Newly discovered beetle species named in recognition of its discoverer, Dr. M.J. Paulsen, division of entomology collections manager. page 12

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**MORRILL HALL CALENDAR AT A GLANCE**

**July 7**
FREE Thursday Night
4:30-8:00pm

**July 9**
investigate:
Second Saturday Science
"Butterflies"
10:00am - 12:00pm

**July 14**
FREE Thursday Night
4:30-8:00pm

**July 15, 16**
Laser Shows in
Mueller Planetarium
6:00pm, 7:00pm, 8:00pm

**July 17**
Sunday with a Scientist
"Alien Invaders: Invasive Species"
1:30 - 4:30pm

**July 21**
FREE Thursday Night
4:30-8:00pm

**July 22, 23**
Laser Shows in
Mueller Planetarium
6:00pm, 7:00pm, 8:00pm

**July 28**
FREE Thursday Night
4:30-8:00pm

**August 13**
investigate:
Second Saturday Science
"Sand & Surf"
10:00am - 12:00pm

**September 18**
Sunday with a Scientist
"Nebraska Archaeology"
1:30 - 4:30pm

**September 24**
Smithsonian Magazine
Museum Day Live!
9:30am - 4:30pm

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**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Director’s Office (402) 472-0577

Museum Information Line (402) 472-2642

School Program Reservations (402) 472-6302

Friends Office (402) 472-3779

Mueller Planetarium (402) 472-2641

Nebraska Hall Office (402) 472-2643

Ashfall Fossil Beds (402) 893-2000

Trailside Museum (308) 665-2929

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**MORRILL HALL**

South of 14th and Vine Streets
Lincoln, Nebraska

Open Year Around
Monday-Saturday: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Thursdays: 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. (Open Late!)
Sundays: 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Closed Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, December 24-25, and January 1
Planetarium Closed Mondays & Husker home football game Saturdays

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**ASHFALL FOSSIL BEDS**

86930 517 Avenue
Royal, NE 68773

Located seven miles north of Highway 20 between Royal and Orchard, Nebraska.

Open Seasonally.
For schedule, visit ashfall.unl.edu

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**TRAILSIDE MUSEUM**

PO Box 462
Crawford, NE 69339

Located on Highway 20 at Fort Robinson, Nebraska.

Open Seasonally.
For schedule, visit trailside.unl.edu

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**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA STATE MUSEUM STAFF**

**Director:** Dr. Susan Weller
**Associate Director:** Mark Harris

**Anthropology:** Alan Osborn, Curator
**Collections Assistant:** Patricia Patton
**Nebraska Archaeological Survey:** Alan Osborn

**Botany:** Robert Kaul, Curator
**Collection Manager:** Thomas Labedz
**Collections Assistant:** Linda Rader

**Entomology:** Brett Ratcliffe, Curator
**Collection Manager:** M.J. Paulsen

**Geology:** R.M. (Matt) Joecel, Curator
**Invertebrate Paleontology:** David Watkins, Curator
**Informal Science Education:** Judy Diamond, Curator

**Parasitology:** Scott Gardner, Curator
**Collection Manager:** Gabor Racz

**Vertebrate Paleontology:** Ross Secord, Curator
**Collection Manager:** R. George Corner
**Chief Preparator:** Carrie Herbel
**Preparator:** Robert Skolnick
**Highway Salvage Paleontologists:** Shane Tucker

**Zoology:** Robert Zink, Curator
**Collection Manager:** Thomas Labedz

**Affiliated Courtesy, Adjunct, and Emeritus Faculty:**
**NAGPRA Coordinator, Professor & Director Emerita:** Priscilla Grew
**Invertebrate Paleontology:** Robert Diffendal
**Parasitology:** Mary Lou Pritchard
**Vertebrate Paleontology:** Robert Hunt, Jr., Michael Voorhies
**Zoology:** Patricia Freeman, Hugh Genoways

**Education Coordinator:** Kathy French
**Museum Associates:** Annie Mumgaard, Cindy Loope, Ann Cusick, Toni Petz

**Mueller Planetarium Supervisor:** Zach Thompson
**Ashfall Fossil Beds Superintendent:** Rick Otto
**Museum Staff:** Sandy Mosel
**Trailside Museum Staff:** Pattie Norman

**Accounting Technician:** Jaime Long
**Discovery Shop Manager:** Samantha Hayek
**Exhibit Specialist:** West Schomer
**Graphics Design Specialist:** Joel Nielsen
**Chief Communications Officer:** Mandy Haase-Thomas
**Public Service Associate:** Pam Jelinek-Smith
**Research Collections Staff Secretary:** Gail Littrell
**Scientific Illustrator:** Angie Fox
**Volunteer Coordinator & Adult Programs:** Sarah Feit
E.H. BARBOUR’S LEGACY: OUR PAST AND FUTURE ROADMAP

A Friend of the Museum asked me what I had learned in my first few months as the new director. I shared that I was impressed by the depth of community pride and good-will towards the museum, especially its dedicated Friends Board members. Further, my museum colleagues exhibit their deep passion and collective commitment to discover and share knowledge about our natural world. Their daily work supports the heart of our museum. And, as I have learned more about the early years of the University of Nebraska State Museum (UNSM), I have been impressed about how the past foreshadows the current and future UNSM.

