



FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2012



Message from the President

Greetings to all members and friends,
Our Annual Fossil Show will be held at the Calusa Nature Center on Saturday, December 1st. This is such a fun event for people of all ages and many parents look forward to this wholesome experience for their children. Admission is free for children so it makes for an inexpensive outing with an opportunity for young people to learn about the fabulous fossils of Florida. It is quite a bit of work for us, but we are pleased to support our community as well as having a lot of fun ourselves.

As many of you know, we had an unusual amount of rain this hurricane season and the rivers ran high. The waters are receding now and we anticipate going to our favorite river in a matter of days. While we were not able to hunt the river for the past four months, several of our divers did get in some fine specimens from the waters near Venice.

Many of us are looking forward to a club trip this month to the Mosaic Mine. The people at Mosaic have treated us very well and we surely do appreciate their hospitality. We wish more mine owners could be like Mosaic

Happy Thanksgiving

and see the benefit of good community relations.

This month we are pleased to have another speaker from the University of Florida Museum of Natural History. We appreciate the excellent support the Invertebrate and Vertebrate departments provide to us and more specifically, we appreciate Dr. Bruce MacFadden who always does his best to accommodate us with speakers. Last month we had an excellent presentation on ammonites by Dr. Adiel Klompmaker and this month we look forward to having Dr. Austin Hendy tell us about his work in Panama.

The program for our November meeting includes our speaker, business topics, door prizes, refreshments, Show and Tell, and our super raffle. Thanks to everyone for their continued support our monthly raffle---it gets better every month.

Best regards, Bill

Next Meeting

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday November 15th at the Iona House, Calusa Nature Center. Meeting starts at 7 PM.

OFFICERS

Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694
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COMMITTEES

Cherie Neat, Newsletter
Curt Klug, Web Master
Bill Shaver, Speakers
Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer
Kathy Pawlowski, Club Merchandise
Pam Plummer, Club Badges
Pam Plummer, Membership
Joshua Frank, Refreshments
Dean Hart, Refreshments co-chairman
Gunther Lobish, Pit Trips
Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips
Coby Pawlowski, Youth Activities Director
Hollie Tiner, Club Photographer
Gunther Lobish, Invertebrate Education
Louis Stieffel, Vertebrate Education

WELCOME MEMBERS

Aimee Hankel
Dennis Hasting
David Allen Orsburn
Rosa Simone
Robert Perez
children:
Robert P., Adriana M. and Carlata M. Perez

ECHINOID BOOK

In our October newsletter, we had an article by Anita Evers, which was the beginning of her book on Echinoids. She had some great pictures and was looking to get some constructive feedback and would appreciate additional pictures to include in her book. If you have any specimens for her to photograph or any echinoid photos, please contact her at alanita@centurylink.net.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER MEETING

THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: October 18th, 2012
Place: Calusa Nature Center
Attendance: 53
Presided by: Bill Shaver, Club President

Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their generous support of the club raffle.

Marc Cantos brought in a nice fossilized fish jaw that Henry Crowley, a fossil vendor, donated for our auction.

Marc Cantos provided hot pizza and his friend Kathy made a great salad and desserts for our refreshments.

Speaker was Adiel Klompmaker, from USF who made a presentation on ammonites.

Bill reminded everyone that the Annual Fossil Show will be held on December 1st and asked everyone to take some of the flyers and hand them out. Bill will ensure that all 13 libraries in Lee County will have an ample supply of the Show flyers.

Show and Tell was presented by Gunter Lobish, Coby Pawlowski, Marc Cantos, David Sheehey, and Ron Seavey.

Honey Archey from Cape Coral Parks asked for fossil donations for a children's project at the park.

Mary Rawl, Director of the Calusa Nature Center, asked if anyone would like to volunteer to help with the Halloween event.

Members signed up for the Mosaic field trip scheduled for Nov 10th.

Bill thanked Ray Seguin for the great door prizes.

Submitted by: Kathy Pawlowski

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS & SPEAKERS

November 10th	Field Trip to Mosaic Mine
November 15th	Speaker Dr. Austin Hendy, UF
December 1st	FCOLC Fossil Show
December 10th	Holiday Dinner at Zion Lutheran Church

VOLUNTEERS FOR REFRESHMENTS

The schedule for 2012 is as follows:

November	Marcia and Charles Simons
December	Pat and David Rosenquist (beverages only) for Holiday Dinner Meeting

Many thanks to all of you . . .
your support is truly appreciated.

