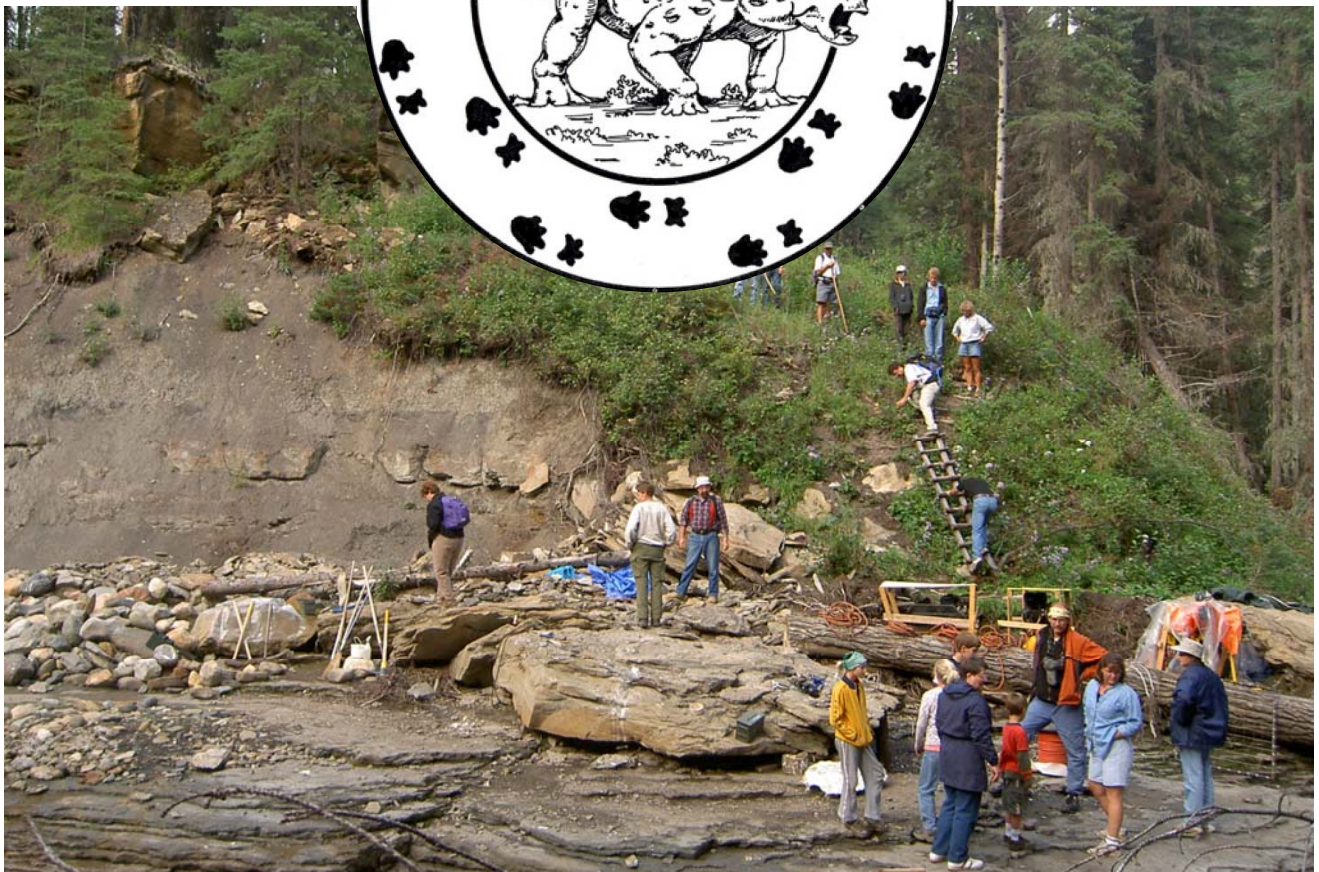
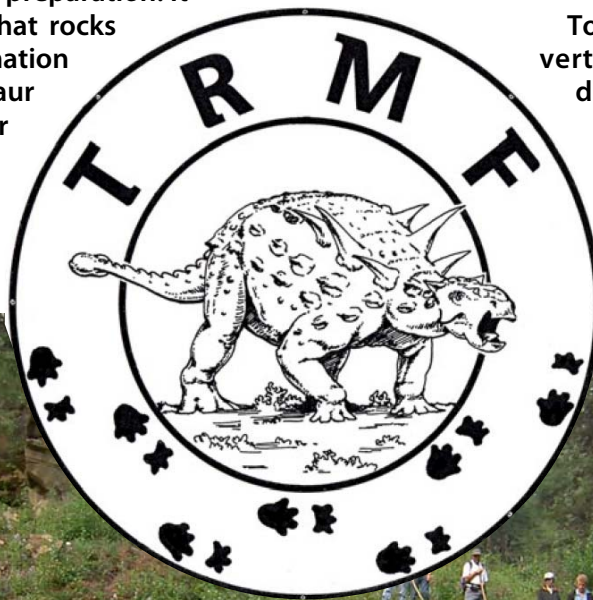
become a tourist destination. Rather, research done at the site will be exhibited in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, with the support of BC Parks. By contrast, a similar site, identified late in 2008 near Hudson's Hope, is on a level surface, and may be amenable to becoming a field station one day, with abundant interpretation potential. Many more trackways have been expertly flown out of their deep canyon sites by helicopter. Others, weighing many tonnes, have been ably transported by ground by local industry. The PRPRC can now boast the largest collection of ankylosaur tracks in the world, with a unique size range from infant to large adult.

