

BACKGROUND

“A Changing Time” Gallery: a refreshed look at the BC Ice Age

The Royal BC Museum unveils a major update to its Natural History gallery, home of the iconic Woolly Mammoth, to reveal our most complete understanding to date of life in British Columbia during the Ice Age.

New hands-on, interactive displays and exhibits have been added to present the latest scientific and archeological discoveries.

Visitors experience BC’s two extremes:

- the Hothouse or Upper Cretaceous Period (66-100 million years ago)
- the Ice Age or Pleistocene Epoch (2.6 million to 12,000 years ago)

Over half a billion years of Earth’s history lies in the Royal BC Museum’s collection for future research. This important repository enables Royal BC Museum scientists, and researchers from institutions around the world to advance our understanding of the speed of geological change, extinctions and the evolution of new life.

BC has a unique story to tell the world. Groundbreaking discoveries by Royal BC Museum scientists are redefining the way we understand BC’s Ice Age:

- Volcanic ash, sand and the bones of extinct animals from an ancient lake bed in the Highland Valley in BC’s Thompson Plateau reveal details of life in the Middle Ice Age
- Near Victoria a mammoth tooth found in Colwood’s gravel deposit and short-faced bear bones at Island View Beach reset the date of the last glaciation.
- On BC’s northern mountain peaks scientists discovered ancient plants that escaped the Ice Age glaciers.

These discoveries establish British Columbia’s central role in the survival of plants and animals during the Pleistocene and the resurgence of life in the northern hemisphere after the Ice Age.

Many parts of BC remained ice free refuges and other areas once thought to have been completely covered by the Pleistocene’s last great glaciers – such as Vancouver Island – were, in fact, only partially covered. Places where we thought life had perished were actually rich in plants and giant mammals.



Humans could journey from Asian to America with beasts like the Woolly Mammoth, the short-faced bear, lions and giant bison.

This all points to a new origin story for BC – as a gateway for species migration and a possible source for many species alive today.

What will be BC’s Next Great Fossil?

Visitors to the new “A Changing Time” Gallery can share what they think future archaeologists will unearth in BC. What will be *the* defining fossils from our current epoch?

A large digital screen displays the different epochs with their representative flora and fauna. Visitors can swipe through time and when they get to the Anthropocene, our current epoch, they can tweet their ideas to #ourePOCH. Flora or fauna: what do you think the representative fossils of our time on earth will be? A sampling of tweets will be pulled every month and added to the gallery’s digital timeline.

Mammoths: Giants of the Ice Age opens June 3 until Dec. 31, 2016.

Media contact:

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries
250-387-3207

news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

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