Websites & Locations of Interest

Fossil Club of Lee County: www.fcolc.com

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/

Florida Vertebrate Fossil Permit <http://flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/vertpaleo/vppermit.htm>

Southwest Florida Fossil Club
www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com

Orlando Fossil Club
www.floridafossilhunters.com

PEACE RIVER Water Levels
www.canoeoutpost.com

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions
www.fossilx@earthlink.net

Smithsonian Natural History Museum
www.mnh.si.edu

Florida Fossil Clubs
www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls
www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org

Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 3450 Ortiz Av, Fort Myers Tel 239-275-3435
www.calusanature.com

Imaginarium 2000 Cranford Ave, Fort Myers
www.i-sci.org

Southwest Florida Museum of History
2031 Jackson St., Fort Myers
www.MUSEUMofHISTORY.org

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL www.shellmuseum.org

Randell Research Center PO Box 608, Pineland, FL
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/

Cracker Museum at Pioneer Park in Zolfo Springs, FL Tel 863.735.0119

Lost in Time, 4719 69th Street, N. St Petersburg, FL 33709, Tel. 727-541-2567 Owner Brian Evensen

Tampa Bay Fossil Club
www.tampabayfossilclub.com

Picking Up Isolated Native American Artifacts
<http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/archaeology/underwater/finds>

SPEAKER FOR NOVEMBER

Dr. Austin Hendy

Seashells by the Seaway - Research on Fossil Molluscs from Panama (and Florida)

Bio: Dr Austin Hendy - I am an invertebrate paleontologist, with interests in fossil (& recent) molluscs, paleoecology and fossil preservation, and past biogeography. During my doctorate I studied the biodiversity and biogeography of molluscs through the last 40 million years, largely from museum collections and published literature. I was fortunate to take a position at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama (the country), and undertake field work through the country and neighboring Colombia. The collections I made are now being curated at the Florida Museum of Natural History and are being used for a range of research projects.

Synopsis: I'll present an introduction to the Panama Canal Project and other projects in the region, provide images and stories from the field, a brief synopsis of the research we are undertaking, and make a few connections to the fossil record Florida that you are all aware of. As many of your club may know much of Isthmus of Panama was once a seaway that connected the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea - hence the title Seashells by the Seashore. Of interest to a Floridian audience, some of the research I will present is focused on the taxa that migrated between these oceans and reconstructing their geographic distribution, which in some cases is suggested to have

REQUEST FOR DONATION OF SEA SHELLS, ROCKS, FOSSILS

The Rotary Park Environmental Center in Cape Coral has started a program for children to express their creative art skills and design ideas. The concept is to use natural materials, especially sea shells, fossil sea shells, rocks and minerals, and fossil bones. The children will use these items in the outdoor environment to make their designs.

Honey Archey, a long time member of our club, is an employee of the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation. She has donated some items of her own for this project and at our October meeting she asked if anyone would like to make a donation. Since the items will be left outdoors, she doesn't want any priceless items. If you have something to donate, please bring it to the November meeting. Her telephone number at the Center is 239-549-4606.

THE AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

The American Alligator is a familiar sight in Florida. Over one million live in Florida and recently several of them have been seen in the Peace River. As a matter of fact, over 25 were sighted on one trip this October and some were very large. Many of us like to hunt for fossils in the Peace River, which means we share the water and surrounding areas with the alligators. This probably sounds scary to many fossil hunters and might even cause them to find a new hobby!

Let's learn some facts about alligators so that we can safely share the environment with them. We have summarized a lot of information to make it easy for you know a lot about "gators".

Alligator mating season begins in April/May and eggs (20 or more) are hatched out after about 65 days of incubation. After hatching, mother gator takes her young (in her mouth) down to the water and then continues to watch over her brood for several months. So by late July or August, you might see some eight inch gator babies and mother gator will be close by. So we don't intrude as in the case with most wild critters, the mother will be there to protect her young. Just a side note; the male alligator has nothing to do with the entire process other than he fertilized the eggs during mating.

One interesting fact is that the sex of alligators is determined by the temperature of the eggs during incubation. If the temperature is 93 degrees Fahrenheit (F), or more the sex will be male, 86 degrees F or less the sex will be female, and in between those temperature extremes, the sex can be either female or male.