As regards dinosaur bones, three years of excavation at the initial site yielded over 300 bones from a variety of dinosaur types, most of which still await preparation. It soon became evident that rocks from the Wapiti formation also contained dinosaur bone, just slightly older than the well-known Alberta material. In 2007 a prospecting

expedition bore fruit with the discovery of an articulated skeleton, and 2008 featured the first summer's work of a multi-year excavation project of this hadrosaur. Ten tyrannosaurid teeth were a welcome bonus. Tumbler Ridge can now lay claim to all but a handful of the 600-odd dinosaur bones known from the province.

These stories and the resulting specimens are rounded off by an array of invertebrate and plant fossils. Together they tell a cautionary tale of evolution and extinction spanning half a billion years. The exhibits invite thoughts of our current predicaments as a species, and the wise mix of conservatism and innovation that may help us get out of our difficulties. These themes will be developed in the exhibit material.

To the north are the largest vertebrate fossils ever discovered, in the form of giant ichthyosaurs. These specimens beg for adequate excavation and



TRMF members visit British Columbia's first dinosaur dig-site near Tumbler Ridge.



Members of the TRMF speaking with the public at their annual Fossil Road Show.

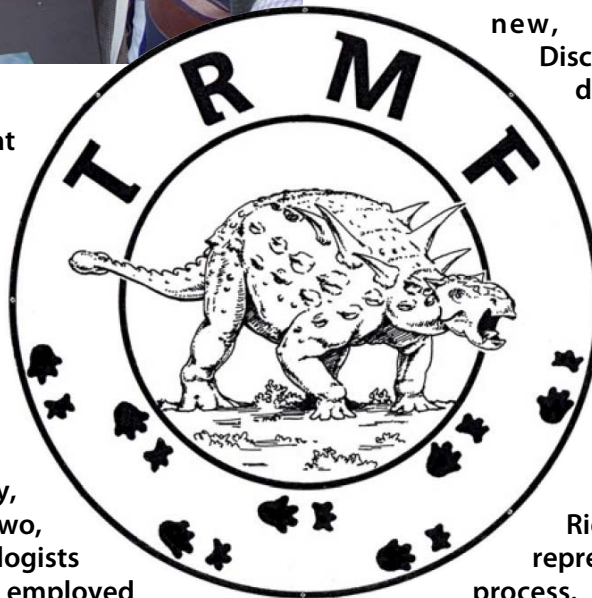
interpretation. The formations in which they occur stretch north all the way to the Yukon border. At times it seems that a complement of twenty, rather than just two, vertebrate palaeontologists could be productively employed here.

Increasingly, the PRPRC and its scientists are being recognized as a centre of expertise in vertebrate palaeontology in British Columbia, and respond to calls from across the province. One such emergency response was to southeastern BC in 2008, where activity in a proposed mine site had uncovered a sauropod trackway, the first of its kind in Canada. The instability of the site demanded attention, and a week later a massive latex peel of this immense trackway was safely in the PRPRC, and awaiting exhibition in the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery.

Less recognized work includes an extensive outreach program, and assistance with the development of fossil protection legislation. The District of Tumbler Ridge now

regularly requests that new industrial proposals include Paleontological Impact Assessments in addition to the standard Archaeological Impact Assessments.

By 2008, what had once seemed like extravagant space in the PRPRC and Dinosaur Discovery Gallery had been exhausted, a sure sign of the success of the collecting program. Field work would have to cease unless a new facility could be found. With the help of its long-term partner, the District of Tumbler Ridge, occupation of a decommissioned school was facilitated, and the major move of all specimens was successfully completed. The new site allows for a 400% expansion of the collections, preparation and exhibit areas, and has proven to be the key to unlocking the future of what remains a massive project for a small community. It is hoped that the new, expanded Dinosaur Discovery Gallery will open its doors to visitors in 2009.



A volunteer Board of Directors continues to administer the affairs of the TRMF (which include many non-palaeontological themes, exhibits and activities), and a Museum Development Committee composed of TRMF, District of Tumbler Ridge and leading regional representatives guides the process. The current school location is regarded as providing an interim facility for the next ten years. The ultimate goal remains a purpose-built museum of international standard, that will finally do justice, both in the scientific and educational senses, to this phenomenal resource.

In just six years this ambitious project has grown to incredibly exciting proportions, and is testimony to the power of volunteer determination combined with professional expertise and successful fundraising. The next six years, guided by similar principles, will with certainty be equally unpredictable and fascinating, and hopefully as successful.



Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation

Vancouver Island Paleontological Society

Dan Bowen and Mike Trask

Background

The Vancouver Island Paleontological Society (VIPS) was formed by a core group of enthusiastic amateurs from the Comox Valley. Many of them had previously enjoyed working as part of a quarry team that recovered the fossil remains of the cretaceous marine reptile called an elasmosaur. This discovery by Mike Trask and his daughter Heather along the nearby Puntledge River in 1988 generated considerable public interest.

After initial investigation by Dr. Richard Hebda and Dr. Elizabeth Nicholls the province of BC wisely decided to provide additional funding and support for the quarry. In the spring of 1991 it all began.

Under the expert guidance and supervision of Dr. Rolf Ludvigsen, the excavation coordinator and Mike Trask, field leader, a group of volunteers laboured for three months, this gave many involved a taste of paleontology and they learned proper field methods. Both Dr. Rolf Ludvigsen and Mike Trask had no trouble filling the seats at North Island College with folks that wanted to learn more about the science of paleontology. The interest was overwhelming and the community responded.

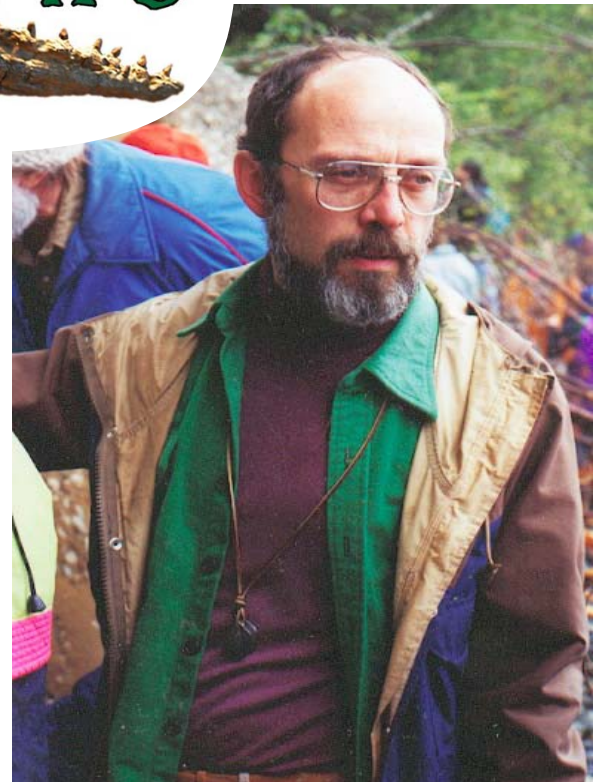
The energetic group started meeting regularly to discuss field trips and educational activities. In the those early days we had collected so many fossils it became a big job to properly accession and prepare them. The Courtenay and District Museum (CDM) then allowed the new group of volunteer amateurs to start renovating an old house next to the museum to become what we called "The Paleo-House." At that time in 1991-1992 the CDM with Dr. Rolf Ludvigsen's supervision began encouraging those collectors to bring their specimens to the museum for ID and donation. This was a place to come and share discoveries, share information and donate our

fossil finds. What a great feeling of learning and discovery!

This was the background leading up to the first meeting of these people as what was temporarily called the Comox Valley Paleontological Society (CVPS first name) on January 19th, 1992. At that early date the focus was on education for us as well as the public.

Newsletters

The first CVPS newsletter was distributed in April 1992 called "Exhumed Arcana" and was drafted by Tim Obear. Tim also did the second VIPS newsletter (new name) in February 1993. These old newsletters were the precursors to the first formal VIPS newsletter in the fall of 1993. Joe Morin's classic ink-dot fossil illustrated covers gave the newsletter a



Dr. Rolf Ludvigsen, founding member of the VIPS, on the elasmosaur excavation 1989-90.
Mike Trask photo.



Mike Trask, founding member of the VIPS, on a field trip to the Haida Gwaii. Dan Bowen photo.



special character. At this time Rolf Ludvigsen was the editor of the first five VIPS newsletters until spring of 1994 when the cover thereafter reflected the first BCPA newsletter. Rolf was an excellent editor and ensured the details and quality of the articles was to his standards. Dr. Dirk Meckert of the VIPS continued the high quality of newsletter from September 1997 to August 2002, a total of 15 issues. The final issue from the VIPS was assembled and edited by Dan Bowen and Rob Lundquist, before we passed the torch on to the Vancouver Paleontological Society. This editorial team also included Maria Box doing printing and layout as well as the entire VIPS collator team for those 30 newsletters. That was ten years of newsletters and over 150 articles. Looking back at those newsletters we all find they are still extremely useful and provide a great reference.

We all enjoyed being part of this process and providing a contribution to the society so all members could look forward to their newsletter. The newsletters have been the vital link that connects all our members.

The BCPA

Around January 1993 the VIPS had several executive meetings to discuss the subject of re-organizing the VIPS. There were some obvious reasons. The first was that the VIPS had grown to over 200 members with members from all over the province and Canada as well as the USA. Getting together for meetings representing all the members would be difficult.

