



MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

A partnership between the city of
Mineral Wells, Texas and the Dallas
Paleontological Society

Presented by Lee Higginbotham

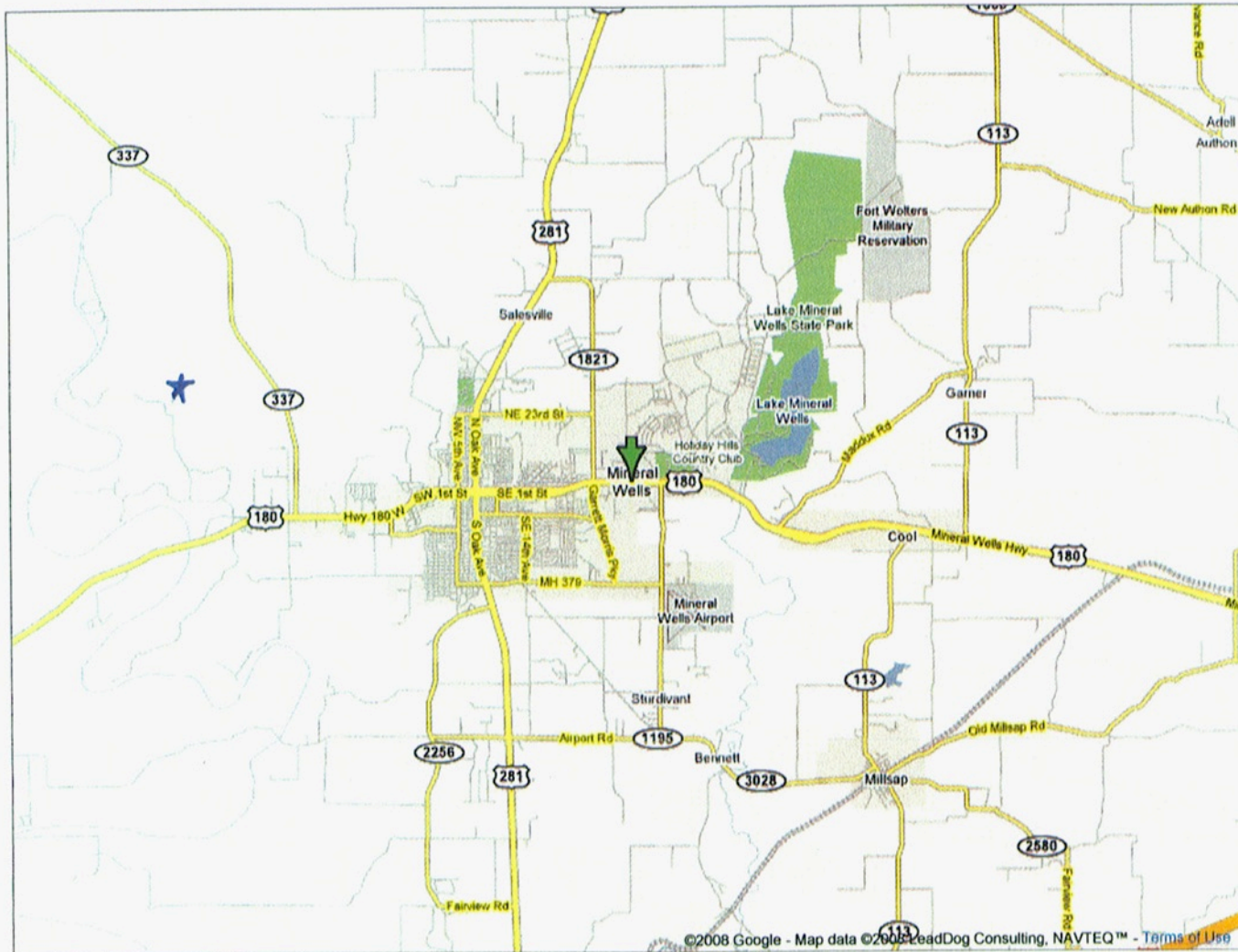






Address

Mineral Wells, TX





LANDFILL
CLOSED
PERMANENTLY
SEPT. 30, 1993

4 P.M.

LANDFILL
PERMIT
198

























Don't miss
this auction
item! The
experience
of a
millenia,
Sunday
May 20th,
will be an
all day
fossil
hunting
excursion.
for up to 12
5th grade
fossil
maniacs!

THINKING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The group will learn a little
bit of Texas geography. A
little bit of geology. A little



Fossilmania

Dice Dazzle & Disco 2007 Auction Item for Fifth Graders

An in-school field trip was organized this spring by Ms. Hughes with Mr. Higginbotham bringing dirt for 5th graders to hunt for fossils. Now there is an opportunity for kids to dig the dirt with the fossils in situ. On Sunday May 20th, Lee & Melissa Higginbotham, with Ms. Hughes in tow will take up to twelve 5th graders to Mineral Wells, Texas to hunt for fossils from the Pennsylvanian age. All of the fossils that you find, you will get to keep!! And you will be able to show off your fossils to your classmates the next day. If it rains, then you will be muddier and dirtier than if it doesn't rain! We will have a picnic lunch at the "landfill" and we will have shakes and malts on the way home at The Malt Shoppe. We will have great fun hunting for fossils from the ancient waters of the Western Interior Seaway that used to cover Texas.

What's Included

- ♦ A Whole Day of Fossil-Hunting Fun-8:00 AM to approx. 8:00 PM
- ♦ Mrs. Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Higginbotham for the whole day
- ♦ 1 1/2 hour drive to/from Mineral Wells, Texas
- ♦ fossil treasure hunting in Mineral Wells and west of Ft. Worth
- ♦ a picnic lunch for hungry paleontologists
- ♦ drinks for thirsty paleontologists
- ♦ bags to bring treasures home
- ♦ fossils galore! We're talking 300 million year old stuff!
- ♦ a group photo

...FAQ...FAQ...FAQ...

How do I get to be part of this group?

Call Melissa Higginbotham to get your child's name on the list. limited to 12 students.

How much can I donate to the Dads Club for my child to participate? We

are making available a "Buy it Now" price of \$120/student, as long as there is a min. of 6 kids.

Do I have to be present at the auction to win? No, but the group's total

"This land, while not specifically named "Fossil Heaven," has offered outstanding learning opportunities for several groups of students and myself. The landscape, as it is, is a natural offering of a look into our State's past. Students and teachers can easily walk the ground, finding remnants of past life." – Nancy Hughes, DISD science teacher from DeGolyer Elementary





SCHOOL PROGRAMS

On Site Tour



Classes come to the Penn Dixie Site in Hamburg, NY to learn about the geology of the land 380 million-years-ago. You will explore an ancient sea floor from a time before dinosaurs roamed. You will also collect mid-Devonian age fossils. STUDENTS

CAN KEEP ALL FOSSILS THEY COLLECT! Tours are led by trained volunteers who discuss age appropriate materials. Tours usually last 1 ½ - 2 hours, but can last as long as the teacher would like. There is no water on site, but portable bathrooms are available. Also there are shelters if the class would like to eat lunch on site.

To request information or to book an on-site tour, or please call Peg Herman at 627- 6335.