Male alligators may grow to be 11 to 13 feet long and the females are smaller in size and weight. The largest alligator on record is 19.3 feet and weighed over 1,000 pounds. Average weight for adult males (at least six years old) is 300 to 500 pounds. In the wild, alligators have a life span of 35 to 50 years.

Alligators are ectothermal (cold blooded) so they are sensitive to the temperature of the water. We often see them basking in the sun as a way to increase their body temperature. Alligators can survive in water temperatures of 36 F to 98 F and in extreme conditions where the water freezes over, alligators will put their snout above the water/ice level and remain there until the ice melts or until they die. Incidentally, an alligator can stay under water for up to eight (8) hours. So if you see one submerge, don't think it has to reappear soon.

When water temperatures drop below 70 F, alligators stop feeding. When water temperatures drop to 55 F and below, they will become dormant. They make a burrow or tunnel (some can be several feet long) and stay

there during the dormant stage and won't be active again until the temperature rises to 55 F or higher.

So for a quick recap, fossil hunters should be aware of the mating season in April and May. This is a time when males are aggressive. In late July and August, beware of disturbing the mother alligator and her brood as she may become aggressive.

Normally, the water levels will drop in September/October, so we will have cooler and shallower water and we can resume our fossil hunting. We still need to be aware of deep holes that may be inhabited by an alligator---they have to be somewhere!

When the water temperature drops significantly in November and gets even cooler during the winter months, the risk of alligator encounters is at its least. Also, alligators don't become adults (sexually active and under six feet long) until they are about six years old so they don't pose a significant threat. Often, alligators about four feet or so are just curious and may watch you dig---- they don't pose a threat. However, if someone has fed them, they will associate humans as a source of food. This is not a real concern on the river, but in lake areas, it could be a real possibility, so beware.

The eyes of an alligator shine red at night, so if you are fossiling at night (just kidding) don't forget to shine your flashlight frequently as you may not be alone.

So what about alligator fossils! The most common find is alligator teeth. Alligators have 70 to 80 teeth and during their lifetime they will, due to wear and breakage, shed and replace over 2,000 teeth. The other less common fossil is the osteoderm (or scute) that was part of the body armor we see on the backs of the alligator. The scutes are those protrusions that absorb when they are basking in the sun---nature's first solar panel. Alligator coprolite (fossilized poop) and bones, especially the distinctive ball and socket vertebrae (common reptile bone structure), are also common finds.

Some other bits about the alligator is that it got its name from the early Spanish explorers who called it "el lagarto" meaning the lizard. The English sailors picked up the name and spelled it alligator! Scientifically, the name is Alligator mississippiensis.

The alligator is no longer on the endangered species list, however it is listed as "threatened" because the crocodile of Florida is endangered and many can't tell the difference between the two reptiles. The alligator was adopted as the Florida State Reptile in 1987.

Floating down the River

My primary fossil hunting experiences come from sifting gravel taken from the Peace River. It has been 4 long months since the rainy season flushed me out of my favorite fossil location. Every year as November comes, I am anxious to get back to fossil hunting as quickly as possible and as quickly as the receding water allows. This means that I frequently attempt a Peace River fossil hunt before it is really feasible. This year I decided to try something different – a prospecting trip on a section of the Peace River which is not easily accessible and where I can probe for gravel beds. I chose the Peace River section going downstream from Zolfo Springs Pioneer Park to the Gardner boat ramp. More importantly, a fellow fossil hunter, Dave Flinchbaugh agreed to kayak with me. We met at Gardner at 7:45 AM, transferred kayaks, left a truck behind and headed up Route 17 to Pioneer Park. The distance by car was about 9 miles and we realized that the distance by river would be significantly longer possibly 14-15 miles due to the twisting and curves of the river. This was a miscalculation that we would only discover after we started downstream. The distance by river between Zolfo Springs and Gardner is actually 26 miles. This was going to be a LOT more exercise than we anticipated.