Some of the members initially did not like this direction, however evolution could not be stopped. The direction was well thought through and we split the VIPS into the VanPS, the VicPS and the VIPMS over the next few years. The VIPS executive did set out the goals and intentions of the umbrella society. This process took a few years to set up.

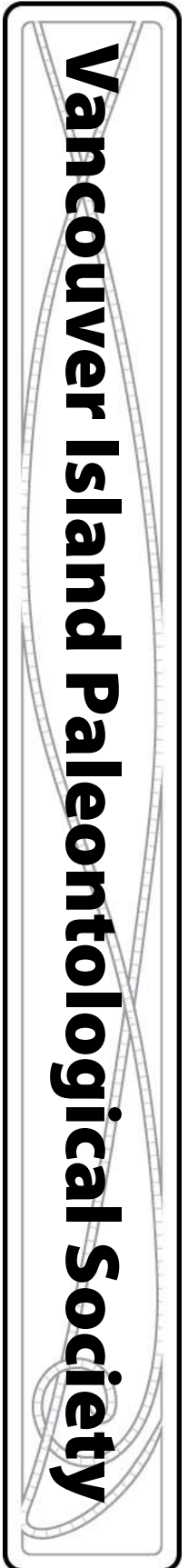
Later in 1994 the VIPS obtained society status and it took 3 more years to set up the other societies.

In the following years (1996-98), through the executive and the efforts of Marjorie Thorpe, the VIPS obtained charitable status. This became very important for our society for fundraising activities.

In 1997-1999 the VIPS and Joe Morin helped with funding a project with the City of Courtenay that created a paleo-arboretum in a new park under construction. We funded several plants and trees that represented examples of taxonomy from our fossil record.

First Symposium

In 1994 our VIPS executive symposium committee began meeting to plan the first British Columbia Symposium for April of 1995, to be held in Courtenay. Rolf Ludvigsen was the only one who had any experience from our area to know what was required for such an event. At each meeting we all had our jobs to complete and the result was a very successful event with over 100 attendees, the most well-attended symposium to date. This was an event that would set the standard for future symposiums. It was the first symposium for most of our members and was very successful. We had keynote speaker Dr. Desmond Collins



from the Royal Ontario Museum, as well as Dr. Betsy Nicholls from the Royal Tyrell Museum to do a presentation on the elasmosaur from the Puntledge River.

Field Trips

The VIPS was always planning regular field trips for the membership. The VIPS field trip coordinator Dan Bowen set a goal to revisit and rediscover some of the old fossil sites on Vancouver Island and some new ones. This aggressive schedule has yielded dozens of new species as well several scientific papers. The VIPS has explored areas like the Appian Way Eocene site, Mt. Washington Coniacian sites, the Apple Bay sites, Escalante Eocene site, Kapoose Jurassic sites, as well as the regular east coast Nanaimo Basin sites. With the new discoveries came recognition of our field teams and many professionals began to further appreciate the contribution of amateur collectors to the science. With the donation of over 2000 specimens by our members to the CDM, there have been some amazing discoveries of new species.

Fossil Pavilion

One of our best years for exposure was

2004. We set up a "Fossil Pavilion" at the Comox Valley Mall for 4 months for 3 days per week. This effort provided the public the opportunity to see world-class fossils and create dialog with the visitors, both young and old. Our membership went from 80 members to about 100. We estimated over 3000 people were able to visit the pavilion. There was such a crowd of interested people that sometimes it was difficult to get through the door. We had over 1000 fossils displayed and accessioned with reference brochures and members available for questions from the public. With this high traffic we also had great success raising funds selling our T-shirts, books and paleo-gifts. We brought the science of paleontology to the masses and they loved it!

Another highlight of the VIPS outreach project was a two month fossil display with lectures at the Campbell River Museum. This was the true member's show, as well as fossils from the VIPS and the VIPMS. We were able to display our paleo-art show and had two lectures: one with Dr. Jim Haggart and one with Mike Trask at the museum. Our displays were the most extensive to date; we had organized displays of fossils from the



VIPS Fossil Pavilion at the Comox Valley Mall. Dan Bowen photo.

Queen Charlotte Islands, the Inland Island Highway site, fossil sharks, fossil decapods, fossils of the world and marine reptiles of Vancouver Island. The exposition ended with two field trips. The turn-out was close to 400 people.

For the VIPS there have been many important discoveries after the mosasaur find, however the discovery of the caudal bones of a mosasaur by Dr. Joe Zambillowitz and the five year process to unearth the entire specimen was a real achievement. Again with grant monies, the CDM hired paleontologist Dr. Dirk Meckert to oversee the project. The museum volunteers and the VIPS members rallied to assist in this difficult excavation. The result was the new genus and new species of a mosasaur, *Kourisodon puntledgensis*. This was most gratifying. The VIPS uses this mosasaur image as their commemorative image.