Turning back the clock to 1891, when Dr. E.H. Barbour joined UNL and began his long, storied association with UNSM, the same elements – a supportive community and an energetic vision for public education and science research were shaping the first decades of the UNSM. One hundred and sixty years after his birth and 125 years after joining the UNL faculty, the legacy of Dr. Barbour is tremendous. Without him and his philanthropist friend Charles H. Morrill, there wouldn’t be premiere paleontological research collections at UNL, an Elephant Hall, and a tradition of an outward-looking museum serving Nebraskans. Morrill and Barbour were the original “dream team”. The emerging roadmap for UNSM’s success was focused on three pillars: public education (especially of youth), scientific research, and college instruction.

As a newcomer, I’ve also tried to make sense of the museum’s episodic ‘dark days’ when the museum nearly closed its doors in the 1960’s, 1990’s and early 2000’s. In all cases, the community – Nebraskans and others with close ties to our museum – made the case to keep the UNSM open. The vigilance of Friends were instrumental to keeping Barbour and Morrill’s vision alive. The wisdom that I have gleaned thus far from the scattered accounts of these crises is that keeping the museum relevant to the community AND the University is critical to its future.

Being relevant in 1871, 1971 or in 2016 means that museum must continue to innovate while staying true to its core mission of scientific discovery and public education. Today, after many listening sessions with community members and in consultation with the Friends of the Museum Board, the museum rededicates itself to Barbour’s three pillars with our aspirational goals. These goals will be foundational to our future roadmap and will guide our priorities. The UNSM aspires to:

I. **Promote scientific literacy and stewardship** of the natural and cultural heritage of Nebraska through our nationally recognized collections, innovative exhibits and dynamic educational programs

II. **Inspire K12 students to pursue careers in STEM or related fields** by connecting them with scientists and scientific research

III. **Conduct internationally recognized research and mentor undergraduate and graduate students** studying biological diversity, environmental processes, and evolving human cultures

I think E.H. Barbour and Charles Morrill would see themselves in these goals and smile. And as for the past crises, we should all remember *Per aspera ad astra* –through difficulty to the stars. We should take this moment to rededicate ourselves to the next 125 years of implementing E. H. Barbour’s founding vision. Happy Birthday, Dr. Barbour!

— Dr. Susan Weller

Dr. Susan Weller, Director
University of Nebraska State Museum
When I moved here in 1998, my California colleagues said, “Nebraska! Why Nebraska?” When I was introduced to people in Nebraska with the statement “…moved from California,” the response was “Nebraska! Why Nebraska?” As a community we tend not to want to show off our pride in a great place. Maybe we’re afraid that we’ll be discovered.

The “Best of College Reviews” website features a webpage with “The 30 Most Amazing Higher Ed Natural History Museums.” We could justifiably be proud of joining Washington State University, the University of Oregon or the University of Minnesota in the top 30. Or maybe we could puff out our chests by being listed with the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Iowa or Rutgers in the top 20. But we can’t do that. We’re ranked in the top 10 as #9. The schools in our company include Michigan State (#8), Harvard (#3), Drexel (#2), and Yale (#1). (http://www.bestcollegereviews.org/features/amazing-natural-history-museums/)

In January, USA Today reported on our Museum’s monthly Sunday with a Scientist program. The session focused on wearable technology.

In addition to national recognition, we have much to be proud of. Those of you attending the Friends Annual Meeting in February got to preview Joel Sartore’s National Geographic Photo Ark. This fantastic exhibit uses Joel’s photographic talent to capture and highlight species we’ve lost and are in danger of losing. Joel said that the project “…was born out of desperation to halt, or at least slow, the loss of global biodiversity.” Photo Ark has broken attendance records and will be in our Museum until late Fall.

In April, the Museum received word that the Nebraska Environmental Trust awarded $425,000 for the new fourth floor Cherish Nebraska exhibits – Nebraska Natural Legacy Project: Ecoregions and Biodiversity. In addition $574,000 was awarded to support improved connectivity to link the Ashfall and Trailside branch museums to Morrill Hall and to schools. This funding will move us closer to the $11.4 million fundraising for Cherish Nebraska and allow many, many more school children to take part in Museum programs. Our past director, Priscilla Grew, deserves much credit for this award. The Friends provided a letter of support and pledged $10,000 to the Morrill Hall Fourth Floor Renovation project to confirm our support. (The architect and exhibit design team will be voted on by the Board of Regents at their July 22nd meeting.)