In School Programs

The Fossil Prairie Center Foundation

Foundations are non-profit organizations operating under Iowa Code-Chapter 504A and Federal (Internal Revenue Code) Section 501 (c)-3. These groups operate exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes...

The Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation is one such organization. Our group is made up of individuals who wish to become more actively involved in supporting environmental education and other conservation-oriented activities and projects in Floyd County! One of the primary goals of this and any foundation is to raise funds via membership, gifts, annual events, etc.

Foundation activities will provide the Floyd County Conservation Board with an organizational base for volunteers, advise as to the needs of the community, and an avenue for community involvement.

Membership to the Fossil & Prairie Foundation will provide members with a seasonal newsletter of upcoming events, progress of the center and the environmental education program, and conservation related topics.

The initial building costs were around \$500,000 with the total estimated cost of building and furnishings to be over \$800,000. The Foundation is seeking funds through membership, monetary donations, fund raising events, memorials, and grants. Money raised will be used to complete the display and provide furnishings.

Please consider making a donation to the building fund and/or becoming a member of the Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation. All donations are tax deductible.

Please print the [membership form](#) and send to the Foundation.

[Back to Fossil & Prairie Center Foundation Home Page](#)





Acrocanthosaurus tracks at the
"Main" site, Dinosaur Valley
State Park

Dinosaur Valley State Park

Glen Rose, Texas

(C) 1996-2008, Glen J. Kuban

[Part of Kuban's Paluxy Website](#)

Introduction

Dinosaur Valley State Park is located in Somervell County Texas, near the town of Glen Rose. Covering over 1500 acres and designated a National Natural Landmark in 1969, the park is great place to view the fossilized dinosaur footprints, as well as to hike, camp, picnic, fish, swim, and enjoy beautiful scenery and wildlife. The world-famous dinosaur tracks in the park occur in a branch of the Brazos

River called the Paluxy. The park is open year round, but late summer is the best time to visit for viewing the tracks, when the river level is generally low. Those planning a visit are advised to contact the park to check on current river and weather conditions:



Hanson Aggregates – Fossil Park

By Jeff Stoll, Geologist

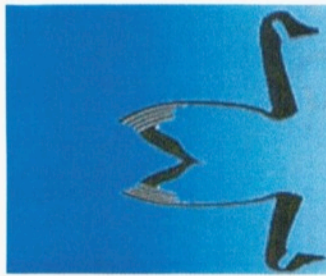
In the spring of 1998, we could have never conceived of what would become one of the most anticipated local events in the history of Sylvania, Ohio. At first, our goals were clear: for our Sylvania Quarry and surrounding property, we had to develop a long term mining plan, as well as a public relations plan. After coming to Hanson in the spring of 1997, it was very clear to me how popular the local geologic formations were (namely the highly fossiliferous Silica Shale). This was evidenced by the numerous calls and requests we received from people wanting access to the quarry ledges. So, after developing a mining plan that took the quarry into the direction of these world famous ledges, it was determined that safety would be compromised if we allowed continued access. This was the beginning of the thought processes that led us to Fossil Park.

On an area of property containing an old, shallow 6 acre quarry where cement stone was once mined, the initial vision was born. The site had many positive opportunities available: 1) it was located away from long-term reserve access; 2) it would serve nicely as buffer



Mine Planning - Safety Concerns

containing the famous Silica Shale. So we wrote a letter to the mayor of Sylvania, and he immediately saw the vision and possibilities. But "the devil", of course, is in the details. A 99 year lease agreement



The Olander Park

Pictures of Fossil Park

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Hall](#)

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DALLAS PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 223846

Dallas, Texas 75222-3846

817-355-4693

www.dallaspaleo.org



Mar 26, 2008

City of Mineral Wells
City Manager, Mr. Lance Howerton
115 SW 1st St.
Mineral Wells, TX 76067

The former landfill located on the west side of Mineral Wells includes a pit that exposes Pennsylvanian Age (~300 million year old) fossils. This site attracts fossil enthusiasts from around the country. Fossils of many types are abundant and several uncommon types can be found. Additionally, educators in the area use the site for geology/paleontology field trips. The area is of interest to professional paleontologists and some academic studies are being performed on this site.

The Dallas Paleontological Society (the Society) understands this land is owned by the City of Mineral Wells and may be redeveloped for other uses. The Society encourages the City of Mineral Wells to consider making this site available for collection and study. Two possible approaches for preservation that could be considered are: make the site a public fossil park aimed at the general public, or make the site an educational resource targeted for educators and serious fossil enthusiasts. The Society has contacted several local paleontological professionals in the North Texas area and they support keeping this site open. Letters from them are attached in this package.

If the City is interested in pursuing these ideas, the Society would like to offer its services in developing a strategy for preserving this paleontological resource. Mr. Lee Higginbotham has been authorized to represent the Society for this purpose.

"This site attracts fossil enthusiasts from across the country...Additionally, educators in the area use the site for geology/paleontology field trips." – Phil Kirchoff President Dallas Paleo Society



SMU

Department of Geological Sciences

March 14, 2008

To: City of Mineral Wells

I am a paleontologist at SMU and the author of *Lone Star Dinosaurs*. I have extensive experience working with K-12 teachers and with museums. My purpose in writing is to urge you to consider an educational use of the Mineral Wells Landfill, a locality frequented by avocational paleontologists regularly. Most of the fossils collected there are of a common and general nature, and easy to find. Therefore, this locality has the potential to be a terrific educational resource for your community that could integrate well into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), and that would also be an attraction to rock hounds, of which there are many combing Texas. I would imagine that serious thought should be given as to how best utilize the resource in a sustainable way with maximum value to education and science, but certainly it can be done if the will is there. Should Mineral Wells choose to go in that direction, and if I might be of any service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Louis L. Jacobs
Professor of Earth Sciences

and

President

Institute for the Study of Earth and Man at SMU

jacobs@mail.smu.edu

214-768-2425

"Most of the fossils collected there are of a common and general nature, and easy to find. Therefore, this locality has the potential to be a terrific educational resource for your community that could integrate well into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)..." – Dr. Louis Jacobs, SMU



MUSEUM OF
NATURE &
SCIENCE
DALLAS, TEXAS

31 March 2008

Lee Higginbotham
10417 Marsh Lane
Dallas, Texas 75229

Dear Lee;

This letter is to support your efforts in the establishment of a public fossil park in Mineral Wells. It is a well established fact that fossils have always held great scientific fascination for students of all ages and this new park would be an important resource for those interested in life long ago.

Here are a few sad facts about the state of science education in the U.S.

- 82 % of American 12th graders are not proficient in science and less than 15% of respondents to a National Science Board survey described themselves as well informed about new scientific discoveries and the use of new inventions and technologies.
- 72% of DISD kids are "at risk"
- State of science education is declining -- Rod Paige, former U.S. Education Secretary, called this decline "morally significant"

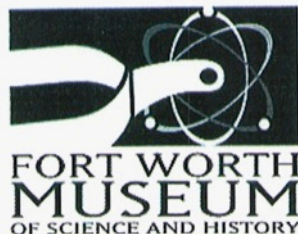
According to a recent study by the National Science Foundation, 85% of people in science related careers credit museums with providing their most memorable science experience. Museum's, according to the National Science Foundation, are the most effective informal learning institutions at illustrating science lessons from school and the greatest sources of ideas professionals use as adults. And often it is exposure to fossils in museum exhibits that helps inspire young minds to pursue science related careers.

