



VICTORIA
PALAEOLOGY
SOCIETY

The present informs the past; the past informs the future

Prospective Partner

February 2025

R/E: Annual Public Fossil Fair

We are excited to present a unique opportunity to partner with the Victoria Palaeontology Society, a registered charity, in hosting the highly anticipated Fossil Fair.

This annual event, going into its 27th year, celebrates the fascinating world of fossils found right here in BC. The two-day event provides a platform to attract active families and outdoor enthusiasts to your location.

For the past 26 years, Fossil Fair has been our Society's annual public engagement and fundraising event, with proceeds supporting the advancement of the science of paleontology in BC. The annual attendance of 500 people has been limited mostly by parking capacity. We are confident that a venue with ample parking can attract more people.

Fossils in BC are considered an important part of BC's heritage and cannot be bought or sold. Enthusiasts are allowed by law to collect fossils, and we teach how to do it responsibly, as a good citizen scientist.

If your business or organization seeks increased foot traffic from nature-focused families and outdoor enthusiasts, and you support our goal of encouraging citizen science, Fossil Fair may be a good match. Attached are details. If you see a mutually beneficial opportunity, we want to talk to you. Please reach out to us.

With appreciation,

Jerri Wilkins, Chair
vicpalaeo@gmail.com
778-700-8714

Attachments:

- Fossil Fair Proposal 2025
- Fossil Fair Poster, Media Release and Media Coverage from 2022

Fossil Fair Partnership Proposal 2025

Who We Are:

The Victoria Palaeontology Society is a registered not-for-profit, charitable society with a mandate to promote the science of paleontology in BC (Vancouver Island, in particular). We are a small organization at the intersection of scientific pursuit and public support; our 20-25 members (professional paleontologists and non-professional citizen scientists) are dedicated to hands-on education and scientific support.

Modest annual revenue from membership dues and donations finances our activities. Our signature charity work includes a student research award for paleontology, and a bi-annual scientific symposium to advance research. The symposium brings together scientists, students and enthusiasts to share the latest paleontological research in BC. The research award is open to paleontology students in BC and western Canada.

Fossil Fair:

The Fossil Fair, entering its 27th year in 2025, is our annual public awareness display and fundraiser. It introduces the public to the incredible wealth of ancient life represented in BC rocks and provides a venue for our members to share their specimens, their knowledge and their passion with the public. Admission is by donation. Attendance and donations have risen steadily since 2020.

The display (30 cases of fossils and illustrative posters) includes a diverse variety of ancient animals and plants from the Cambrian (550 million years ago) to the end of the last Ice Age (10,000 years ago) including dinosaur bones, ammonites, trilobites, corals, mollusks, insects, giant palm leaves and microscopic fossils. Most are from Vancouver Island, and the remainder from elsewhere in BC and Alberta. Much of the display is hands-on.

Traditionally held in late March to align with Spring Break, the timing of Fossil Fair can be flexible.

Fossil Fair Objectives:

- Science-based public education.
- Create awareness and appreciation of BC's fossil heritage.
- Engage the public to actively participate in finding, preserving and protecting BC's fossil heritage.
- Promote BC fossils as a resource, not a commodity (as per provincial legislation).
- Generate modest revenue through donations at the door.

An Ideal Partner Would Be a Business or Organization that:

- Would benefit from the profile and foot traffic that fossils and ancient life generates (500+ people).
- Wants to be recognized as a key partner and/or sponsor in exchange for a venue.
- Can offer publicly accessible space (min of 40m²/just under 500ft²) with ample parking.
- Can (ideally) provide folding tables for the event (about 12).

Victoria Palaeontology Society Contribution:

- Advertising and promotion (media contacts, social media advertising).
- Extensive display of BC fossils collected and curated by our members over the past 30 years.
- Hands-on educational fossil displays.
- Illustrative posters placing the fossils in context (the fossilization process, ancient life and ecosystems in BC, and environmental change over time).
- Fossil identification (public is encouraged to bring in their BC specimens for ID).
- Experts and enthusiastic, knowledgeable volunteers to identify fossils.
- A kid's scavenger hunt (with prizes) to reinforce learning.
- Colouring and crafts for kids.
- Demonstrations of fossil collecting, curating, preparing and displaying (activity number and type varies annually based on availability of volunteers).
- Volunteers for set-up, staffing/engagement and tear-down.

Interested?