Seventh Symposium 2007

Finally the
Seventh BC
Paleontological
Symposium held at
the North Island
College was a

milestone for the VIPS, as this brought our history full circle from the first symposium to the seventh. This time there was no Rolf Ludvigsen to guide us through, however we were all confident of our jobs and objectives. We chose the Vancouver Island ichthyosaur as our theme and were fortunate to get Dr. Ryosuki Motani as our keynote speaker. Our 3-day event was well attended and organized. The highlights were the great lecture presentations, the wine and cheese social and art show and the workshops and field trips.

Presently the VIPS are working with Science World in bringing the science of paleontology to students on Vancouver Island. This is part of the VIPS mandate and we enjoy sharing our knowledge that we have learned over the past 20 years.

From the original executive in 1993 the VIPS has maintained a core group that has stood together, worked together and had a lot of fun together.



Betty Franklin gives fossil molding workshop to the kids at the Campbell River Museum. Dan Bowen photo.

Vancouver Island Paleontology Museum Society Graham Beard

The Vancouver Island Paleontology Museum Society was one of the first members of the BCPA. Our Society has an incredible record of scientific and educational achievements, and is at present one of the largest groups in the BCPA.

The VIPMS is unique in that we are the only group that actually has its own museum. This year this facility was visited by over 4000 people from all over the world.

The VIPMS has always worked very closely with the scientific community and as a result of this close association, numerous discoveries have been made. Over the years we have provided specimens that have resulted in many new species too numerous to list and even a new genus!

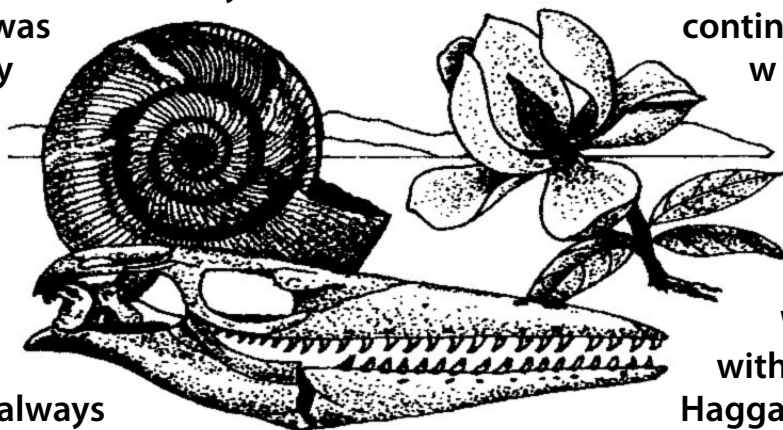
Our Society also has an active educational program, with numerous university, high school, elementary school presentations and museum tours.

Our society meets on the last Sunday of the month and over the years has presented educational lectures, fossil fairs and work shops that are open to the general public. The VIPMS has regular field trips that are usually held during the summer months.

At present we continue to work with the University of Alberta on the very important Appian Way site and with Dr. Jim Haggart and Dr.

Peter Ward on the studies of *Baculites* and other heteromorphic ammonite variation. We also have specimens that are being researched that will shed light on our knowledge of bird and dinosaur evolution.

We are also in the planning stages of a vast expansion of our museum building, which when complete will include larger displays, a storage area, workshop, library, classroom, store, and archive facilities.





Members of the VIPMS collecting on the Browns River near Courtenay.



VIPMS monthly meeting on the last Sunday of the month.