It is from the perspective of informal science education that I see the value in the establishment of a public fossil park at Mineral Wells. Its establishment would help inspire curious minds and be a new resource to help curb the disturbing trend in science education in our culture today.

Good luck with your efforts.

Regards,
Anthony R. Fiorillo
Curator of Earth Sciences

"According to a recent study by the National Science Foundation, 85% of people in science related careers credit museums with providing their most memorable science experience. Museums, according to the National Science Foundation, are the most effective informal learning institutions at illustrating science lessons from school and the greatest sources of ideas professionals use as adults. And often it is exposure to fossils in museum exhibits that helps inspire young minds to pursue science related careers. It is from the perspective of informal science education that I see the value in the establishment of a public fossil park at Mineral Wells." – Dr. Tony Fiorillo, The Perot Museum



To the Director of the City of Mineral Wells:

This letter is in support of the plan to make the Mineral Wells Landfill available to the public.

For many years this locality has been visited by innumerable fossil hunters of all ages. The area is very rich in crinoids, an extinct marine animal. With each rain the small fossil disks and rods are exposed so the supply is virtually endless. The museum has taken field trips to the site and has also recommended the locality to various groups such as scouts, college geology classes as well as individuals.

The pit with its gently sloping sides and soft soil is very safe for all ages. The experience of actually finding fossils instead of seeing them in a lab is an invaluable experience. The landfill also has other marine fossils such as brachiopods, snails, sponges etc. which adds to the interest of the area.

I would encourage Mineral Wells to find a means to keep this unique locality available to the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. Pan".

Aaron D. Pan, Ph.D.
Curator of Science
Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
1501 Montgomery St.
Fort Worth, TX 76017

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Irene Stemple".

Irene Stemple
Museum School Instructor
Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
Fort Worth, TX 76107

"The pit with its gently sloping sides and soft soil is very safe for all ages. The experience of actually finding fossils instead of seeing them in a lab is an invaluable experience." –
Dr. Aaron Pan and Irene Stemple
Fort Worth Science Museum



THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS
AT ARLINGTON

Department of Earth
and Environmental Sciences

Box 19049
500 Yates St.
107 Geoscience Building
Arlington, Texas
76019-0049

T 817.272.2987

F 817.272.2628

geology@uta.edu

April 3, 2008

Mr. Lance Howerton
City Manager
115 S.W 1st Street
P. O. Box 460
Mineral Wells, TX 76068

Dear Mr. Howerton:

This letter is written in strong support of the Dallas Paleontological Society's (and others) efforts to preserve the site known as the "Mineral Wells Dump" for future fossil collectors and recreation purposes. This site has been used for many years for these purposes and I know of no problems that have resulted. In fact, I have taken my invertebrate paleontology class there on several occasions over the past years for a few hours to look at the strata and to collect a few fossils.

This particular site is a very nice one for amateur fossil collecting as it readily replenishes itself after every hard rain because of the softness of the rock strata. It is one of few nice accessible localities in the north central Texas area that has good fossil material of Pennsylvanian geologic age. From what I have seen of the material that comes from this site, the fossils collected there have negligible monetary value.

It would be a very nice gesture for the City of Mineral Wells to provide for some way that allows access for surface collecting as there would be no damage to the property from this activity. If you should wish to meet with me about this site and have me go with you to the site to explain the geology of the area, I would be happy to do so. I know the geology of the area around Mineral Wells very well as I have had several students do masters thesis work on some of the local ranches in Palo Pinto, Parker, and Wise counties whose owners have been most kind and hospitable to us.

Sincerely yours,

Merlynd Nestell

Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences

817-272-2983

Email: nestell@uta.edu

"This particular site is a very nice one for amateur fossil collecting as it readily replenishes itself after every hard rain because of the softness of the rock strata...From what I have seen of the material that comes from this site, the fossils collected there have negligible monetary value." – Merlynd Nestell
University of Texas at Arlington



MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

PHASE I -- PROBABLE COSTS

DESCRIPTION	Quantity	Unit	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
1 Pipe Barricade around Parking Lot 4" diameter pipe barricade -- \$4.00 per lineal foot includes installation	300	L.F.	\$4	\$1,200
2 Parking Lot Surfacing -- Not Necessary Surfacing of parking lot is not necessary as existing compacted gravel area is more than adequate for the parking lot proposed (this area was previously used as the entrance to the landfill)	7,500	S.F.	\$0	\$0
3 Portable Toilet -- Delivery Fee	1	One Time Cost	\$50	\$50
4 Portable Toilet -- Annual Servicing Fee	12	Monthly	\$120	\$1,440
5 Trash Cans / Dumpster -- Annual Fee	12	Monthly	\$120	\$1,440
6 Information Signage at Parking Lot Includes "Rules of the Park"	1	Includes Installation	\$200	\$200
7 Directional Highway Signs	8	Signs Only	\$100	\$800
8 Highway Sign Supports and Installation	8	Supports & Installation	\$100	\$800
Subtotal				\$5,930
Contingency			15.0%	\$890
Contractor's Fee, Building Permit, Etc.			15.0%	\$890
Total Probable Cost for Phase I				\$7,709

MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK PHASE II -- PROBABLE COSTS

DESCRIPTION	Quantity	Unit	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
1 Decomposed Granite Walkway (compacted) Walkway shall start at the parking lot and extend to the stairs leading into the Fossil Pit (5' wide x 100')	500	S.F.	\$3	\$1,500
2 Stairs Leading Down into the Fossil Park Pit See enclosed photographs for proposed design	200	S.F.	\$10	\$2,000
Subtotal				\$3,500
Contingency			15.0%	\$525
Contractor's Fee, Building Permit, Etc.			15.0%	\$525
Total Probable Cost for Phase II				\$4,550

PHASE III -- PROBABLE COSTS

1 Covered Observation Deck Observation Deck shall include guardrails, benches, and a roof covering to provide shade -- also included are benches directly below the observation deck to provide shade and seating within the Fossil Pit itself. See photographs for proposed design (15' x 15').	225	S.F.	\$50	\$11,250
2 Bridge to Covered Observation Deck Bridge shall be for pedestrian traffic only and lead from the end of the granite walkway to the Covered Observation Deck. Construction will be similar to the Observation Deck and both sides of bridge shall have guardrails (4' wide x 30' long)	120	S.F.	\$20	\$2,400
3 Solar Panel and Ceiling Fans located within the Observation Deck.	2	Includes Installation	\$500	\$1,000
4 Custom Designed and Painted Signage Sign shall be located within the Covered Observation Deck and shall be educational and/or informational.	1		\$1,200	\$1,200
Subtotal				\$15,850
Contingency			15.0%	\$2,378
Contractor's Fee, Building Permit, Etc.			15.0%	\$2,378
Total Probable Cost for Phase III				\$20,605
Total Probable Cost for all Three Phases				\$32,864

FOSSILMANIA

Welcome to Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Didn't know there was such a place? Neither did city officials until recently. But it has been around for years. The city is looking to make it an official attraction.