Please contact:

Jerri Wilkins, Chair
vicpalaeo@gmail.com
778-700-8714

Attached, FYI:

- Poster, media release, media coverage and photos from 2022.



Fossil Fair

Saturday March 26, 10 - 3

Outdoor event at the
Swan Lake Nature House
3873 Swan Lake Rd

Register at: www.eventbrite.ca/e/fossil-fair-tickets

Free Parking

please bike or carpool as space is limited

Proof of Vaccination required for ages 12+

Admission by Donation to support the Victoria
Palaeontology Society and Nature Sanctuary

All Ages Welcome!

- Discover the amazing creatures who lived in the ancient seas and forests of Vancouver Island
- **Bring your own fossils** for identification by experts!
- **Learn and create** with hands-on activities.



www.vicpalaeo.org
vicpalaeo@gmail.com



Registered Charity # 11920 7157 RR0001

www.swanlake.bc.ca
info@swanlake.bc.ca
or 250.479.0211

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NEWS RELEASE

FOSSIL FAIR 2022

PLACE: Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary 3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria

DATE: Saturday, March 26, 2022

TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

COST: Admission by Donation

VICTORIA – Following a two-year hiatus, the Victoria Palaeontology Society will hold its 25th Fossil Fair featuring fossils from Vancouver Island, other parts of British Columbia and other areas.

The display includes a diverse variety of ancient fossil animals and plants from the Cambrian (550 million years ago) to the end of the last Ice Age (10,000 years ago) including dinosaur bones, ammonites, trilobites, corals, mollusks, insects, giant palm leaves and microscopic fossils.

The Fossil Fair is a hands-on, educational experience for all age groups. The public is invited to bring in fossils for identification. Specific activities for children include hands-on inspection of fossils, a scavenger hunt with prizes and fossil colouring and rubbings.

The display, which is used by the society in presentations to school groups, youth camps and other organizations will be of interest to educators.

BC fossils are important globally for their scientific, heritage and educational value and recognized as such under provincial legislation. Information on the Provincial Fossil Framework will be available, as will information about BC's Provincial fossil, the Elasmosaur, which is pending official designation under the *Provincial Symbols and Honours Act* by the provincial government. The Elasmosaur is a marine reptile about 80 million years old from the Courtenay area of Vancouver Island.

The Victoria Palaeontology Society cooperates with professional palaeontologists undertaking research on fossils collected by Society members. Information will be provided on some of the scientific contributions made by members, including the discovery and naming of new species. All scientifically important fossils are donated to the Royal British Columbia Museum.

The Society is a member of the British Columbia Paleontological Alliance, an umbrella organization representing the interests of a number of paleontological organizations in the province.

Admission to the Fossil Fair is by donation. Pre-registration and carpooling are recommended:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/fossil-fair-tickets-289985924707>

CONTACT: Jerri Wilkins, Victoria Palaeontology Society
vicpaleo@gmail.com

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250-479-0211

25th Fossil Fair hosted in Saanich showcases rich history of ancient artifacts

[MEGAN ATKINS-BAKER](#)

Mar. 26, 2022 2:45 p.m.



The family friendly event was perfect for children of all ages and many youths were present – seen here enjoying entertainment from a live dinosaur. (Megan Atkins-Baker/News Staff)

Fossils from all over B.C. and the world were on display Saturday (March 26) at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.

The Victoria Palaeontology Society held its 25th Fossil Fair, showcasing a diverse range of ancient fossils from as long as 550 million years ago.

Items such as dinosaur bones, ammonites, trilobites, corals, mollusks, insects, giant palm leaves and microscopic fossils were on display for families to interact with and learn from.

Tom Cockburn from Victoria Palaeontology Society said fossils are important for their heritage and educational value and are recognized as such under provincial legislation.

“We work very closely with the scientific community. Anything that is scientifically important goes to the Royal B.C. Museum,” said Cockburn. “We got a whole collection of bones from a couple who did the right thing and brought them in to be analyzed.”

The society cooperates with professional palaeontologists undertaking research on fossils collected by researchers and the public.

“What we do in the society is teach people how to collect responsibly, how to store it and how to keep the scientific integrity so we can pass it on – when it’s really scientifically important we work to get it in the hands of a palaeontologist to find out what the fossils can teach us,” said society member Jerri Wilkins.

To find out how you can preserve natural heritage if you come across a fossil visit gov.bc.ca/fossil-management.

