
News Release

Important Dinosaur Tracks Discovered In British Columbia

VICTORIA — There is new evidence that dinosaurs once roamed the lands of British Columbia due to a recent discovery of dinosaur foot imprints and a fossilized turtle shell in Bowser Basin, north of the city of Terrace. David Anderson, Member of Parliament for Victoria, on behalf of the Honourable R. John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) announced the historic discovery today at the Royal British Columbia Museum.

These dinosaur trace fossils are the most westerly dinosaur track remains to be found in British Columbia and the third most westerly in North America. The Royal Tyrell Museum in Alberta and the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria have confirmed the fossils are from the early Cretaceous period. The fossils are now part of the Royal British Columbia Museum collection and are currently on public display.

“This is an exciting discovery for all Canadians,” said David Anderson. “It will teach us more about the geology and history of our land and has the potential to lead us to future discoveries. This discovery demonstrates the importance of supporting knowledge, innovation and technology in our natural resources sector.”

“Resource development is not only a key to B.C.’s economic future, it’s also helping unlock our past,” said Minister Neufeld. “Careful, scientifically based research is allowing us to develop our natural resource potential and, at the same time, get a first-hand look at remote areas of the province. Who knows what else is out there waiting to be discovered.”

Mike Boddy, a geologist with B.C.’s Ministry of Energy and Mines, made the initial turtle skeleton find during a routine day of geological mapping in the area. He was part of a field crew led by Dr. Carol Evenchick of NRCan, which included Professor Peter Mustard from Simon Fraser University’s Department of Earth Sciences. Professor Mustard discovered the dinosaur tracks.

“The fossil footprints prove that dinosaurs once made the trek to the ancient west coast of Canada,” said Dr. Richard Hebda, Curator of Botany and Earth History at the Royal British Columbia Museum. “This first-time evidence shows these dinosaurs crossed the prehistoric North American continent over the newly formed landscape of ancestral British Columbia to gaze upon the western ocean.”

“Finding evidence of dinosaur tracks, turtle remains and abundant plant material in this remote area certainly means that it is rich in fossils and most likely would include dinosaur bones,” said Professor Mustard. “A turtle skeleton of this age is an extremely rare find in western North America and it may also turn out to be very scientifically important among these new fossil discoveries.”

The Bowser Basin and adjoining Sustut Basin contain Jurassic (170–144 million years ago) and Cretaceous (144–65 million years ago) sedimentary rocks more than 5,000 metres thick, covering an area of some 65,000 square kilometres. Since 2002, NRCan’s Geological Survey of Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Energy and Mines have been working on a \$4-million multidisciplinary geoscience program to collect baseline geological data. The oil and gas industry uses this data to better focus its exploration efforts in the area.

Geoscientists from Simon Fraser University are partners in this collaborative program, which also includes participants from the University of Alberta and student research assistants. Members of the team have actively publicized the new data and information they gathered. This data has also successfully elevated oil and gas activity in the area. The first fieldwork took place in the summer of 2003 in the eastern parts of the basins. This year’s field season focused on the central part of Bowser Basin, where the dinosaur fossils were found.

For more information about this program, visit www.bowserbasin.com or http://nrd.nrcan.gc.ca/nrd_t3/index_e.aspx?articleid=278.

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