By CHRISTIN COYNE
ccoyne@mineralwellsindex.com

The old Mineral Wells landfill is being looked at by the city as a potential public fossil park after it was discovered the site has been the destination for fossil hunting groups for years.

The Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation Board was informed of the Dallas Paleontological Society's suggestion to turn the former "borrow pit" into an area attraction for school children and adults interested in paleontology at their Feb. 4 meeting.

City Manager Lance Howerton said the city will be checking with the Texas Municipal League, the city's insurance carrier, about any special liabilities with regard to a fossil park and refining the Society's proposal before the next Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Howerton said the Parks and Recreation Board will likely make a recommendation to the city council whether a fossil park should be pursued or not at its March 4 meeting.

The Mineral Wells landfill, about 5 minutes west of down

See FOSSILS, page 2A



DALLAS PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Shown above is what is described on Dallas Paleontological Society's Web site as 'a very nice trilobite' fossil recovered from the old city landfill off Indian Creek Road. The group and others have – unknown to city officials – been digging and taking fossils from the site's 'borrow pit' for years. Below are pictured some people searching in the pit.



LOOKING OUT

MARKET MATTERS

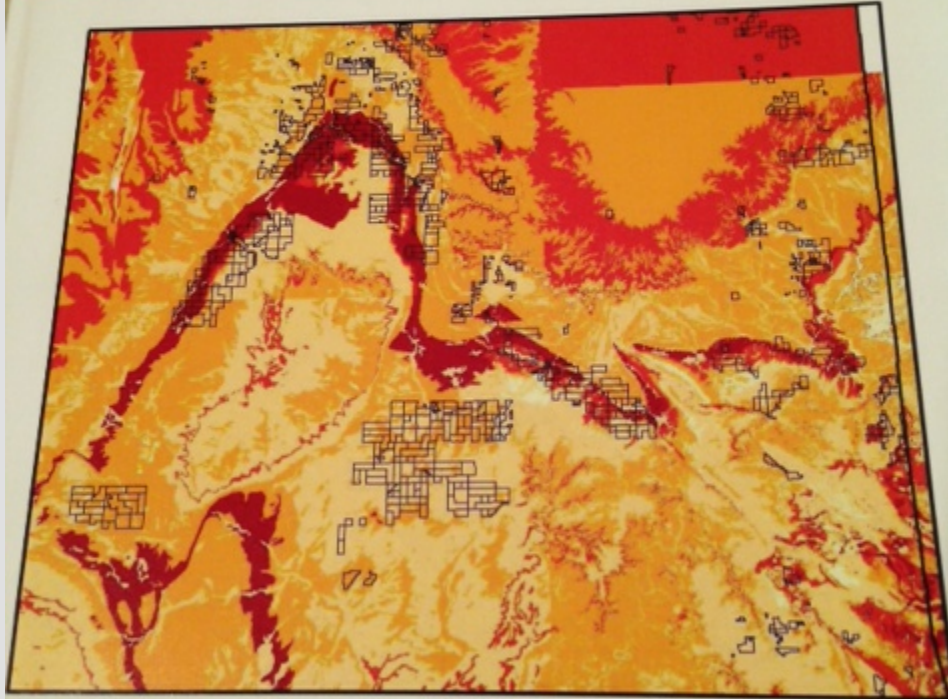
CONTACT US

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editor@mineralwellsindex.com

61281

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE ON FOSSIL RESOURCES

Foss, Cavin, Brown, Kirkland, and Santucci



MAY 19-21, 2009 • St. George, Utah

MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK – A PROJECT BY THE
CITY OF MINERAL WELLS, TEXAS WITH ASSISTANCE
FROM THE DALLAS PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY
(WWW.DALLASPALEO.ORG)

HIGGINBOTHAM, Lee Taylor¹; FARISH, Linda²; FARISH, Roger²; MANNING, Rocky³;
HOLTERHOFF, Frank K.⁴; KIRCHHOFF, Phil⁵; HALL, Lance⁶

¹Dallas, Texas; ²Highland Village, TX;
³Carrollton, TX; ⁴Lewisville, TX; ⁵Hurst, TX; ⁶Fort Worth, TX

The City of Mineral Wells, Texas, closed their landfill permanently September 30, 1993. In 1997, Linda and Roger Farish, Dallas Paleontological Society (DPS) members, while searching for possible field trip locations, discovered that the 8 acre heavily disturbed and eroded borrow pit of the closed landfill was laden with Pennsylvanian fossils which included crinoids, brachiopods, echinoids (urchins), pelecypods (clams, oysters), bryozoans, corals, petalodus teeth, and trilobites. Afterwards, fossil groups and individuals from Houston, Austin, and Dallas regularly collected from this location. Texas has very little public land, and it is illegal to remove fossils from State and Federal land. The rules do not apply to private or city owned property.

In early 2008, the city of Mineral Wells was approached about selling the 75 acre former landfill which included the borrow pit. No buyers contacted the city of Mineral Wells regarding the property, and prior to a City Council meeting, DPS member Lance Hall informed the City Manager, through words and photos, that part of the landfill was a fossil collecting location. The city was unaware that persons came to Mineral Wells to hunt for fossils, and more specifically, to hunt the borrow pit of the city-owned landfill. DPS member Lee Higginbotham had a previous relationship with the Mineral Wells

City Manager, Lance Howerton, and presented a DPS proposal to convert the former borrow pit of the closed landfill into a public fossil park where folks could keep the fossils that they find (Figure 1).

The April 2, 2008 proposal was presented to Lance Howerton, City Manager, Beth Watson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and Christina Childs, Tourism Director. The group drove to the landfill, looked over the site, bent down and picked up fossils and gave the site an overview. A riker box, with a representative group of fossils from the borrow pit, was given to the group. The proposal for a fossil park was presented, which included letters of support from Dr. Louis L. Jacobs, Professor of Earth Science and President of Institute for the Study of Earth and Man at SMU, Dr. Anthony R. Fiorillo of the Museum of Nature & Science Dallas, Texas, Dr. Aaron D. Pan and Irene Stemple of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, and Dr. Merlynd Nestell of the University of Texas at Arlington.

The City Manager requested cost proposals and more ideas from DPS. The City Manager requested that persons cease collecting fossils from this location unless they were to sign a waiver to protect the city. During the months that the park concept was being developed, more than 40 persons signed the release forms to be able to collect at the landfill.

Some of the persons who signed release waivers included geology classes from Brookhaven College, middle school teachers on a convention trip to Fort Worth, a UTA student group, and others. During the time of the development of the park idea, DPS raised almost \$3000 in pledges from members, and others, in support of this fossil park concept. The requested cost proposals and ideas were delivered to the city in August 2008. At the January 2009 Mineral Wells Park Board meeting, a presentation was made by Lee Higginbotham with four other DPS members in attendance.

On February 15, 2009, a front page article titled, "Welcome to Mineral Wells Fossil Park," was published in the Mineral Wells Index, the local paper. The Mineral Wells Park Board will decide, in March 2009, whether to send this fossil park idea to the City Council to see if the idea should be pursued. The final decisions by the City of Mineral Wells, Texas, regarding the proposed Mineral Wells Fossil Park should be made prior to the presentation at the 8th Conference on Fossil Resources, May 19-21, 2009.