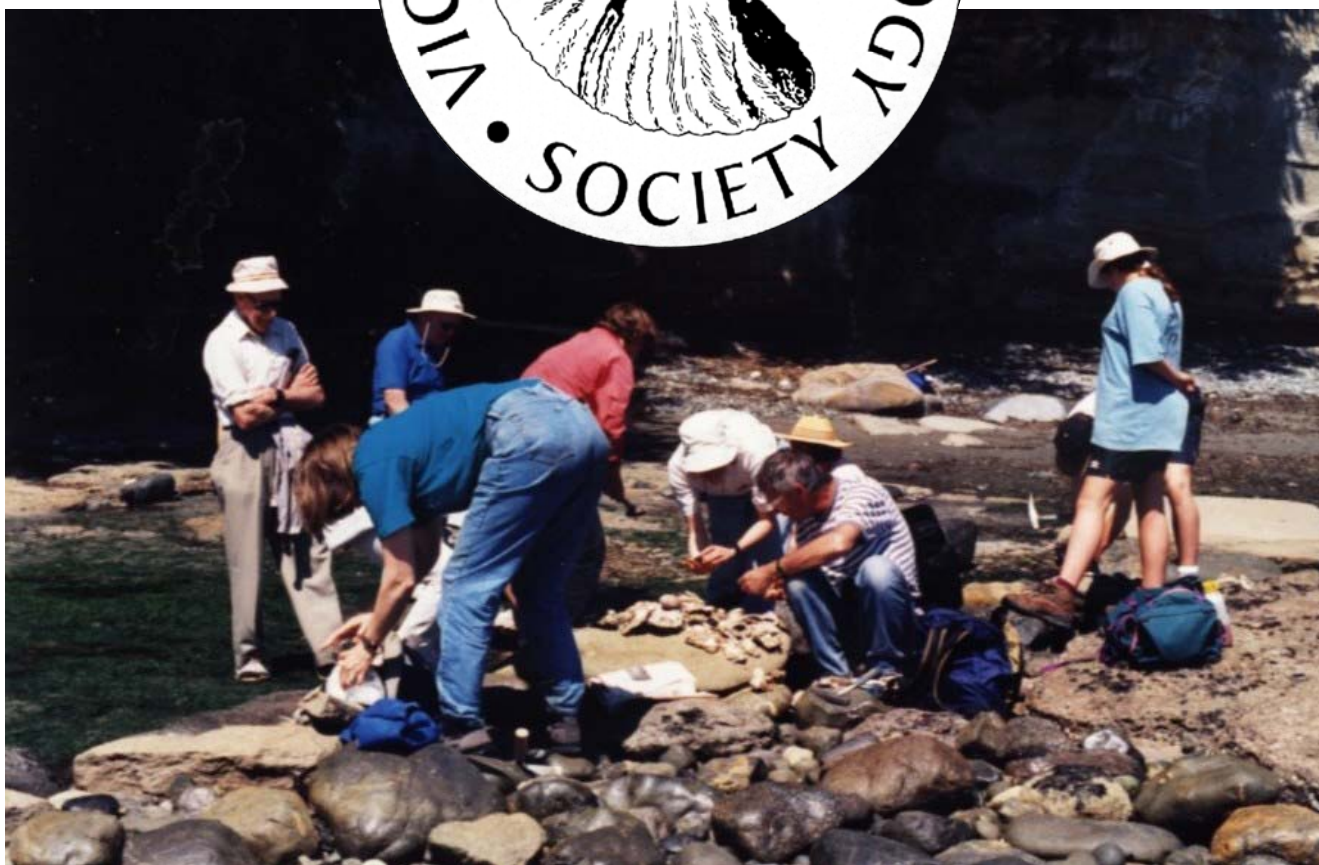
Victoria Palaeontology Society

Tom Cockburn and Timon Bullard

The Victoria Palaeontology Society was incorporated under the provincial Society Act on Oct. 27, 1994. The first Directors were Sandra Taylor, Thor Henrich, John Graham, Brian Brown, and Lisa Bohach. The society's first meeting was held on November 4, 1994, but the first AGM and Election of Officers and Directors was on January 17, 1996. Elected were Tim Lomas, Chair; Thor Henrich, Vice-Chair; John Graham, Treasurer; Marji Johns, Secretary; and Lisa Bohach, Andy Couillard, Tom Cockburn, Roy Leeson, and Thom Sedun, Directors. Of these officers, Tom Cockburn, Thor Henrich, and Roy Leeson remained active in the society's board for many years.

Field trips

VicPS field trips are organised for each month of the year except December through February, when access to most sites is impossible and the cold and rainy weather deters all but the most dedicated collectors. Spring brings low tides first along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and so our first field trip after this hiatus is usually to exposures of the Upper Oligocene Sooke Formation. Over the years VicPS members — usually led by Tom Cockburn, who has made these rocks his especial concentration — have made substantial collections from the coast between Sooke and Port



Members of the VicPS on the society's first field trip, the cliffs at Muir Creek on May 21, 1995.

Renfrew. These have greatly expanded our understanding of this ancient coast-line, featuring a myriad of molluscs, as well as barnacles and the teeth and bones of marine mammals.

Summer time brings low tides and shallow rivers, both good news for collectors on Vancouver Island. Traditional summer field trips for the VicPS include weekenders to beautiful Hornby Island and to the many sites around Courtenay and Campbell River. Many other rivers, creeks, beaches, and quarries have hosted VicPS field trips, as a glance at any Newsletter's back pages can attest. All of these localities are exposures of the late Cretaceous Nanaimo Group, and their ammonites, snails, clams, and other marine fossils have been the focus of many VicPS collectors. Society

members have been fortunate enough to discover many rare and undocumented species in these rocks, as well as some that are new to science. All the best specimens, from single fossils to whole collections, have been donated to the Royal British Columbia Museum.



In 1996, blasting for a highway out to the new ferry terminal at Duke Point south of Nanaimo exposed a hitherto unknown deposit of plant fossils in the Protection Formation. The site became known as Cranberry Arms, after the nearby public house. Thor Henrich was committed to preserving as many fossils as possible before the road was completed, and the VicPS made several dedicated trips to the locality. The result was the most diverse flora yet recovered from the Nanaimo Group, including huge palms, conifers, ferns, leaves, and even flowers. Extensive collections were made by Thor and Ken O'Neill and later donated to institutional collections, the former to the Vancouver Island University (previously Malaspina College) and the latter to the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Research

Members of the VicPS have prided themselves in being active in palaeontological research. This activity has included collaborations with other interested scientists, including Jim Haggart of the Geological Survey of Canada, LouElla Saul and Richard Squires of California, and Gareth Dyke of University College Dublin. Over the years, hundreds of specimens have travelled on loan to these and other researchers. The outcome of these extremely fruitful associations has been several figured type specimens and two new species, a Jurassic lobster and a Cretaceous clam, named after members of the VicPS.