This is just a sampling of the good news. Museum staff, curators, and volunteers continue to astound and amaze the Friends Board with their accomplishments. And you can take credit for that. Your donations added over $20,000 to the funds held by the Friends. Those contributions allow the Museum to make investments in better exhibits, improved programs, and upgraded facilities.

Over the past year, the Friends have provided nearly $44,000 to Museum programs and exhibits. In addition, the Board made a special allocation of $32,200 to upgrade the planetarium’s projector. We also took steps to improve the way membership income transfers between the Museum and Friends. This increased process efficiency by decreasing the number of steps involved.

As you know, the Friends partnered with the friends of the Sheldon Art Museum, Lied Center for Performing Arts, and Quilt Museum in a progressive dinner. The goal was to provide an opportunity for the friends of each organization to see what goes on in the other venues. I expect that we will have more events like this. In my view, along with football, these organizations are an important part of engaging the public with the University. Working together, we enhance our ability to serve our University and community.

I’d like to acknowledge the vision and energy brought to the Museum by our new director, Dr. Susan Weller. She continues on a strong path to move the Museum forward. Her guiding hand is helping us do a better job as Friends. Susan along with the Museum staff and curators continue to earn our respect and support. Nebraska! Why Nebraska? Because of people like you who show their pride, their dedication, and their caring in supporting our Museum. Nebraska is a special place.

Thanks for being a Friend.

— Art Zygielbaum
President,
Friends of the University of Nebraska State Museum
MEMBERS RECEIVED FIRST-LOOK OF PHOTO ARK EXHIBIT, ANNUAL MEETING

The Friends’ Annual Meeting was held Friday, February 23 in Morrill Hall. The social hour marked the opening of the National Geographic Photo Ark by Joel Sartore exhibit. The reception also included informal poster presentations by students who had received Friends’ travel funding. Dinner and the Friend’s award presentation followed. The program concluded with a talk by Joel Sartore, photographer, speaker, author, teacher, conservationist, 25-year contributor to National Geographic magazine, as well as a National Geographic Fellow.

The Friends acknowledged outgoing board members Erin Colonna and Lois Mayo. Colonna joined the board in 2013. Mayo served on the board from 2010-2015 serving as the Board’s vice president in 2012.

The Friends honored Sandy Mosel, museum associate at Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park, with the Anderson Award for her meritorious service and dedication to the Museum. Mosel has performed extraordinary service with enthusiasm at Ashfall for over 24 years since its opening. Her duties include managing the Visitor’s Center book and gift shop and the Park’s bookkeeping. Mosel also coordinates the student interns living arrangements as well as their training. John Winkelas, museum volunteer, was honored with the Tuttle Award for his meritorious service and dedication to the Museum. Winkelas partnered with the Museum’s volunteer coordinator Sarah Feit to develop the inaugural 2015 Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab event calendar. He helped to develop a diverse science program that immerses children into active investigation and science experimentation.

Also recognized during the event were student workers in the Museum. The Carpenter Award was established to recognize long-term student employees who demonstrated outstanding leadership, responsibility, and initiative during their public service in Morrill Hall. Carpenter awards were presented to Cassie Spale and Samantha Hayek.

— Mandy Haase-Thomas, Chief Communications Officer University of Nebraska State Museum

Sarah McClure and Anne Hubbard tour the National Geographic Photo Ark by Joel Sartore exhibit. The Friend’s of the State Museum Annual Meeting and Dinner marked the opening of the temporary exhibit. Photo courtesy University Communications

The event concluded with a talk by Joel Sartore, National Geographic Fellow, photographer, speaker, author, teacher, conservationist, 25-year contributor to National Geographic magazine. Photo courtesy University Communications

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
PHOTO ARK
JOEL SARTORE
NOW SHOWING IN
MORRILL HALL
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA STATE MUSEUM
© Joel Sartore /National Geographic Photo Ark
MUSEUM PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO INTERESTING SCIENCE CAFE TOPICS

From ‘Space Law’ to ‘Saving Animals From Extinction’, Science Cafe at Morrill Hall provides an opportunity for visitors to eat, drink and talk science with a variety of scientists and researchers from across disciplines.

Kicking off in January 2016, Science Cafe continues to be a casual, educational and entertaining monthly series for adults (ages 21+). Exploring a variety of science and natural history topics, the Cafes present a no-pressure environment for ticket holders to enjoy a meal from event partner Raising Cane’s and a beverage of their choice under the 360-degree dome in Mueller Planetarium.

Over the past six months, the Museum has partnered with other UNL departments including the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and the University of Nebraska College of Law as well as other institutions in the community including 10/11 News and the Lincoln Children’s Zoo.