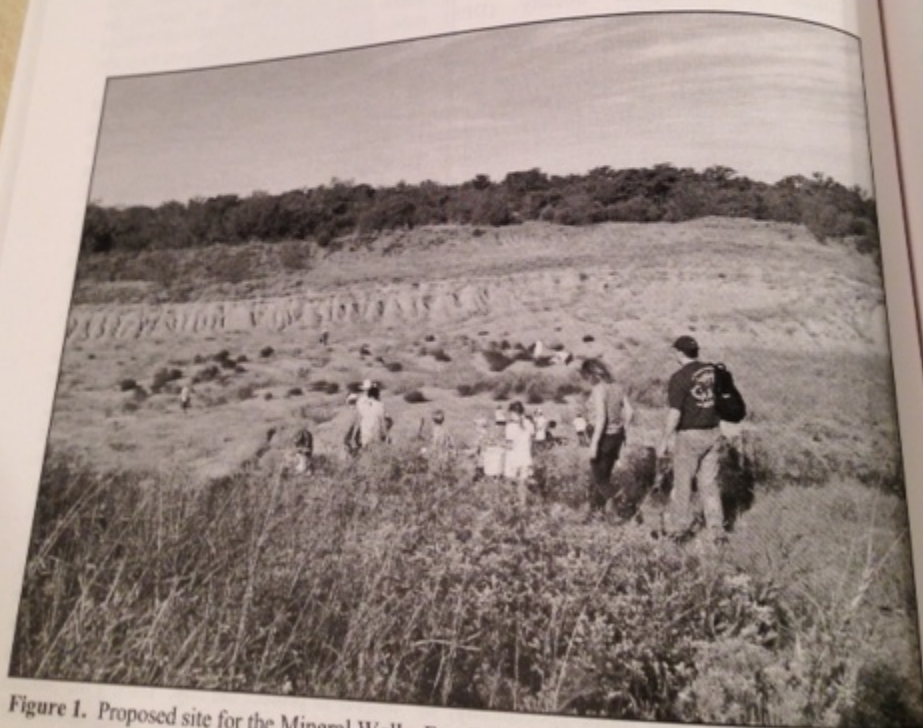


Figure 1. Proposed site for the Mineral Wells Fossil Park. Photo taken by: Roz Morgan

BY GERALD E. MCLEOD

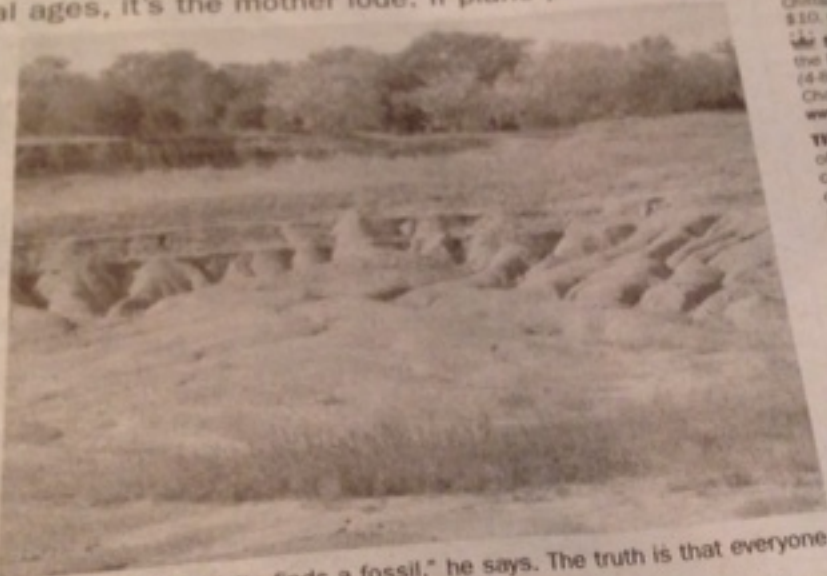
daytrips

The **Mineral Wells Fossil Site** may not look like a gold mine, but to anyone who gets a kick out of finding remnants of past geological ages, it's the mother lode. If plans proceed, the

former landfill borrow pit may become only the fourth public park in the U.S. where visitors can keep the fossils they find.

"It's a real treasure and learning experience," says Lee Higginbotham, a member of the Dallas Paleontological Society and one of the many volunteers working to open the site to the public. The excavated site is littered with millions of tiny straw-like rocks that were once on the bottom of the prehistoric sea that covered Texas. "Everybody who visits finds a fossil," he says. The truth is that everyone finds a pocket full of the petrified tubes.

The story of the fossil pit began more than 300 million years ago when a deep underwater trench spanned this part of Texas. At the bottom lived invertebrates such as crinoids, trilobites, and brachiopods that left their remains in the ancient mud. Fast-forward to the 1970s when the city began depositing its trash in the field west of town. To cover the refuse, it "borrowed" dirt next to the landfill, creating a large 12-foot-deep pit covering roughly 8 acres. At the time the city didn't realize what bounty it was uncovering. Soon after the landfill closed in 1993, some fossil hunter discovered the site. The location led hunters to the point where educational groups were



GERALD E. MCLEOD

WISPER SUNDAYS Right foot blue! Left hand red! Left right yellow blue green! Yip! Twister. And you can win those tickets if you don't fall over! Sundays, 8pm. Rush on 4th, 217 W. Fourth, 494-1150.

GRIEFSHARE Invites anyone grieving from the loss of a loved one to join. A new grief-related topic is discussed every week. Sundays, 3:30pm. Ridge Lutheran Church, 6414 N. Hampton, 926-8574. Free. www.griefshare.org.

MEDITATION CLASSES Sundays, 9:30-11am. Chittamand Buddhist Center, 1918 Boswell, 916-4444. \$10. www.meditationinatlanta.org.

SUNDAY SUPER SHOW Samantha DelGrosso, the Men of Manwatch, dollar drafts, and free burgers (4-6pm)? Where have you been all my life? Charlie's Austin, 1301 Lavaca, 474-6461. www.charliesaustin.com.

TIBETAN BUDDHIST TEACHING Longtime student of dharma, Bonnie Baptist, shares her knowledge of calm minds and big hearts. Sundays, noon-2pm. Land of Compassion & Wisdom, 2601 Penny Ln., 921-6901. Free (donations appreciated). www.austintpmt.com.

78704 ARTISAN MARKET (See Saturday.)

BUDDHIST MIND TRAINING (See Saturday.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (See Saturday.)

NEED FOR SPEED MALL TOUR (See Friday.)

SPECIAL SCREENINGS (See Film Listings.)

Lord of the Rings Trilogy Hobbit Feast @ Alamo
Ritz, 10:30am

MUSIC (See Music Listings.)

Cafe Tacuba La Zona Rosa
Voodoo Glow Skulls Red 7

WHERE THE WATER MEETS SCREENING Lesbian sex story, young women embraced by 100. Services Building, San Marcos 471-5745. Free. www.lesbian.org.