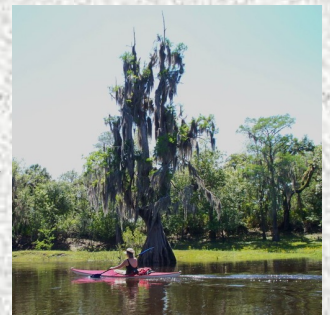
We left the Pioneer Park boat ramp at 9 AM. This is a fantastic kayak trip even for non fossil hunters. There was a good current helping us move downstream and the high water had spread out over a relatively flat river basin. Huge Live Oak trees with Spanish moss and Bald Cypress trees with grotesquely shaped “knees” ringed the river banks and provided perches for all kinds of birds and other wildlife. There were gray, blue, and green Herons, Egrets, Ibis, Osprey, Hawks, Woodpeckers, Wood Storks, Turkey Vultures and many others I could not identify. I especially noted the kingfishers singly or in pairs who would serenade either Dave and I or possibly their partner while streaking up or down the river. I counted about 25 Kingfishers and next to Ibis, they seemed to be most numerous. There were deer, wild pigs, and cattle but the attention grabbers were alligators. Dave started a count of alligators and reached the number 35, but I think that there were others who slid into the river before we reached them or we just missed seeing them as we passed by. There were some small alligators in the 5-6 foot size, but most were between 8 and 10 feet. 4 or 5 of the alligators were longer than my 11.5 foot kayak and the largest one exceeded 13 feet and weighed in excess of 800 pounds. Dave and I paid EXTRA attention to that alligator. At the beginning of the trip, we had stopped a couple of places to probe the river bottom for fossil bearing gravel. After seeing some of the Alligators, we both decided to stay in the kayaks and skip the probing for gravel.



During the first 10 miles, the river snakes east and west as much or even more than heading north and south. There were numerous switchbacks with the river breaking into two currents only to join back a couple of hundred yards downstream. The downstream current splits forming an island between the primary and secondary branches with very shallow water over the secondary branch. These spots would be dry land during the months of March thru June and I really wanted to investigate the river bed for good gravel spots before moving on downstream. However we did not stop because by now we realized that there was a long way to go and a short time to get there. Approximately 5 miles from Zolfo Springs there was a house on the left side of the river. It was one of only 4 human structures we saw during the entire trip. This house seemed to be associated with “Canoe Outpost” which rents canoes and facilitates traveling on the river. There was a large sign on the back lawn – Punta Gorda = xxx miles, Arcadia = 35 miles, and (most important to Dave and I) – Gardner = 22 miles. It had taken us approximately 1.5 hours to travel the first 5 miles to this spot and since we had 22 miles to go, we needed to start paddling. About halfway to Gardner, there was a Trestle bridge that I originally thought might be part of a railroad but this steel and wooden bridge is privately owned by the Peace River Ranch and used to transport equipment and animals across the river.

There is a popular fossil location above the Gardner boat ramp called “The Sholes”. In strong currents, it is a difficult 3 mile trip upstream. I learned that it was not easier to reach the Sholes coming downstream because it took us 4.5 hours to reach that point. This is a beautiful spot with a number of Bald Cypress trees completely encircled by the river on small islands. There were no alligators in this area possibly avoiding the increasing number of people who frequent this part of the river closer to Gardner. Dave and I reached the Gardner boat ramp at 2:30 pm with sore muscles and sunburned. I had found 2 Lemon Shark teeth at the first location we stopped.

While I would not choose to repeat this trip in a single day, I enjoyed the scenery and connecting with nature. Next time I'll take along a sleeping bag and leave sufficient time to search for fossils in isolated gravel beds. Maybe I'll find a Megalodon tooth or even a Mastodon molar. I can only dream. By: Jack Boyce



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FCOLC FOSSIL SHOW FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2012

As of this date, we have several vendors signed up for the Show. Publicity efforts are ongoing. Our Show flyer is included in this newsletter. Distribution of the Show flyer to all libraries in Lee County (except Sanibel) has been done. We have a fossil exhibit at the Lakes Library on Gladiolus in Fort Myers. Flyers will be available to members at the November meeting. All members are encouraged to help with the publicity. Coordination with the Calusa Nature Center is ongoing. We have a food vendor; same one we used last year. Mark Renz will be on hand to chat with fossil enthusiasts and also to do book signings. The Imaginarium will staff the Kid's Dig. The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum and the Southwest Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Club will also have exhibits. We are still asking and getting donations of fossils, mineral specimens, and books from our members for the silent auction, spin game and raffles. More items will be appreciated and those items not used for the Show will be held over for the March 2013 Auction.