June speaker, John Chapo of the Lincoln Children’s Zoo, shares, “visiting with the attendees of the recent Science Café was a delight, as they had thought provoking questions which lead to excellent discussion topics.” John spoke on how ‘Zoos are S.A.F.E. (Saving Animals from Extinction)’. “I'd encourage anyone to attend a Science Café at Morrill Hall as the professional staff is very competent at coordinating a great evening filled with [hot topic science] issues, refreshments, food and a delightful time.”

“The great thing about Science Cafés is that anyone and everyone can get involved with their questions and opinions,” said Museum Director Dr. Susan Weller. “I look forward to hearing visitor’s comments and questions, and asking a few of my own.”

Wrapping up the summer series on animal conservation, the July 21 event will take a look at animal rights with the University of Nebraska College of Law Student Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Visitors visit the beverage station before finding their seat for Science Cafe in Mueller Planetarium. Photo courtesy University Communications

Science Cafe is an environment that allows ticket holders the opportunity to talk one-on-one with presenters. Photo courtesy University Communications
MUSEUM WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Trisha Patton  
Collections and  
NAGPRA Assistant,  
Anthropology

I began officially working for the Anthropology Division in April of 2016, although I had been a volunteer in the Division for over 2 years.

As the Collections/NAGPRA Assistant, I am responsible for managing and preserving the Ethnographic and Archaeological collections. Additionally, I assist visiting researchers, students, and community members who wish to tour the collections. I also work with dedicated volunteers and student interns who help with projects. I am passionate about the diverse collections in the Anthropology Division and love to learn about the objects and their history. It is a privilege to be able to work with, care for, and learn about cultures from all over the world through my work with these artifacts.

I moved to Lincoln in 2011 from Omaha. I graduated from University of Nebraska-Lincoln with my Bachelor’s in Anthropology with a minor in Archaeology. I will be starting a Master’s program in Art History this fall. During the Master’s program I will focus on applied digital technologies in Mediterranean Archaeology. During my free time I enjoy long runs, hikes, and simply being outdoors.

Robert Zink  
Curator of Zoology and  
Professor, School Natural  
Resources and School of  
Biological Sciences

My background includes a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, a postdoctoral fellowship at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and faculty positions at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge) and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, where I was the Breckenridge Chair in Ornithology at the Bell Museum (1993 to 2015). I have always been associated with museums, and am committed to their advancement and success in both the public and research arenas.

Although my roots on my mother’s side are Nebraskan (her father was from Tobias), I have just moved to Lincoln. My wife, Susan Weller (Director of the University of Nebraska State Museum), and I are very happily settling into our new home and life in Nebraska. I am excited to be a part of the State Museum environment and to help guide the excellent zoology collections. My research will continue to involve conservation genetics and evolution of birds, and I am really happy to be partnering with Nebraska Game and Parks to start research projects on ring-necked pheasant, wild turkey and white-tailed and mule deer. In the latter studies we will be assessing the genetic uniqueness of populations in Nebraska relative to neighboring states.

First Thursday of Every Month  
6:30 pm  
with Lincoln City Libraries at Morrill Hall

BRING A FRIEND
MUSEUM CURATOR LEADS BOOK UPDATE, POPULAR MUSEUM RESOURCE


*Practical Evaluation Guide* provides the necessary tools to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and exhibits in informal educational settings including museums, science centers, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and parks.

This resource serves as a basic, easy-to-follow guide for museum professionals and students who want to understand the effects of such public institutions on the people who visit them.


NOW SHOWING IN MUELLER PLANETARIUM

**Dream to Fly**
- Tues - Sat | 11am
- Sun | 2pm

The incredible story of human flight, from simple dream to astonishing reality.

**Solar Superstorms**
- Tues - Sat | 12pm
- Sun | 3pm

Explore the inner workings of the Sun to see how it could threaten civilization as we know it.

**Big Red Sky Tour**
- Sat | 2pm

Explore the night skies over Nebraska and discover the stories behind the constellations.

Tickets available at the front desk in Morrill Hall. | Schedule subject to change.
Children ages four and under are not admitted into the Planetarium. | Go to www.spacelaser.com for more information.
VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Each month the museum highlights the contributions of an outstanding volunteer. You can see our volunteer spotlight near the visitor services desk at Morrill Hall.

JANUARY
Mary A.
“My favorite part of volunteering is feeling useful.”

FEBRUARY
Jerica B.
“My favorite part of volunteering is making a positive impact on other people!”

MARCH
Alex L.
“I enjoy the kids I get to work with. I’ve learned so much about dinosaurs because of them -- they almost always know more than I do.”

APRIL
Jessica W.
“My favorite part is volunteering in the Discovery Center and seeing the children run around with the skunk scent and trick others into smelling it. These children get so much joy from watching others suffer from a bad smell!”

MAY
Joshua L.
“My favorite part of volunteering is meeting new people.”

