

# The Paleo Times

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## EMSP SOAPBOX

By Tom Lee

I want to personally thank those club members that have been sending articles for the newsletter. This month there is a nice article about an opportunity for EMSP club members to collect fossils at the Lee Creek Mine in North Carolina in April. This article was contributed by Rick Poropat. Last month, there was an article originally written several years ago by John Stade that was reprinted with his permission in the February newsletter. These contributions really help with the publishing of the newsletter and are greatly appreciated. So....please take a little time on a rainy day and put together an article about your favorite subject in paleontology, earth science or geology and send it to me by email ([motirek@charter.net](mailto:motirek@charter.net)). It will get included with full credit to the author in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

## DUES ARE DUE

Our treasurer, Pete Smith will accept dues payment for a full year. Dues are \$15.00 per household per year and are payable on the anniversary date printed on your newsletter address label. See Pete at the next meeting or mail a check (payable to Eastern Missouri Society for Paleontology) to:

EMSP  
P.O. Box 220273  
St. Louis, MO. 63122

## Upcoming Events

**March 10<sup>th</sup>**. EMSP meeting at Washington University. Speaker – Mike Morales, Ph.D., Emporia State University (see details below).

**March 24-26--** 46th annual show; Rock Hobby Club of Greater St. Louis; Machinist Hall Auditorium, 12365 St. Charles Rock Rd.; Fri. 4-9, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, children 12-18 \$2, children under 12 free; dealers, demonstrations, exhibits, door prizes.

**April 7-9** MAPS EXPO28 Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

**April 14<sup>th</sup>**. Note the change of meeting place. The April EMSP meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Louis Science Center in conjunction with a lecture presented by Joshua Smith, Ph.D. Josh Smith is a vertebrate paleontologist in the Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University. Josh Smith is best known for his expeditions to the vast Bahariya Depression of Egypt to collect dinosaurs specimens such as *Spinosaurus*. He is co-author of the Book entitled: "The Lost Dinosaurs of Egypt". A short business meeting will be held following Dr. Smith's lecture. More details will be discussed at the next meeting (March 10<sup>th</sup>) and published in the April newsletter.

## Thanks!

Matt Forir was our speaker in February. Matt gave a great talk about the discovery, mapping, geology and paleontology of Riverbluff cave, located in Southwest Green County, MO. Many thanks for a very fine talk Matt!

**March Meeting**

The next meeting of the Eastern Missouri Society for Paleontology will be on Friday, March 10th, 2006 at 7:30 pm in room 203 of the new Earth & Planetary Sciences Building on the campus of Washington University. The Earth & Planetary Sciences building is on the southwest corner of Hoyt Drive and Forest Park Pkwy. There is a large parking lot just across the street. Please see the map below for more information.

For those that arrive late to the meeting, a cell phone number will be posted on both doors to call. Someone will come down to promptly let you in, but please try to arrive on time.

Our speaker for March will be Michael Morales, Ph.D., Assoc. Professor of Geology and Museum Director- Earth Science Dept., Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Mike is currently on sabbatical and is spending part of his time studying some of the dinosaur fossils collected in Montana that have been prepped in large part by fellow EMSP club members at the St. Louis Science Center's prep lab. One of Mike's many interests is reproduction in dinosaurs. Mike will present his theories about the interesting, but seldom discussed subject, of how the dinosaurs mated. Although this will be a serious scientific presentation, parental guidance is advised for small children.



## Field Trips

The Field Trip to Cedar Creek near Fulton, MO on February 18th was cancelled due to very cold weather conditions. Hopefully, no one was really upset by the cancellation. It was the coldest weekend of the winter.

Bruce, trip leader, is willing to try again soon. The rescheduling of this fossil collecting trip will be discussed at the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## Lee Creek Mine Trip 2006

By Rick Poropat

PCS Phosphate has announced the lottery winners for the Spring 2006 collecting season at Lee Creek Mine near Aurora, North Carolina. Our club has been awarded 6 slots to collect on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. These slots will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Sign up with Rick no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>. Any slots not filled by this date will be turned back in to PCS Phosphate. The following rules apply for this trip:

1. This trip is open to **current** EMSP members only.
2. Participants must be at least 16 years of age.
3. Participants are responsible for their own transportation and lodging.
4. Participants are required to wear hard hats (any color but white), steel-toed boots and long pants.
5. Photo ID will be required to enter the mine.
6. PCS Phosphate liability waivers must be signed before entering the mine.