We are still in need of a volunteer to do face painting. We will have a sign-up sheet at the November meeting for everyone who wants to help out with the many tasks that need to be done for set-up, working the various games, silent auction, and raffle during Show day, setting up our fossil exhibits, helping with parking, helping at the admissions table, providing relief and assisting vendors, and helping with the Show tear-down. Dr. Charles O'Connor will be giving a talk at 11 am and again at 2:30 pm.

Everyone is invited to participate in the success of our Annual Fossil Show.

COBY PAWLOWSKI--FOSSIL HUNTER WINS FISHING TOURNAMENT

Coby Pawlowski is the Director of Youth Activities for the Fossil Club of Lee County. Coby, who is 16 years old, is an ardent fossil collector and a very active member of our Club. He is also an ardent fisherman and recently captured the the Junior Division of the Inshore Fishing Association Florida Regional Tournament. We are very proud of Coby and of course it goes without saying that his mother and father are even more proud. Coby's mother is Kathy Pawlowski, our Club Secretary.

Coby has been a fishing enthusiast since he was five years old. He fishes from his 12 foot Hobie Pro-Angler Kayak, which he also uses on the Peace River when he is doing some serious fossil hunting. Coby has an extensive fossil collection and he is quite knowledgeable about paleontology, especially for a person of his age.

Coby is an A student who attends Edison High School College and in two years will receive a high school diploma as well as an associate degree. He plans on eventually getting a degree in marine science.



Coby, winner of the 2012 IRA Kayak Fishing Tour

EARLY MAYAN RULER'S TOMB EXCAVATED

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) —

Archaeologists announced Thursday they have uncovered the tomb of a very early Mayan ruler, complete with rich jade jewelry and decoration.

Experts said the find at Guatemala's Tak'alik Ab'aj temple site could help shed light on the formative years of the Mayan culture.

Government archaeologist Miguel Orrego said carbon-dating indicates the tomb was built between 700 and 400 B.C., several hundred years before the Mayan culture reached its height. He said it was the oldest tomb found so far at Tak'alik Ab'aj, a site in southern Guatemala that dates back about 2,200 years.

Orrego said a necklace depicting a vulture-headed human figure appeared to identify the tomb's occupant as an "ajaw," or ruler.

"This symbol gives this burial greater importance," Orrego said. "This glyph says he ... is one of the earliest rulers of Tak'alik Ab'aj."

Experts said the rich array of jade articles in the tomb could provide clues about production and trade patterns.

Susan Gillespie, an archaeologist at the University of Florida who was not involved in the excavation, said older tombs have been found from ruling circles at the Mayan site of Copan in Honduras as well as in southern Mexico, where the Olmec culture, a predecessor to the Mayas, flourished.

FOSSIL SHOW 2012

Presented by:

THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

**FOSSIL SHARK TEETH, VERTEBRATE FOSSILS,
ROCKS & MINERALS, INDIAN ARTIFACTS, BOTTLES, GEMSTONES,
FOSSIL SHELLS, UNIQUE JEWELRY, FOSSIL BOOKS, & EXHIBITS**

**MEET LOCAL FOSSIL COLLECTORS
FIND OUT WHERE & HOW TO HUNT FOR FOSSILS**

**FEATURING MANY WELL KNOWN FLORIDA VENDORS
KIDS' FOSSIL DIG – KEEP WHAT YOU FIND
RAFFLES, GAMES, DOOR PRIZES, SILENT AUCTIONS**

FOSSIL TALKS BY DR. CHARLES O'CONNOR

11:00 AM – *FLORIDA'S FOSSILS*

**FOSSILIZATION, SABER-TOOTH CATS, MAMMOTHS, GIANT GROUND SLOTHS,
HUGE SHARKS, HOW TO HUNT FOSSILS & MUCH MORE
MANY FOSSILS ON DISPLAY**

2:30 PM – *SHARKS*

**BIOLOGY, FOSSIL TEETH & MEGALODONS-THE LARGEST SHARK OF ALL TIME
MANY TEETH ON DISPLAY**



**SATURDAY, DEC 1st
9AM to 5PM**

Calusa Nature Center & Planetarium

CORNER OF COLONIAL BLVD. & ORTIZ AVE.

ENTRANCE: 3450 ORTIZ AVE.

Ft. Myers, I-75 Exit 136 – Go West to 1st Light,

Turn Right. Entrance 500 Feet on Left

WWW.FCOLC.COM

ADMISSION \$3 (children under 12 FREE)