JUNE
Sarah S.
“My favorite part of volunteering is meeting new people.”

Ready for a unique opportunity to promote discovery in natural science? Join the Museum’s volunteer program to support Museum operations, contribute to visitor experience, assist at special events or help with the Museum’s collections and research. For more information and to apply go to: museum.unl.edu/volunteer
On April 11th the Museum hosted a celebratory lunch to honor the commitment and dedication of the 2015 “Volunteer of the Year at Nebraska Hall,” “Volunteer of the Year at Morrill Hall,” and “Group Volunteer of the Year,” recipients.

This year’s group volunteer award went to Lambda Theta Nu Sorority. Anna Rodriguez accepted the award on behalf of the group. The organization provided eight volunteers to help during Dinosaurs and Disasters (D&D). If you have been to D&D, you know what a busy, full event it is; this year was no exception, we had over 2,000 visitors. The members of Lambda Theta Nu volunteered to help man the fossil dig boxes and fossil rub station in the rhino gallery.

The State Museum’s “Volunteer of the Year,” for a volunteer working at Morrill Hall is Christy Buhrmann. Christy volunteers on Sundays at the fossil cart, she also helps at special museum programs such as our recent Museum Day Live, and at outreach events like Nebraska SciFest. Not only is Christy a wonderful volunteer for the education department she also helps herbarium and zoology collection manager Thomas Labedz in our botany collection. Since becoming a volunteer in 2015, Christy has given over 213 volunteer hours in support of the State Museum.

Vertebrate Paleontology Preparator Rob Skolnick nominated Darrell Pavey for “Volunteer of the Year” for his efforts at Nebraska Hall. Darrell has volunteered with the Museum since the 1990s helping in exhibits and in collections. In January of this year he worked over 90 hours doing everything from the painting of corks for specimen vials to the technical sorting of micro-fossils that is critical to curator Ross Secord’s research. Rob described Darrell as “always positive, helpful, and willing to take on any assignment. He is truly the perfect volunteer!”

From April 17-23rd the museum also offered all volunteers discounts in the museum store, free planetarium shows, and museum admission as a way to further show our thanks. Thank you to all of the volunteers who gave their time in collections, education, and research.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming involved please contact Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Feit.
UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 80 YEARS, VOLUNTEER AT MUSEUM

To commemorate the University of Nebraska Foundation’s 80th anniversary in June 2016, employees of the organization participated in a day of service on each campus of the University of Nebraska.

The State Museum welcomed 15 foundation employees that provided support to various projects within the museum’s collections. The day of service included work in the C.E. Bessey Herbarium entering a book collection into a database for ease of use by visiting scholars, the zoology collection organizing mollusks, and in the vertebrate paleontology collection assisting with organization of unopened field jackets containing specimens removed from the field awaiting to be prepared.

Thomas Labedz, collection manager for both the herbarium and zoology collection noted, “the more efficient retrieval of botanical references from our shelves, facilitated by Foundation volunteers, make possible more efficient research by visiting scholars.” He added, “the Foundation volunteers allowed experimentation with a new format for organizing late 19th and early 20th century mollusk specimens for easier retrieval.” Carrie Herbel, chief preparator in the Vertebrate Paleontology Division commented, “the organization project would have taken the Department’s staff a week or more to accomplish, while with the volunteers it was almost completed in one day! Their enthusiasm was infectious and made the project a joyous event.”


After being closed to the public for more than 50 years, plans are underway to transform the fourth level of the historic Morrill Hall into state-of-the-art exhibits showcasing our great state of Nebraska. These exhibits, many of which will feature interactive, hands-on technology, will show the museum’s latest research and highlight amazing animals from Nebraska’s past. These exhibits will Cherish Nebraska—but we need your help to make it happen.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA FOUNDATION

Exhibit your love of this museum and this state by making a donation at nufoundation.org/cherishnebraska or by contacting Connie Pejsar at connie.pejsar@nufoundation.org or 402-458-1190.
A NEW SPECIES OF TROX DESCRIBED FROM NEBRASKA AND KANSAS

One out of every four animals on Earth is a beetle . . . and we just discovered a new one from Nebraska. . . again! This new species was described and published by Curator Brett Ratcliffe (Ratcliffe 2016) in the journal, *Insecta Mundi*, where a formal morphological description, diagnosis to distinguish it from related *Trox* species, distribution, and illustrations were provided. The new species was named *Trox paulseni* in recognition of its discover, Dr. M.J. Paulsen, division of entomology collections manager. Examples (paratypes) of *Trox paulseni* have been deposited in the collections of The Natural History Museum (London), The Canadian Museum of Nature (Ottawa), The Florida State Collections of Arthropods (Gainesville), the University of Kansas’ Snow Entomological Museum (Lawrence), and our own collections at Nebraska.

