

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
A SPECIAL REPORT FROM
THE VISION FORUM, INC.

HOME SCHOOL EXPEDITION UNCOVERS
RARE ALLOSAUR and GIANT SAUROPOD

COLORADO, May 20 -- A dinosaur fossil expedition for home educators sponsored by Vision Forum and Creation Expeditions has excavated a rare, large, intact Allosaurus measuring more than 22 feet in length, 10 feet in height, with a complete skull more than a yard long. Allosaurs are believed to be a close relative of the Tyrannosaurus rex, and differ from the T. rex primarily in size and cranial capacity.

Under the leadership of Vision Forum president Doug Phillips, an adjunct professor of apologetics with the Institute for Creation Research, and Peter DeRosa, a veteran archaeologist and paleontologist with Creation Expeditions, the team of thirty home educators spent a week hunting for and excavating fossils in a privately owned location in the Skull Creek Basin of Northwest Colorado.

Of the thirty-seven Allosaurs which have been discovered around the globe, only thirteen have been found with more than twenty-five percent of the fossilized remains intact. Of those thirteen, only three complete skulls have ever been recovered. The Skull Creek Allosaur not only provides the world with the fourth complete skull, but nearly seventy percent of the animal has already been found which lends credence to speculation that it may prove to be the best-preserved and most fully-articulated allosaur yet to be excavated.

"Most people do not realize that there is a tremendous paucity of dinosaur bones available to scientists," said Doug Phillips. "Ninety-five percent of all the fossils in the world are marine invertebrates. Ninety-five percent of the remaining five percent are plants. The vast majority of the rest of the fossil record is fish and insects. Only a fraction of a percent of the remaining fossil record includes land vertebrates, and those finds usually consist of less than one bone. To find a complete Allosaur is simply historic."

FOSSILS POINT to RELATIVELY RECENT
and CATASTROPHIC BURIAL

The significance of the find arises not only from its rarity, but also from the circumstances surrounding the death of the animal.

"The evidence strongly points to a relatively recent and catastrophic event similar to that described in the Bible as the Flood of Noah's day," said Pete DeRosa.

"We found a complete section of vertebrae more than twelve feet in length which was fully articulated. The dinosaur appears to be in much the same position as he was at the time of his death and burial, which must have been virtually instantaneous, and caused by a catastrophic event. Not only was this fully articulated dinosaur found laying in a bed of leaves and plant debris, but there is wood from trees mixed in among the bones, some of which contains petrified and non-petrified elements in the same piece of wood. If this creature were millions of years old, the evidence would look quite different."

The discovery of such a valuable dinosaur by creation scientists could send shockwaves through the scientific community. Phillips notes that "up to now, a well-funded and insular community of evolutionary theorists have dominated the field of paleontology, directing most of the large dinosaur finds to research and museums committed to interpreting the fossil evidence through the faith-driven assumptions of evolution. To have a dinosaur of this size and significance within the camp of scientists committed to the creation model is nothing short of a coup d'etat."

The DeRosas, who have a contract on the fossil rights to the property and own the right to the material they excavate, had been working the site well in advance of the arrival of the home school expedition. Their preliminary work over a period of months led them to believe that they had an allosaurus, but it was not until the Vision Forum home school expedition arrived and preformed the heavy lifting of moving a lot of dirt, that evidence was found to validate their suspicions.

HOME SCHOOL FATHER FINDS ALLOSAURUS SKULL

As often happens with fossil expeditions, the discovery of the Allosaur skull came at the last moment of the last day of the trip. With just minutes to go before calling quits on the expedition, Dr. Bruce Bellamy, a home school father from Clinton, Missouri, broke dirt on what would prove to be the neck vertebrae leading up to the skull.

"I placed a \$250 bounty on anyone who found the skull," Phillips said. "It was just a small incentive for my team, of course. The actual skull could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Last week, Pete DeRosa brought in a fresh team of professional excavators to plaster jack the skull and remove it from the ground for laboratory preservation. It is not yet known when the skull will be available for viewing.