Members have conducted their own research projects as well. Notable

amongst these was a long-term project to organise and identify a GSC collection from the Hesquiat Peninsula.

Several VicPS members met once a month at what was then the Pacific Geoscience Center, to peruse literature and make taxonomic decisions. Tom

Cockburn and Marji Johns have performed similar projects in the

collections of the Royal British Columbia Museum; Tom painstakingly teasing apart the contents of the famous Newcombe Cabinet, and Marji tackling the Mesozoic collections from the Queen Charlotte and Vancouver Islands.

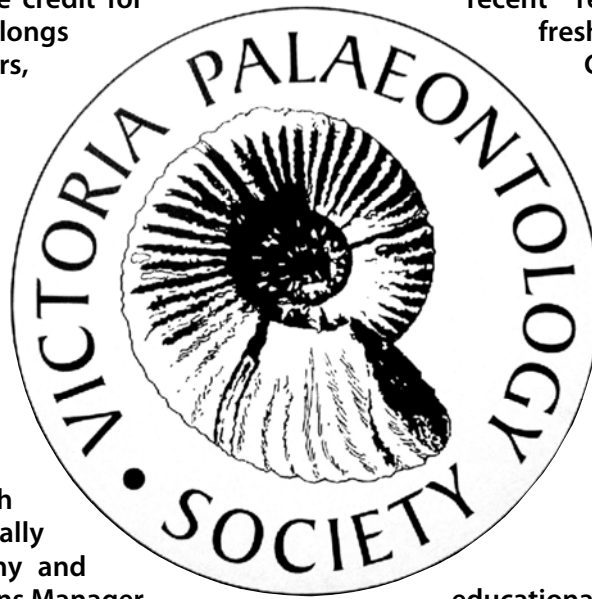
Volunteering

Having the provincial museum here in Victoria has provided many volunteer opportunities for VicPS members. Since the time of the society's inception, we have watched the Royal British Columbia Museum's palaeontological collections evolve from a cramped room overseen by a single volunteer to a meticulously and professionally managed series of cabinets that now span two floors of the Fannin



Members of the VicPS speaking with the public at Fossil Fair 2006, Swan Lake Nature House.

Building. Some of the credit for this transformation belongs with VicPS volunteers, particularly Tom Cockburn, Marji Johns, and Ken O'Neill, who have devoted years of service to the RBCM and demonstrated the value of palaeontological research. The remainder, of course, rests squarely with RBCM staff, especially Joan Kerik, the Botany and Earth History Collections Manager.



recent research projects, and fresh fossil discoveries. Children are always plentiful, given their appetite for dinosaurs, and are encouraged to 'dig' for fossils in the sandbox outside. Having run annually for over a decade, the Fossil Fair has excited and informed thousands of people.

The Society's other educational efforts include a portable fossil education kit on loan to the local school districts, and a variety of short-term exhibits around the city. The VicPS has also collaborated with other institutional exhibits, such as the RBCM's Bones of the Earth exhibit, and a temporary display with the Sooke Region Museum.

In the VicPS, as probably in the other member societies, our interest in palaeontology has brought together people who otherwise might never have met. Getting to know these people, and others around the province, has been a very great pleasure.

Public Outreach

Since 1996, the VicPS has showcased its Fossil Fair every year at the Swan Lake Nature House. This event is an opportunity for VicPS members to display their personal collections and interact with members of the public. Fossil Fair typically features three large collections: macrofossils of the Oligocene Sooke Formation, microfossils from a variety of Tertiary and Mesozoic formations, and macrofossils of the late Cretaceous Nanaimo Group. Complementing these are smaller displays on dinosaurs,

Upcoming Events

For information about field trips and other upcoming events, please contact the following persons:

NBCPS: Bob Campbell 250-562-1612
bob@theexplorationplace.com

TRMF: Dr. Charles Helm 250-242-3466
drchelm@pris.bc.ca

VIPS: Dan Bowen 250-338-8978
danbowen@shaw.ca

VIPMS: Graham Beard 250-752-9810
gtbeard@shaw.ca

VicPS: Timon Bullard 250-661-9106
timonbullard@gmail.com

Monthly Meetings

NBCPS: location, day, and time to be announced.

TNPS: Room S223, Science Building, Thompson Rivers University: second Tuesday of the month at 19:00.

TRMF: location, day, and time to be announced.

VanPS: Vancouver Museum/Planetarium, fourth Thursday of the month at 20:00. There is no meeting in August.

VIPS: location to be announced: first Wednesday of the month.

VIPMS: Qualicum Beach Community Hall: last Sunday of the month at 13:00.

VicPS: Room A120, Cornett Building, University of Victoria, third Wednesday of the month at 19:30. There are no meetings in July and August.

Event Calendar

January 21. VicPS: Gary Kaiser - Bones, fossils and bird classification.

January 22. VanPS Annual General Meeting: Dr. Nicholas Pyenson - Fossil whales of the Pacific Northwest.

February 18. VicPS: Grant Keddy - Victoria archaeology and the changing landscape.