Trogids are scarabaeoid beetles recognized by an overall bumpy, grayish brown, dirt-encrusted appearance. This helps them to blend in with their backgrounds to avoid predation. These beetles are among the last scavengers to visit the dry remains of dead animals, where they feed on skin, hair, and feathers, thus giving rise to the common name of “hide beetles”. They also feed on the organic debris (feathers, fur, feces) found in the nests of birds and mammals. Many interesting and possibly rare species as well as valuable new data could be gathered by collecting in the burrows of small mammals and in the nests of birds where there are accumulations of fur or feathers. Many species are also attracted to lights, and a few are occasionally found in dung, especially carnivore scat that contains hair and bones, which was exactly the case for the new species reported on here.

These beetles, which are included in the family Trogidae, are distributed worldwide with diversity and abundance increasing in arid regions. Approximately 300 species are known with 51 species in two genera occurring in the USA, and 19 of these species are found in Nebraska. The genus *Trox* includes 25 species in the USA, and 14 of those species are found in Nebraska (Ratcliffe and Paulsen 2008).

We had several specimens of the new species in our collections dating from as far back as 1973, but they went unrecognized as being different from a similar-looking species from Nebraska. In the fall of 2015, Dr. Paulsen, while doing routine identifications, examined *Trox* specimens he had previously collected from dried coyote scat in Frontier County and realized they were different. He then made a concerted effort to re-examine specimens in our extensive collections and to undertake additional field collecting the following March and April in Frontier and Johnson Counties to look for additional specimens. In total, 46 specimens of this new species were discovered by new field collecting and by examining our collections and those of the University of Kansas. *Trox paulseni* is now known to occur in Antelope, Boone, Brown, Cuming, Frontier, Johnson, McPherson, and Rock Counties in Nebraska, but additional collecting (particularly on coyote scat) will probably show that they occur statewide in prairie habitats. Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody as thought.

——Brett C. Ratcliffe, Curator, Division of Entomology University of Nebraska State Museum

References Cited


UNDERGRAD DISCOVERS NEW MAMMAL SPECIES

During her first fossil-hunting trip, University of Nebraska-Lincoln student Carissa Raymond found a specimen of a previously unknown mammal species from about 65 million years ago.

Raymond, a junior geology major from Seward, was one of three students recruited by UNL paleontologist Ross Secord to assist with fieldwork in the San Juan Basin in New Mexico in 2014. Three or four days out, she spotted several strange black teeth lying exposed in the grit of an area known as Kimbeto Wash.

The teeth had cusps arranged in rows resembling kernels on an ear of corn or the teeth of a meat-tenderizing mallet. They were characteristic of multituberculate mammals, rodent-like creatures that lived with dinosaurs for more than 100 million years. They survived the dinosaur extinction only to die out about 40 million years ago.

It was the first new multituberculate mammal — “multituberculate” refers to the multiple rows of cusps found on the animals’ teeth — to be found in the San Juan Basin in more than 100 years. Project leader Thomas Williamson, curator at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, said he knew almost immediately Raymond had found something special.

“When Carissa found this thing and brought it to me, I instantly suspected it was new,” he said. “I’d never seen anything like this before.”

Along with jaws from both sides of the head containing molars and premolars, Raymond found front incisors and part of the brain case. Although fossils of a multituberculate species called Taeniolabis are common in certain rocks in the area, this specimen was found in an older bed. It was somewhat smaller and its teeth appeared too different to be the same species.

After comparing the new fossils with others from around the world, Williamson, Secord and colleagues at the University of Edinburgh concluded Raymond had found a new species, which they named Kimbetopsalis simmonsae, after the wash where it was found and a scientist who has studied the mammals.

The newly identified species is described in an article published online today by the Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society. The article acknowledges and thanks Raymond for her discovery.

“I knew it was cool — but not this cool,” Raymond said of her find. Secord, an associate professor in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and curator of vertebrate paleontology at the University of Nebraska State Museum, said Raymond has a great eye for spotting fossils.

“She was just a sophomore at the time. She hadn’t taken a class on mammals yet,” he said. “She was in my historical geology class, and although she didn’t have any formal training in fossil mammals, she turned out to be quite good at finding them.”

Secord and Williamson are now working on a National Science Foundation-funded project to analyze how mammals have changed through time and to identify sudden changes related to climate shifts. Williamson is a vertebrate paleontologist who specializes in the early Paleocene epoch, while Secord is a vertebrate paleontologist and geochemist who uses stable isotopes to reconstruct ancient ecosystems and investigate the effects of climate change.

NSF funds provided support for students to help with fieldwork who otherwise would have needed to work summer jobs.