GIANT "BEHEMOTH" SAUROPOD UNCOVERED

Dr. Bellamy was not the only one to uncover a last minute prize. Just yards away on a second site, nine-year-old home schooler Haley Meadows was dusting away dirt with her brush when she found the claws to a 100-foot Sauropod, presently believed to be of the rare Ultrasaurus variety.

"What is amazing about this sauropod is the fact that it constitutes an entire hill," Phillips said. "This is an enormous and impressive creature. Everywhere we dig, we seem to be finding more bones -- from six-foot femurs to ribs to vertebrae.

HOME SCHOOL ADVENTURE TURNS INTO HISTORY-MAKING EXCAVATION

Excavating a fully articulated dinosaur is a highly specialized, expensive, and technical task -- for which the DeRosa family was well prepared.

"We were blessed to be under the supervision of Pete DeRosa and his entire staff from Creation Expeditions," Phillips said. "These guys are a top-notch team with hundreds of digs behind them and more than a decade of experience working on some of the most interesting fossil sites in the world. I think everyone was impressed by their professionalism, their knowledge, and their passion for excellence."

Home educators paying \$995 per person were treated to a rare opportunity to study dinosaurs, learn excavation techniques, and actually uncover world-class dinosaur bones on a privately owned site once described by National Geographic as one of the fifty best fossil dig sites in the world.

"The home schoolers on this trip paid for the privilege of shoveling dirt, hacking at rocks, and the possibility that some of them might uncover dinosaur bones," Phillips said. "Many of our guests came with minimal expectations, but the dig proved successful beyond the imagination of both trip sponsors and participants. There is not one child in a million who gets an opportunity like this. This is what home education is all about."

"Learning paleontology and excavation techniques from a godly, highly experienced team of expert paleontologists, has not just been a highlight of our family's home school experience, but one of the greatest experiences God has ever given to my family," Phillips said.

"I have been lecturing on dinosaurs and creation for years, but this was the first time I ever had the thrill of sitting with my boys on the edge of a cliff and uncovering a behemoth femur or a Stegosaurus plate," Phillips said. "It is difficult to describe the exhilaration to know that you are uncovering something very similar to the animal described by Job as the great 'behemoth,' an animal which in this case died and was buried during the Flood of Noah's day, and which has remained unseen by the eyes of man for thousands of years. Incredible!"

THE FOSSIL SITE MAY YIELD GREATER DISCOVERIES YET

For many, the fact that creation scientists have broken through the monopoly on paleontology with access to such a fossil-rich treasure trove is the real story.

"The story behind the location of this site is perhaps the greatest miracle," said DeRosa. "Through a series of remarkable events, more than 120 acres fell into the hands of the current owners, a Christian home schooling couple committed to biblical creationism."

The owners, an evangelical Christian couple who home educate their own children, have been approached by museums, television networks, and leading evolutionists who have expressed a strong interest in the fossils found on the property.

"I am sure the evolutionists would love to get their hands on these bones. Who can blame them," Phillips said. "It is like a goldmine for paleontologists."

Creation Expeditions, which believes the land may contain dozens of more fully articulated dinosaurs, hopes to be excavating the site for years.

VISION FORUM to SPONSOR TWO MORE FOSSIL DIGS

A similar fossil recovery expedition is planned in the first week of February 2002, for the Peace and Rainbow Rivers of Florida, where the team hopes to recover fossilized mammoth, megalodon, woolly rhino, giant sloth, giant beaver, and other ice age creatures. A recent expedition by the DeRosas to these locations uncovered the largest fully articulated mammoth jaw in the world.

A dinosaur dig to the Colorado location is planned for May 2-6. Last year's dig was filled within about a week of the announcement by e-mail. Terms and application requirements for the 2003 Dino Dig will not be announced until later this year. However, if you would like to be considered with members of your family for a spot on the 2003 trip, you can send your contact information to Brian Howell at brian@visionforum.com. Space will be limited to just thirty.

VISION FORUM to RELEASE DOCUMENTARY

Vision Forum is planning to release a video documentary on the historic Dragon's Den Expedition in the future.

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