Do you have a story tip? Email: megan.atkinsbaker@saanichnews.com.



Jerri Wilkins, a member of the Victoria Palaeontology Society, inspects an artifact found on a B.C. beach by a family attending the event. (Megan Atkins-Baker/News Staff)



Tom Cockburn of the Victoria Palaeontology Society holds a fossil of a dinosaur foot. (Megan Atkins-Baker/News Staff)



This is a replica of a dinosaur egg – dinosaur eggs had hard shells, were laid in a nest and were tended by the parents in the same way that birds tend to their nests. (Megan Atkins-Baker/News Staff)



Newsletter: BC Paleontological Alliance

Following a two-year pandemic-induced hiatus, the Victoria Palaeontology Society (VicPS) held its 25th Annual Fossil Fair. The annual public education event is held at, and in partnership with, the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Sanctuary located in the traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ people on the outskirts of what we now call Victoria.

On Saturday, March 26, 2022, nearly 300 people joined VicPS, The Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, the Royal BC Museum, and the Provincial Heritage Branch (home of the Fossil Management Framework) to explore the fossils of Vancouver Island (primarily) and what they tell us about ancient life and our world today.

With 80+ feet of table tops, 16 posters, 12 display cases, six totes of hands-on specimens, plus specimens from personal collections, visitors were able to take the usual historical journey: visiting a BC Ice Age Lake 12,000 years before present, then explore the Cretaceous (marine and nearshore fauna and flora from coastal BC, dinosaurs from the Alberta Badlands, and avian dinosaurs of China) and finally to a Late Triassic coral reef which over the past 200 million years rose from a warm shallow sea to form terra firma of the Cowichan Lake area.

Display themes included fossils (what they are, how they are formed and identification), what they tell us about the past, why it matters today, and the value of stewardship and amateur involvement.

The 25th annual event was slightly different from previous years. A pandemic-precipitated morphological make-over was required as we migrated from the cozy, enclosed Nature House classroom of the past 24 years to a spacious outdoor, open-sided tent with unpredictable weather and distancing guidelines at play (Six feet = one mastodon tusk apart, according to signage). For manageability, the event was reduced to one day from two, and to five hours.

That didn't affect turnout, and surprisingly, we didn't lose as much intimacy as we expected, moving 'en plain air'. With lots of sanitizer at elbow, and more elbow room (30' X 30' tents are huge!), the change was anchored by the traditionally popular activities (i.e. fossil scavenger hunt) while affording some creative latitude.

Touchable material was distributed throughout the table-top journey (as usual). Given the additional space to move around, people appeared to linger longer with it and were seen revisiting tables that particularly piqued their interest.

The outdoor venue also provided enough range to let loose T-Rex for the first time. 'Fran'-Rex (to her friends) quickly amassed a fan club as all seven feet of her waddled the grounds directing traffic, talking to kids, and generally hamming it up. The best behind-the-scenes entertainment was watching her paleo-pals get her into that suit; priceless!

The biggest boon of more space—literally and figuratively—was involving the Royal BC Museum and the Heritage Branch, adding expertise, creating new relationships, and gaining a few new VicPS members. Our organizations are all committed to the same end—professionals and amateurs working to advance paleo science and public engagement—and VicPS looks forward to further collaborations.

A handful of specimens arrived for identification this year. Few, however, were fossils, and none of any significance, which didn't seem to disappoint the collectors, who were eager to find other aficionados (amateur and professionals) to share in their enthusiasm.

A big shout out to the staff at the Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Sanctuary. They did an amazing job with pre-registration, pandemic restrictions, flow of traffic and people, and photography. They were organized and responsive and approachable and pulled together an amazing potluck lunch for us; they are dream partners!

And a big shout out to our own VicPS volunteers. There was a lot more set-up and tear down this year and logistical matters to work out; more than a dozen members participated before, during and after the event to ensure it proceeded with no major hiccups. It included a few former members whose faces and expertise are a welcomed re-addition.

During the event, many good ideas were generated for further expansion and use of the grounds, such as an indoor/out-door combination event (luckily the rain held off this year) and capitalizing on the carnival feel under the big tent to add more interactive activities and demonstrations, such as an expanded scavenger hunt around the property for high-energy kids, fossil preparation demos. Based on the solid foundation of materials and experience amassed over the first 25 years, these are just a few ideas that will likely see the Fossil Fair continue to evolve.