Stephen Brusatte and doctorate student Sarah Shelley of the University of Edinburgh’s School of GeoSciences also took part in the research. Other financial support came from the Marie Curie Foundation, the Natural Environment Research Council and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Not much is known about multituberculate mammals, which date back to about 160 million years ago. They are not ancestors of existing mammals. Their fossils, found mostly in North America and Asia, have usually included only teeth, skulls and jaws, giving scientists few clues about how they moved or how they reproduced.

Multituberculates survived into the Cenozoic era, growing bigger in size after non-avian dinosaurs went extinct about 66 million years ago. The specimen Raymond found was about the size of a beaver and may have been an evolutionary ancestor of the bigger-sized Taeniolabis. They may have been out competed by rodents, which emerged 57 million years ago.

“It’s rare for anybody to find one of these,” Williamson said. “I wish I had found it.”

— Leslie Reed, Sr. Newswriter & National News Specialist, Office of University Communications
MEET THE 2016 ASHFALL FOSSIL BEDS SUMMER STUDENT STAFF

Each season the park welcomes new student interns and office staff from across the nation. Get to know this year’s students and be sure to say “hello” on your visit to Ashfall this summer.

Special thank you to the David B. Jones Foundation and Ted and Colleen Hubbard for funding student scholarships at Ashfall Fossil Beds. The site is the only known locality in the world where whole skeletons of large prehistoric animals are preserved in three-dimensions in volcanic ash. Through scholarship support, these students get a truly unique hands-on learning experience.

Adrienne R.
Hubbard Intern
“I recently graduated from UNL with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences and Geology, earning honors and distinction with my undergraduate thesis on Miocene turtles and tortoises. I will attend the University of California, Santa Cruz this fall to begin a Ph.D. program using geochemistry to study prehistoric mammalian ecology.”

Nicole S.
David B. Jones Intern
“I recently completed my second year of undergraduate study at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where I am majoring in geology, and minoring in Mathematics. I am primarily interested in ancient environments and the different indicators that include trace fossils, isotopes, and evolutionary traits. I look forward to returning to school in the fall and to Memorial Stadium as a member of the Cornhusker Marching Band Flagline.”

Rachel J.
David B. Jones Intern
“I am a junior at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, majoring in Geology with an emphasis in paleontology, and this is my second year as an intern at Ashfall. I have an interest in fossil plants and North American Pleistocene fauna. I hope to continue to grad school for museum and field studies.”

Brian L.
David B. Jones Intern
“I recently completed my sophomore year at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, where I am majoring in Geology with an emphasis in Paleontology. My major interest lies in Mesozoic life (dinosaurs, pterosaurs, and marine reptiles) although I am fascinated by all aspects of paleontology. I plan on attending graduate school after completing my undergraduate studies, with my eventual goal being a career in museum conservation, preservation, and preparation.”

Mikayla S.
David B. Jones Intern
“I am entering my senior year at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. In May 2017 I will be graduating with a Bachelor’s in Organismal Biology, a degree in the MSU honors program, and a focus in paleontology and geology. My research has focused on shifts in genome size through tetrapod evolution and functional biomechanics in the feet of birds of prey and I have a strong interest in biological illustration and the cleaning of modern skeletons for academic and research purposes.”

Jacob T.
Office Staff
“I was part of the Class of 2016 at Clearwater-Orchard Public Schools in Nebraska. This is my third year as student help, and the site is only a few miles away from my home. My plan is to attend UNL and major in Physics while pursuing a career in astronomy.”

Kinzly M.
Office Staff
“This will be my second year working at Ashfall Fossil Beds. The site is eleven miles away from where I live.”
THE ASHFALL FOSSIL SITE AS A PUBLIC PARK - 25 YEARS OF CHANGE

If you were one of the tens of thousands of people who visited the Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park the year it opened, you might remember that there was a small visitor center, a small Rhino Barn and a single sidewalk that linked the two. The parking lot was gravel, as was the county road accessing the park, and the grass was newly seeded, struggling to survive a hot and windy summer. There were just a few skeletons exposed in the Rhino Barn by the end of the summer.

If you haven’t visited Ashfall since that first year or so, you would be amazed at how the park has developed. The first thing you would notice is a paved road that accesses the park from either direction, and a paved driveway and parking lot. With a first glance across the facility, you would see a lovely lawn of well-established buffalo grass, as well as seas of big and little bluestem, Canadian wild rye, Indian grass, and some patches of switch and love grass. Wildflowers dot the area that was still barren after the initial building phase, adding color and beauty to the landscape. The visitor center is twice as big as it was that first year, with much more room for interpretive exhibits, a hands-on microscope table, and a book and gift shop area. A restroom facility that can easily accommodate visitors, even on the busiest days, is located across the parking lot from the visitor center, and a lounge area in that building provides a nice space for watching the hour-long Ashfall story on DVD. A picnic shelter, a fossil sandbox, and the Heritage Center, a building full of exhibits and kid’s activities rounds out the area nearest the Visitor Center.

