



Doug Stutzman, left, presents the fossil to Shane Tucker.

Doug Stutzman donates fossil

Douglas Stutzman, Schuyler Junior High School science instructor, recently presented the plesiosaur vertebra to Shane Tucker in the Nebraska Hall Department of Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Plesiosaurs were long-necked sea reptiles (usually 30'-40' long) which swam the ocean waters that covered Nebraska between 90 and 65 million years ago. The rise of the Rocky Mountains drained the ocean.

Stutzman found the vertebrae on the Loup Valley Gem and Mineral Society's June field trip. After club members had visited the Ashfall Fossil Beds, they drove on to the Verdigre sandpit and then on to the Baldwin Plesiosaur Site north of Center. At this last site, Stutzman found a plesiosaur vertebra that the diggers in 2003 had missed. Member Judy Dobbs found a mosasaur tooth here as well. Tucker stated that the Highway Salvage Paleontology Crew had also found a few pieces of mosasaur (a smaller marine reptile) bone there last year.

Tucker and Bruce Bailey are the two members of Nebraska's

Highway Paleontology Salvage Crew who investigate fossil finds when Nebraska roads are built or improved. Fossil finders may call (402) 472-2657 to report possible fossils.

Stutzman and his wife, Sylvia, were given a tour of the huge collection of fossils stored in Nebraska Hall. Only about 10% of their specimens are on display in Morrill Hall. Scientists from all over the world often come to Nebraska Hall to study the very complete record of Nebraska fossil mammals.

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