### How it all works:

Collectors arrive at the PCS Phosphate contractor parking lot at 7:30 am on the morning of their scheduled trip. You must first check in with the trip leader using a current photo ID. When everyone has checked in (there will be about 50 people from all over the US) there will be a short orientation session to go over the rules. A liability waiver will be signed by each collector.

Collectors are taken to the collecting area by bus. There is only one bus and it must make 2 trips to get

every one into the mine. Those who go on the first bus will have about 2 hours more collecting than those who wait, so it is important to line up for the bus as soon as you have turned in your paperwork.

Collecting trips are operated by PCS Phosphate employee volunteers. Most of them have outstanding fossil collections from the mine and are very knowledgeable and helpful to beginners. Trips are held rain or shine except during severe electrical storms. Heavy rain may cause the collecting area to be reduced in size.

### **What's the fuss about Lee Creek?**

Lee Creek Mine, near Aurora, North Carolina, has been a popular collecting site for many years and offers the opportunity to collect a huge variety of Paleocene and Miocene fossils. Collecting is offered during two seasons; spring and fall. There is a separate lottery for each season. Access to the mine is offered only to individual members of organized groups by lottery selection. The mine is so popular that there are hundreds on the waiting list.

Most people visit Lee Creek to collect a large variety of shark teeth, some as large as 5 inches. There are also other vertebrate remains to be found, including whale, porpoise, fish, turtle, bird and the occasional Pleistocene mammal tooth. There are also hundreds of different invertebrate fossils to collect such as gastropods, clams, pectens, oysters, corals, bryozoans, echinoids and fossil pearls. Fossilized wood and amber has also been collected at the mine.

Lee Creek Mine is an open pit phosphate mining operation that encompasses about 5 square miles of real estate. Collecting is done on the spoil piles within the pit. Most of the material is a very soft, sandy mixture that fossils are easily pried out of. Most collectors use nothing more than a screwdriver to collect, although it is possible to dig with a shovel as well.

### **What else do I need to know?**

Additional information will be made available at the April meeting for those who sign up for the trip. I hope to have a slide program to show at that time.

Some people drive down to North Carolina, others fly. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

Make sure you are absolutely going to go before you sign up. Last minute cancellations deprive other collectors of the chance to participate and make our club look bad. We want to avoid any problems that might cause the trip organizers to suspend EMSP from consideration for future trips.

For additional information, contact Rick Poropat prior to signing up.

### **The Inner Secrets of Rocks and Fossils**

*(submitted by Rick Poropat)* Researchers at UCLA have produced the first 3D images of fossils embedded in rocks aged between 650 and 850 million years old. New microscopy and spectroscopy techniques allowed them to sneak an interior peek inside ancient rocks without having to crack them open. The research allows them to spot signs of ancient microscopic life, such as fossil cell walls and could be useful in studying extraterrestrial rocks in the search for alien life. Dig inside the full story in David Bradley's news page on spectroscopynow.com

<http://www.sciencebase.com/science-blog/rocks-fossils.html>

### **Distribution of the Newsletter by email**

We are starting to get a list together of those that have elected to receive the newsletter by email. A few will go out by email this month. This is a cost savings measure for the club. Each newsletter currently costs 39 cents to mail. This is over \$4.00 per person each year for postage alone. A sign-up list will be available at meetings, or email Tom ([motirek@charter.net](mailto:motirek@charter.net)) to begin to receive the newsletter electronically.

### **Be Patient**

If the renewal date posted on the copy of the newsletter you receive hasn't changed, although you recently paid your dues, don't panic. It takes a little while to update our records when you pay your dues for the year. The correct date will appear shortly. Thanks your patience.

# What is EMSP?

The Eastern Missouri Society for Paleontology (EMSP) is a not-for-profit organization Dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of fossil collecting. It is open to all individuals interested in learning about the history of life on earth. The club membership includes professional paleontologists as well as amateur hobbyists. The EMSP provides an open forum for the exchange of information and access to expertise on collecting, identifying, preparing and displaying fossils.

EMSP meetings are held on the second Friday of every month (except July, August and December) at 7:30pm in the Earth and Planetary Sciences Building on the campus of Washington University. Each meeting includes an informal exchange of information and speakers on a variety of fossil-related topics.

Weather permitting, field trips to fossil collection localities around the St. Louis area are held each month. Led by experienced collectors, these trips are a fun way to augment discussions at the monthly meetings. The club participates in joint field trips with other paleo clubs, visiting fossil sites throughout the United States. EMSP is also proud to be involved in partnerships with the St. Louis Science Center and the Greater St. Louis Association of Earth Science Clubs, Inc.

**Eastern Missouri Society For Paleontology**

**(EMSP)**

**P.O. Box 220273**

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