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Explore Nevada’s Rich Paleontological History with the Nevada Paleontology Passport: A Statewide Guide to Deep Time and Adventure

RENO, NV (September 6, 2024) – Nevada’s paleontological history is rich and diverse, spanning millions of years of geologic time. The state’s fossil record offers insights into ancient ecosystems, climate changes, and the evolution of life on Earth. To extend the education and exploration ideas of Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada, an exhibition currently on view at the Nevada Museum of Art (Museum). The Museum developed the “paleontology passport” with the Nevada Division of State Museums and History to encourage families and visitors to get out and explore Nevada’s rich pre-history.

Presented at the Museum in Reno, Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada is the largest gathering of giant ichthyosaur fossils assembled under one roof. Spanning 9,000 square feet, the exhibition combines science with art, history, and design to tell the story of the rise and fall of the ichthyosaur, and its unique connection to Nevada.

“This is such an important partnership between the State’s Museums staff and the Nevada Museum of Art,” said Dan Thielen, administrator of the Division of State Museums and History. “Deep Time will show a new audience a slice of the work being done by state staff on behalf of the residents and visitors of Nevada.”

The passport describes the extraordinary exhibits and activities found at each of the guide’s 14 locations in nine Nevada communities. The Nevada Paleontology Passport is available for free at the Nevada Museum of Art and the participating destinations.

“It has been a great pleasure and privilege to collaborate with our state’s paleontologists, historians, and museum colleagues on this exciting Nevada Paleontology Passport that highlights all of the unique prehistoric wonders that Nevada has to offer,” said Ann M. Wolfe, Chief Curator at the Nevada Museum of Art and co-curator of Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada.

The Nevada Paleontology Passport is one of the many resources the Museum developed to help educators present STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) concepts throughout the exhibition, reinforcing state and federal curricular content in history, geography, English Language Arts, and visual arts. Deep Time educator resources also include a “Teacher Tool Kit” of education plans created through a collaboration with The Discovery that explore the history of Nevada’s prehistoric past, focusing on Ichthyosaurs and other ancient marine life common to the Triassic Period. These materials will be available for educators for free and will be disbursed by the Museum and PBS Reno.

“I am excited for the partnerships created for Deep Time,” said Dr. Josh Bonde of the Nevada State Museum, Carson City. “Every kid that has grown up in Nevada, including myself, learns about the ichthyosaur. I remember camping at Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park as a kid with my family, being inspired by the enormous bones in the grey limestone. Those experiences led me down my path to being a paleontologist.

“It is amazing to see what the Nevada Museum of Art has done to use the same subject to inspire the next generation of scientists, artists, and wanderers.” he added.

Locations in the passport include:

- **Aliante Nature Discovery Park, Las Vegas** Features a large man-made lake and waterfall, walking paths, a multi-story playground unit and a dinosaur-themed nature discovery area.
- **Berlin Ichthyosaur State Park, Austin** Tour the Fossil House, where numerous ichthyosaur fossil specimens remain embedded in a large quarry.
- **The Discovery, Reno** Look up to see a large ichthyosaur sculpture by Nevada artist Jerry Snyder hangs in the museum’s lobby.
- **Humboldt Museum, Winnemucca** View Great Basin Triassic and Ice Age fossils, including the Black Rock Mammoth.
- **Ice Age Fossils State Park, Las Vegas** Walk through the paleontology of the Pleistocene in the upper Las Vegas wash and experience the Visitors’ Center.
- **Las Vegas Natural History Museum, Las Vegas** Step into the world of dinosaurs and immerse yourself in prehistoric wonders with life-sized replicas and captivating dioramas.
- **Northeastern Nevada Museum, Elko** Learn about the discovery and community excavation of the Spring Creek Mastodon.
- **Nevada State Museum, Carson City** View ammonite fossils, a life-sized ichthyosaur, an ancient mammoth, and prehistoric horse, and walk through a 340-million-year-old reef.

- **Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas** Stand face-to-face with Nevada’s state fossil—the ichthyosaur. Take in a Columbian Mammoth and tickle your imagination with an enormous prehistoric Sloth.
- **Oak Springs Trilobite Area, Caliente** See fossil remains of six types of trilobites in the shale deposits near Oak Springs Summit at this popular off-the-beaten-path site.
- **Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, Reno** Let your imagination lead the way as you explore prehistoric creatures in one of Reno’s favorite parks.
- **Shangri-La The Dinosaur House, Prehistoric Park, Henderson** View large-scale models of life-like prehistoric creatures.
- **Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument, Las Vegas** Explore the Ice Age on foot with self-guided tours or ranger-led experiences.
- **W. M. Keck Earth Science and Mineral Engineering Museum, University of Nevada, Reno** View a large collection of fossils from Nevada’s ancient past including 50,000-year-old Giant Sloth tracks and a life-sized plaster cast of a plesiosaur.



DISTRIBUTION

To receive copies of the Nevada Paleontology Passport, please contact Caitlin Bell | Jeane Jones Director of Public Programs at Caitlin.bell@nevadaart.org.