

Public Exhibits on Paleontology & Prehistoric Life

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The old cowboy humorist Will Rogers used to say, “Everybody’s ignorant, just on different subjects,” which is certainly true. But knowledge of some things is more important than of others. I often feel sad that so many people are quite oblivious to the immense history of the earth on which they live and move and have their being. Therefore, I approached our local library with the idea of having a series of interpretive exhibits dealing with paleontology, showing fossils of major life-forms from different geological periods, most of which I have found myself. The staff reacted with enthusiasm.

The project began in January, with a different display running each month through August. Topics included: Different types of preservation in the history of life; The Oceans of Montana (giant marine reptiles); Duckbilled Dinosaurs; T. rex & other meat-eaters; Horned Dinosaurs; Ammonites (tentacled marine invertebrates); The Ice Age (Mammoths, Saber-toothed Cats, Giant Bison with an 8-foot horn spread, and The First Americans); finally, Facts & Fallacies about Fossils. Evolution has been implied throughout with labels concerning tens and hundreds of millions of years, and nothing brings out issues of science and religion more than the discoveries in paleontology.

The exhibits have descriptive material on an adult level and lots of visuals in the form of photos, paintings, and sculptures that kids can appreciate, too. Of course, People are drawn to the close-up view of fossils of dinosaur bones and other prehistoric creatures (most real, a few casts). School teachers are visiting the displays with their students, and the library is having a summer reading program on dinosaurs for kids. I’ll be doing presentations for both kids and adults.

(PS: (The fact that added to my profession as a Christian minister (now retired) is my 30-year position as a Research Associate in Paleontology with The Museum

of the Rockies at Montana State University does, I think, give me some credibility in this subject and causes people to reflect.)

[The following five photos will give you a flavor of the exhibits.]