February 26. VanPS: Dr. Tom Cockburn - Fossils of the Appian Way.

March 15. VicPS: Field trip to Muir Creek, Sooke Formation.

March 18. VicPS Annual General Meeting: Clio Bonnett - Dinoflagellates.

March 26. VanPS: Perry Poon - Mount Stephen Fossil Trail.

March 28. VanPS: Field trip to Chuckanut, Washington State.

April 15. VicPS: Martina Steffen - Topic to be announced.

May 15-18. Eighth British Columbia Paleontological Symposium, hosted by the Vancouver Paleontological Society at the University of British Columbia.

British Columbia Paleontological Alliance Policy on Fossil Collecting and Regulation

The British Columbia Paleontological Alliance (BCPA) is a union of professional and amateur paleontologists working to advance the science of paleontology in the province through fostering public awareness, scientific collecting and education, and by promoting communication between all those interested in fossils. It is the position of the BCPA and its component regional societies that fossils comprise a critical record of past life forms and, therefore, fossils have important scientific, heritage, and educational values. Any collecting of fossils must be made with due consideration of these factors.

Fossil collecting activities, by both professionals and amateurs, should be undertaken in a responsible manner, that is, suitable for subsequent scientific study and where collected materials receive proper curation, as described in the following BCPA Standard and Ethics for Scientific Collecting. Fossil collecting undertaken according to these standards provides a valuable record of British Columbia's paleontological resources and should be encouraged.

Standards and Ethics for Scientific Collecting

Determine the status of the land prior to collecting. Ensure that appropriate permission and/or permits have been obtained from landowners or governmental authorities before venturing to a fossil site. Leave each site as found with respect to gates, fences or constructions on the property. Practice sound environmental etiquette. Ensure that the size of field groups, as well as collecting methods employed, minimize the impact of collection on the outcrop. Take appropriate safety precautions while collecting and carry a first aid kit in each field group. Members will not collect from Paleontological Research Sites. Collectors must record and maintain documentation of all relevant geographic and stratigraphic information for each fossil in the collection. Every effort should be made to ensure that this information is accessible to interested professional researchers. Fossil collections must be properly curated. Each specimen should normally have a unique identifying number related to a documented fossil locality. Specimens should be stored in a manner consistent with their long-term preservation. Important specimens should be housed in a recognized paleontological repository. Sale of fossils for personal or corporate profit by any member of the Alliance is unacceptable. Members who fail to adhere to these standards may have their membership in the Alliance revoked.

Paleontological Reserves

A few fossil localities in British Columbia are of outstanding scientific importance (e.g. the Burgess Shale and Wapiti Lake, both presently protected) and merit specific protection and regulation as Paleontological Reserves. Measures of the importance of a Paleontological Reserve include, but are not limited to: uniqueness of the fossils found there (either individual specimens or associations of fossil types); unusual preservation of fossils; large moderately-complete vertebrate remains; etc. It is the opinion of the BCPA that recommendations proposing such a locality, and the nature

and extent of management of such sites, should be made known to legislators by the BCPA in consultation with other professionals having specific knowledge relevant to the proposed locality. General scientific collecting is not permitted in Paleontological Reserves. Locality protection should be flexible, to allow for periodic revision of the status, and should be designed so as not to hinder valid scientific research at the locality. The BCPA will seek to work directly with provincial ministries and legislators to help develop a process whereby Paleontological Reserves can be designated promptly and with the input of the BCPA.

Paleontological Research Sites

The BCPA recognizes that valid scientific research may require that some fossil sites remain undisturbed for the duration of the study. Such sites are to be designated Paleontological Research Sites (PRS). Researchers may apply to the BCPA for PRS status. Research sites would be established typically for periods of six months to two or more years, depending on the nature of the research. Collecting by BCPA members will be prohibited for the duration of the PRS designation. At the conclusion of the assigned study period, the site will revert to normal status unless the researcher demonstrates to the satisfaction of the BCPA that it should be further protected. The BCPA will work directly with provincial ministries and legislators to help develop a process whereby Paleontological Research Sites can be designated promptly and with the input of the BCPA.

Out-of Province Paleontologists

Out-of province paleontologists should not be restricted from fossil collecting, provided they follow adequate collecting and curatorial procedures, as outlined in the above Standards and Ethics for Scientific Collecting. Out-of province paleontologists should inform the BCPA of their research programme prior to initiation of their collecting programme. Type specimens and general collections of fossils must be housed in appropriate institutions designated for such storage. In particular instances, the BCPA may request out-of province paleontologists to deposit a representative suite of specimens in a British Columbia museum, or recognized institutional collection.

Commercial Collecting

The BCPA is opposed to commercial extraction of fossils by its member organization or individuals. Any commercial fossil extraction activity should be regulated by the province and should require permits and/or licenses, with some sort of associated fee. The BCPA anticipates that its advice will be sought and followed by regulators in assessing each permit application for suitability. The BCPA will seek to work directly with provincial ministries and legislators to help develop a method whereby guidelines for Commercial Fossils Collecting Standards and a Commercial Permit Application Process are established.