ARTS OF THE ARTS WALK May start with a cup of tea of original art and gift bags provide services, musical donations. To 6717 Sunset Rd. www.artsaustin.org.

ARTS IN THE BLAZ Center for African arts this lecture. Rm. 3.200, 471-1111. www.artsaustin.org.

"AARON..." Drug runners, snobs, who celebrate in Ranch. Ty www.aaron.com.

HOSTES that m belly t and i roys the 63

MONDAY 30

***CHEFS UNDER FIRE** Local chefs choose the recipes while finalists turn up the heat to impress the celebrity judges. An interactive cookbook is included with the ticket price. 6:30pm Executive Education and Conference Center, 1900 University Ave., 404-1900, 877/744-88 www.keepercollection.com.

INSIDE TODAY'S INDEX ...

Rams baseball



The second-place Mineral Wells Rams welcomed first-place Birdville to Pratt Field on Tuesday in a key district matchup.

See Sports, page 5.

Lights, action ... bikes

30 years ago, the movie "Breaking Away" put Bloomington, Ind., in the spotlight. Also inside, "Living with Autism," a story about John and Robin Kirton of Salt Lake City, Utah, who are raising six autistic kids, ranging in age from 4 to 15.

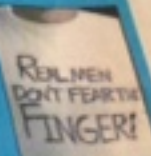
See American Profile.

American Profile



Prostate cancer

Doctors are stamping gene-guided treatment for men with advanced prostate cancer.



See Health, page 5.

BURN



BAN

Frontier Stampede Fun Run for the Old Jail Museum

The weekend kicks off bright and early Saturday, April 4, with the Frontier Stampede for the Old Jail Museum.

This event is a driving tour and features seven historical sites (many not accessible at other times). There will be breakfast, but the first car is out at 8:30 a.m. (in at 4:30 p.m.).

Entry fee is \$15 for the first fun-run hand and \$10 for additional hands. There will be prizes, live music starting at 3 p.m., a silent auction and more. Cars, motorcycles and pickups welcome!

Start at the Old Jail Museum Complex south of the courthouse in Palo Pinto. Call Bob Manskey at (940) 328-1400 for information.

Clark Gardens Spring Festival

Clark Gardens presents its

Spring Festival from 10 a.m. to 7

CITY BEAT

Officials dig in to fossil park plans

■ Efforts to turn city's old landfill borrow pit into an attraction for fossil hunters move ahead.

By CHRISTIN COYNE
ccoyn@mineralwellsindex.com

City officials are now actively looking into the proposed Mineral Wells fossil park.

City Manager Lance Howerton said he and Donnie Hoover, director of Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation, will be looking over the site on Indian Creek Road this week to form an idea of what is needed to make the site functional as a park. The city will then be able to get estimates to present to the city council.

The parks board recommended that the city look into turning the abandoned landfill borrow pit into a public park at their March 4 meeting.

A staff member of the Texas Municipal League, the city's insurance carrier, also toured the site this month and addressed the issue of liability for the city,

SANTO CELEBRATION



DAVID MAY/INDEX

Mineral Wells

TUESDAY

March 23, 2010

75¢

mineralwellsindex.com



MWJH Honors
Local junior high students recognized for exceptional performance.
See page 4.

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PALO PINTO COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

MW fossil park to open May 8

By CHRISTEN COYNE
coyne@mineralwellsindex.com

The Mineral Wells fossil park grand opening is scheduled for May 8 at 11 a.m., if all goes as planned the next month and a half at the former city landfill borrow pit site off Indian Creek Road.

With \$6,500 raised and donated by the Dallas Paleontological Society over the past year being matched with city funds to put up fencing, lay gravel for parking and place signage and portable bathrooms, work is scheduled to take place over the next several weeks at the 8-acre site west of town.

The city plans to have the primitive site open to the public between 8 a.m. and dusk Friday through Monday as they gauge how popular the site is with visitors.

Lee Higginbotham, along with Lance Hall and other volunteers with the DPS, have put in many hours over the past two years to see the site officially opened to the public to be what Higginbotham describes as an "outdoor classroom."

Since the group began petitioning the city to open the site to the public they have raised and donated \$6,500 to the building efforts and made plans to help promote Mineral Wells' newest attraction.

Hall is also helping with the interpretive signage that will provide information on the fossils that can be found at the site and the geology of the land, Higginbotham said.

They hope to soon have a separate Web site for the park, as well, to provide information

See PARK, page 3



Gabby Kindie sings the National Anthem at the Mineral Wells Junior High School Academic Award Assembly.

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Mineral Wells Index

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DALLAS TX 75229-5224

TUESDAY

April 6, 2010

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mineralwellsindex.com



Thomas headed to HPU

Mineral Wells Lady Rams soccer standout Kelci Thomas has committed to play for Howard Payne University in Brownwood. See Sports, page 5.

Kidscoop

It's our weekly page made just for kids full of games, fun and even some facts and info. See page 6.

PALO PINTO COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER



Finding ways to deal with school bullies

Mineral Wells High School has taken proactive steps to stop or deter student bullying problems.

■ Second in a two-part series.

By LIBBY CLUETT
lcluett@mineralwellsindex.com

With close to 930 students, Mineral Wells High School certainly sees types of bullying and harassing behavior, but



FOSSIL PARK OPENING NEARS

CHRISTIN COYNE/IND

City of Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation Director Donnie Hoover talks with tour guides with the East Texas Travel Association during their visit last week of the Mineral Wells Fossil Park. The guide picked through the dirt for their own handful of fossils during their tour. The public works department began moving dirt at the future site of the parking area last week as the ground dried up after several rainy weeks. The grand opening of the site – the former borrow pit for the old city landfill located off Indian Creek Road west of the city – is scheduled for May 8. The park will be one of the few in the U.S. that will allow hunters to keep their fossilized finds. Admission will be free and the park initially will be open Fridays through Mondays, dawn to dusk.

Mineral Wells Index

THURSDAY

May 6, 2010

75¢

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What health care means to seniors

If you're one of the 27 million U.S. seniors who has a Medicare (Part D) prescription drug plan, health care reform has just upgraded your coverage. See what information the Savvy Senior has for you. See Senior Scene, page 6.

Dez pleases

Cowboys coach Wade Phillips says he likes what he is seeing from Dez Bryant. See Sports, page 5.

PALO PINTO COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

Finders keepers

Mineral Wells Fossil Park officially opens Saturday, becoming one of the few such parks in the nation that will allow hunters to keep their finds.

By CHRISTIN COYNE
coyne@mineralwellsindex.com

If you've ever wanted to go to a public fossil hunting site and bring home your finds, you'll have a chance every weekend starting Saturday.

After many years of serving as a popular but quiet hunting ground for area fossil enthusiasts, the Mineral Wells Fossil Park grand opening to the public is planned for 11 a.m. Admission is free.

The unique park, one of the few places in the United States where visitors can bring home their finds, is the brainchild of Dallas Paleo member Lee Higginbotham, who led groups of school children on field trips to the site until the city attempted to sell the property in 2008.

The result of many months of planning and work by the Dallas Paleontological Society and the City of Mineral Wells will be recognized

opening of the fossil pit.

The park is located about two miles down Indian Creek Road west of Mineral Wells.