There are now two short interpretive trails that visitors can walk to learn about the park’s geology. A longer nature trail gives opportunity for discovering the flora and fauna of the area, a little bit about the original homestead site, and more about park geology.

The sidewalk to the Rhino Barn now loops around, providing a handicap accessible route and benches where visitors can sit and take in the view across the valley. Interpretive signage along the sidewalks further explains the initial discovery site, the geologic rock layers, and includes a fun timeline that takes you back twelve million years a step at a time. Beyond the Rhino Barn is the Discovery Pavilion, a shelter for sorting and explaining micro-vertebrate fossils.

All of these additions make a visit to Ashfall a fuller, richer experience, but the addition of the Hubbard Rhino Barn has been a key development insuring that the park will continue to be a great place where the science of paleontology and the public can meet and interact. This building covers over 17,000 square feet, and is more than eight times larger than the original structure. A crew of interns is hired each summer to excavate in the Rhino Barn, and have a total of fifty-five skeletons exposed to-date. The interns are key to the Ashfall experience as they excavate the site, and interpret it for visitors.

If you haven’t visited Ashfall since those early years, you might just be surprised how it has developed as both a museum and a park, a natural feature turned into an educational facility for people of all ages to enjoy and appreciate. It’s well worth a second look.

— Sandy Mosel, Museum Associate, Ashfall Fossil Beds
TRAILSIDE MUSEUM WELCOMES PALEONTOLOGY CAMP

This spring the facelift for the Trailside Museum was finished. The much needed repairs and painting was completed and ready for Memorial Day weekend. The Pine Ridge Job Corps started the painting project in the fall of 2015. The carpentry crew, headed by instructor Marcus Fisher, replaced the tops of the museum exhibits. This was followed by Jerome Hinrichs and his painting crew with caulking, primer, and a top coat, giving the exhibit tops a finished look. The crew power washed the building, caulked, and hand painted the primer on the entire building. They returned this spring and finished the top coat with both hand painting and spraying techniques, returning this historic building to its original beauty. Both instructors placed great importance on technique and safety, readying the young men and women for their careers.

Shane Tucker, Highway Salvage Paleontologist, stopped by the Trailside Museum with a group from the High Plains Science Adventure Paleontology Camp. The group of 25 students and five adults from Agate Fossil Beds, Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Scottsbluff National Monument, and The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies were on their way to Agate Fossil Beds after a tour of Hudson Meng.

The 2016 season started out with an average spring but has gained momentum in the month of June. People from all over the world have toured the Museum and enjoyed the exhibits. The fluorescent booth, which we were installed in 2014, has been a big hit with the children.

— Pattie Norman, Museum Specialist, Trailside Museum of Natural History
As we close out our 2016 fiscal year on June 30, I want to thank all our museum donors - Museum Friends, the Friends of the State Museum Board, and Ashfall Friends Board for your continued financial generosity in support of our research and our public education efforts.

Thanks to donations to the Mantor Parasitology Laboratory, Dr. Scott Gardner and his students traveled internationally this past year for research and conferences. Donors and family foundations support student interns at Ashfall, vertebrate paleontology research and Dr. Ross Secord’s field work this summer. Dr. Matt Paulsen returned from a beetle expedition to Taiwan; the Hagen Endowment paid for his travel.

Exciting exhibits and educational programs are made possible because of you, our Friends. The beautiful National Geographic Photo Ark by Joel Sartore exhibit was made possible through your generosity. We served over 41,000 youth in the past 12 months—donors made those numbers by supporting school scholarship programs. And, thanks to you, our Friends, the Planetarium received a major hardware upgrade and two new planetarium shows. The wonders of the Universe are now crystalline clear, instead of fuzzy points of star-light. Gifts of all sizes make a difference - donor dollars help purchase color markers, pencils and ‘kitchen chemistry” supplies for Investigate: Second Saturday Science and Sunday with a Scientist.

I am grateful for you supporting us as a museum Friend, with your membership and the ‘little extra’ gifts you gave when asked. We couldn’t be a great museum without you, our donors, our Friends. Together, we are sparking people's interest in the natural world.

Thank you!

Dr. Susan Weller
Director, University of Nebraska State Museum

Dr. M.J. Paulsen, Division of Entomology collections manager, in a Taiwanese rainforest in July, 2015, collecting insect specimens to increase the museum’s holdings. Photo courtesy Chris Weiler

A museum volunteer assists a young visitor make “gak” during Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab. The session on polymers used a saturated Borax solution and glue to demonstrate a non-Newtonian fluid – a fluid that has the characteristics of both a solid and a liquid, depending on the amount of force applied to it. Photo courtesy Mandy Haase-Thomas
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Dr. Robin Kimmerer

THE HONORABLE HARVEST:
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Dr. Robin Kimmerer, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor at the SUNY College
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