Closed in 1993 next to the old city landfill, the former borrow pit's erosion has uncovered so many fossils, including many crinoids and trilobites, they can be picked up by a child barely scratching the ground.

Higginbotham said it is one of a few sites he knows where he can bring children or adults and everybody is assured of bringing home a fossil.

Just over two years ago, the former borrow pit's popularity came as a surprise to city leaders, who didn't know their landfill was attracting academics, fossil hunting tourists and school groups on weekends until Higginbotham and other society members showed up at a city council meeting requesting access, as the city put the property up for bid.

Site discovery



MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

The area's newest tourist attraction, the Mineral Wells Fossil Park, will open to the public with a brief ceremony at 11 a.m. Saturday. The site is located off Indian Creek Road about two miles north of U.S. Highway 180 west of Mineral Wells. Normal operating hours are 8 a.m. till dusk Friday through Monday. Admission is free. Hand digging



COURTESY/AMERICAN IDOL

Cool's Casey James was voted off 'American Idol' on Wednesday night after making it all the way into Fox reality show's the top 5.

James' 'Idol' odyssey continues

FROM STAFF REPORTS
For the first time this season, Cool's Casey James left his comfort zone, performing Tuesday night without a

Mineral Wells Index

1100 JIMMIE LANE
LOUISIANA 70417
PHONE 504-885-5224

TUESDAY

May 11, 2010

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mineralwellsindex.com



A-Skyping we will go

Fourth-grade students at Travis Elementary School are using some of the latest and most popular internet-based software called Skype to see and talk with their peers across the web. See Education, page 4.

Seasons end

The Lady Pirates and Lady Wildcats saw their softball seasons come to an end. See Sports, page 5.

PAID PINTO COUNTY DAILY NEWSPAPER



AMERICAN IDOL/COURTESY

Cool native and Millsap High School graduate Casey James will perform Tuesday night on 'American Idol,' looking to make it into the show's final three contestants.

Casey James watch party at Millsap High School

Local fans hope to help push local product



PAID SEBERT/COURTESY

This panoramic photograph at the old city landfill's borrow pit was taken as hundreds of people ventured into the pit in search of small fossils they could take home. The park celebrated its official public grand opening

Saturday. It will be open Friday through Monday from 8 a.m. to dusk. The park is located west of Mineral Wells on Indian Creek Road, about two miles north of U.S. Highway 180 West.

Hundreds turn out for fossil park opening



CHRISTIN COYNE/INDEX

Eileen Skeen, 12, of McKinney, Texas, looks over a find at the city's new fossil park. She said she hopes to go into science one day.

By CHRISTIN COYNE
ccoynec@mineralwellsindex.com

The Mineral Wells Fossil Park celebrated its grand opening Saturday morning with a large crowd, estimated to be between 300 and 400 people, on hand as the former landfill site was opened to the public for finders, keepers fossil hunting.

The Mineral Wells Area Chamber of Commerce estimated it was their largest ribbon cutting event in years, or perhaps ever, with guests ranging from children and families to older couples attending from across the state.

Parked cars stretched nearly half a mile down Indian Creek Road to the intersection of Weir Road by noon.

Twelve-year-old Eileen Skeen, who wants to go into science when she grows up, said she was enjoying herself Saturday morning as she picked up chunks of dirt and rock to closer inspect the preserved specimens.

Skeen, from McKinney, Texas, said she'd visited Glen Rose before to hunt fossils.

Her mother had been following the progress of the Mineral Wells fossil park through Facebook, according to Skeen.

"The fossils are very small but good," Skeen said about the Mineral Wells site.

"I've been looking for a place to find paleozoic fossils," Will Childress said.

He and Julie Vail took their two children, Lillian Wallace, 8,

See FOSSILS, page 2

DALLAS COUNTY | TRANSPORTATION

Tollway agency now has all-white board

Commissioners OK appointment changes call for more diversity

By KEVIN KRASKE
and FRANK
LINDEBERGER
Staff Writers

A divided Dallas County Commissioners Court voted Tuesday to replace the only minority member of the North

SECURITY CONCERNS

North Texas Tollway Authority OK

North Texas Tollway Authority board with a white man.

Russ Cagle, the Dallas County Commissioner, was appointed to the NTTA board of directors by a 5-2 vote. He replaces Alan

See NTTA Page 10

A spike in cases

Police reported 103 sexual assaults through July of last year.



See CRIME Page 10

CRIME

Rise in sex assaults has police on alert

Half of cases involve alcohol, Dallas officials consider awareness campaign

By KERRY DAVIS
Staff Writer

A significant spike in sexual assaults reported in Dallas in the last year is prompting police officials to get to work on a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing the trend.

Through Tuesday, Dallas police reported 103 sexual assaults. Through the end of July last year, the department had reported 95.

Officials are still making the data, but preliminary indications are that about half the cases involve alcohol and pro-

See CRIME Page 10

MINERAL WELLS

History at your fingertips

Founders hope visitors will unearth love of science as they hunt for fossils at new park



Visitors can take home what they find at Mineral Wells Fossil Park, which was dedicated Tuesday.



Though the fossils are small, they are everywhere at the free Mineral Wells park, which draws 50 to 100 visitors a week. The best time to look for fossils is after a rain, say experts from the Dallas Paleontological Society. The group encouraged the city to open the educational park.

By KRISTJANA GUDMUNDSSON
Staff Writer
kgudm@metro.com

MINERAL WELLS — Lee Higginbotham is hoping that something old can trigger something new: a passion for science in today's kids. Old as in fossils and paleontology.

"My hope is that 10 or 20 years from now someone will say that when I was a kid I went to Mineral Wells Fossil Park and I thought science was just so cool and I wanted to become a doctor or an engineer — a biologist or chemist," said Higgin-

botham, who is with the Dallas Paleontological Society and a driving force behind the park.

Visitors to the newly opened Mineral Wells Fossil Park can find remnants of marine life from the Permian Period —

300 million years ago. Among the most common fossils are crinoid columns, known to many as tooth bands because of their shape.

And visitors can take home what they find at the park.

Only a few such parks exist in the United States. It is illegal to take artifacts from state or national parks, but because Mineral Wells is a city park, it is an exception.

"You don't just get to open an attraction like this every day or possibly ever," said

See GUESTS Page 10

COLLIN COUNTY

DA files report on clerk

Employees finished work records 200 times, document says

By KIM CAMPBELL
Staff Writer

Collins County Clerk, Barbara C. Cragg, has filed a report on her work records for the year 2009.

The report is among more than 200 documents in a 40-page document that was filed by the clerk's attorney's office in which Cragg and the others

The document outlines the criminal case against Cragg, Sherry Bell, Barbara Litterell, Amy Martin, Loretta Roberts and Maria Simpson, who were indicted last week on charges of engaging in organized-crime activity.

District Attorney John Rosen would not comment on the evidence.

"We will do our talking in court," he said in a brief e-m-

See DOCUMENT Page 1

ELUESS

Funding blasted senator

Grant for the school district list of 'waste'

By TOM
Staff
Writing

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Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Hours of Operation
Friday-Monday 8 a.m. to dusk

Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation Department
940-328-7803
Established with assistance from the
Dallas Paleontological Society
www.dallaspaleo.org

















MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

Geology:

Mineral Wells Fossil Park provides an excellent opportunity to collect well preserved Pennsylvanian Period (aka Late Carboniferous Period) fossils with ease and abundance. The Pennsylvanian Period ranges from 299 million to 318 million years ago with the Park being at approximately 305 million years.

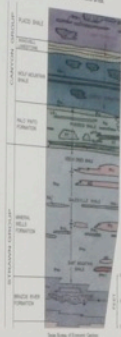
The park as it exists today is a result of 20 years of erosion of the old City landfill's borrow pit, which was closed in the early 1990s. The erosion of the borrow pit has revealed fossils documenting an ancient marine fauna consisting of a large assortment of species of crinoids ("sea lilies"), echinoids (sea urchins), brachiopods, bivalves (clams, oysters), gastropods (snails), bryozoans, sponges, corals, trilobites (arthropods), ammonoids, nautiloids, plants and primitive sharks.

In recent years the pit has become a destination for avid fossil collectors, paleontologists, geologists, and various other related groups.

Fossils have been collected from north Texas for 150 years with many of them becoming the first official recorded and described of their species (type specimen).

During the Pennsylvanian Period the North American continental plate was much further south and partially conjoined with the South American and African plates, forming the western half of Pangaea, with Texas located near the Equator.

Geologic column for the Mineral Wells area



Fossils:

Crinoids are by far the most common fossil found here. They are the remains of ancient "sea lilies." While crinoids may look like weed plants they are actually animals! There are probably at least a dozen or more species of crinoids found here, each with their own design and some with defensive spikes around the "cup." Crinoids still exist today.



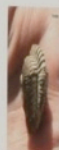
Segments of the crinoid's stalk (columnals) have historically been called "Indian beads" or "top rocks" by locals.



Echinoids (sea urchins) are distantly related to crinoids. The commonly found echinoid in the Pennsylvanian Period layers in north Texas is the "Archaeocidaris." Individual spines and body plates are commonly found. Echinoids such as sea urchins, sand dollars, sea biscuits are still common today.



Trilobites are ancient arthropods related to crustaceans and insects. Trilobites became extinct at the end of the Permian Period (251-259 mya).



Gastropods (snails) and bivalves (clams, oysters) were common mollusks that lived in the shallow seas that once covered the area.

Brachiopods look similar to bivalves or clams but are very different animals. Brachiopods did not today live in the same type.

Corals - The most common coral found here is "horn coral." Corals are different from today's corals but are very different animals. Brachiopods did not today live in the same type.

Bryozoans are colonies of tiny animals that build common living structures that look like tiny reefs or sea which can be found standing like pillars, branching like, or flat-like arrangements on other fossils or rocks.

Nautiloids - Many species of both coiled and straight-shelled nautiloids existed, but today only a few species of coiled nautiloids still exist. Nautiloids are different mollusks like the squid and cuttlefish.



Sharks - Many species of primitive sharks existed at the time. The most common shark fossil found are their teeth.

More Information:

www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com
www.fossilparks.org



MINERAL WELLS FOSSIL PARK

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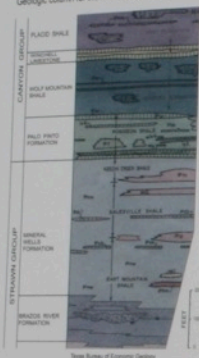
In recent years the pit has become a destination for avid fossil collectors, paleontologists, geologists, and various other related groups.

Fossils have been collected from north Texas for 150 years with many of them becoming the first official recorded and described of their species (type specimen).

Geology:

The Fossil Park is located in a member ("portion") of the Mineral Wells Formation called the Salesville of Shale. The Mineral Wells Formation consists of shale, sandstone, conglomerate and limestone deposited during the Pennsylvanian Period when the region was covered with a shallow sea that extended across the southern and western part of the continent.

Geologic column for the Mineral Wells area



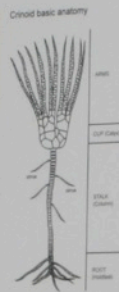
Because of the slight north-westward dip (toward NW) in 2 degrees of the layers in the Park, fossils are exposed more to the southeast and the higher, steeper slopes are exposed more to the north-west.

Some species of animals are very specific to certain geologic formations making it possible to correlate certain layers with other areas.

The base of the Mineral Wells Formation is correlated closely with the Collierville Formation in Oklahoma.

Fossils:

Crinoids are by far the most common fossil found here. They are the remains of ancient "sea lilies." While crinoids may look like weird plants they are actually animals! There are probably at least a dozen or more species of crinoids found here, each with their own design and some with defensive spikes around the "cup." Crinoids still exist today.



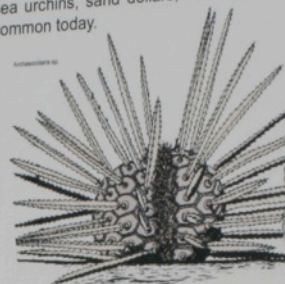
Segments of the crinoid's stalk (columnals) have historically been called "Indian beads" or "pop rocks" by locals.

Crinoid columnal description

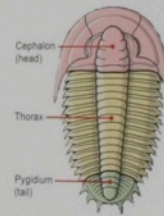
Columnals bearing an art are called nodes or internodes. Nodes without art are internodes.



Echinoids (sea urchins) are distantly related to crinoids. The commonly found echinoid in the Pennsylvanian Period layers in north Texas is "Archaeocidaris." Individual spines and body plates are commonly found. Echinoids such as sea urchins, sand dollars, sea biscuits are still common today.



Trilobites are ancient arthropods related to crustaceans and insects. Trilobites became extinct at the end of the Permian Period (251-299 mya).



Gastropods (snails) and bivalves (clams, oysters) were common mollusks then just as today.

Brachiopods look similar to bivalves on the outside but are very different animals inside. Brachiopods still exist today but in fewer types.

Corals - The most common coral found here is "horn coral." Corals are still common today, but the "horn coral" became extinct at the end of the Permian Period.

Bryozoans are colonies of tiny animals that build communal living structures that look like tiny nets or lace which can be free standing like lattice, branch-like, or net-like encrustations on other fossils or rocks.

Nautiloids - Many species of both coiled and straight-shelled nautiloids existed, but today only a few species of coiled nautiloids still exist. Nautiloids are advanced mollusks like the squid and octopus.



Sharks - Many species of primitive sharks existed at the time. The most common shark fossils found are their teeth.

More Information:

www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com
www.dallaspaleo.org

Crinoid columnals, column sections, spines, cup, and cup plates



Echinoid plates and spines



Gastropods (snails)



Bivalves (clams)



Brachiopods



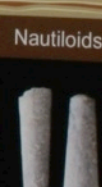
Coral



Bryozoan



Nautiloids



Shark tooth













SEYBOLD RANCH

MINERAL WELLS

FOSSIL PARK



MINERAL WELLS
FOSSIL PARK







Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Hours of Operation
Friday-Monday 8 a.m. to dusk

Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation Department
940-328-7803

Established with assistance from the
Dallas Paleontological Society
www.dallaspaleo.org

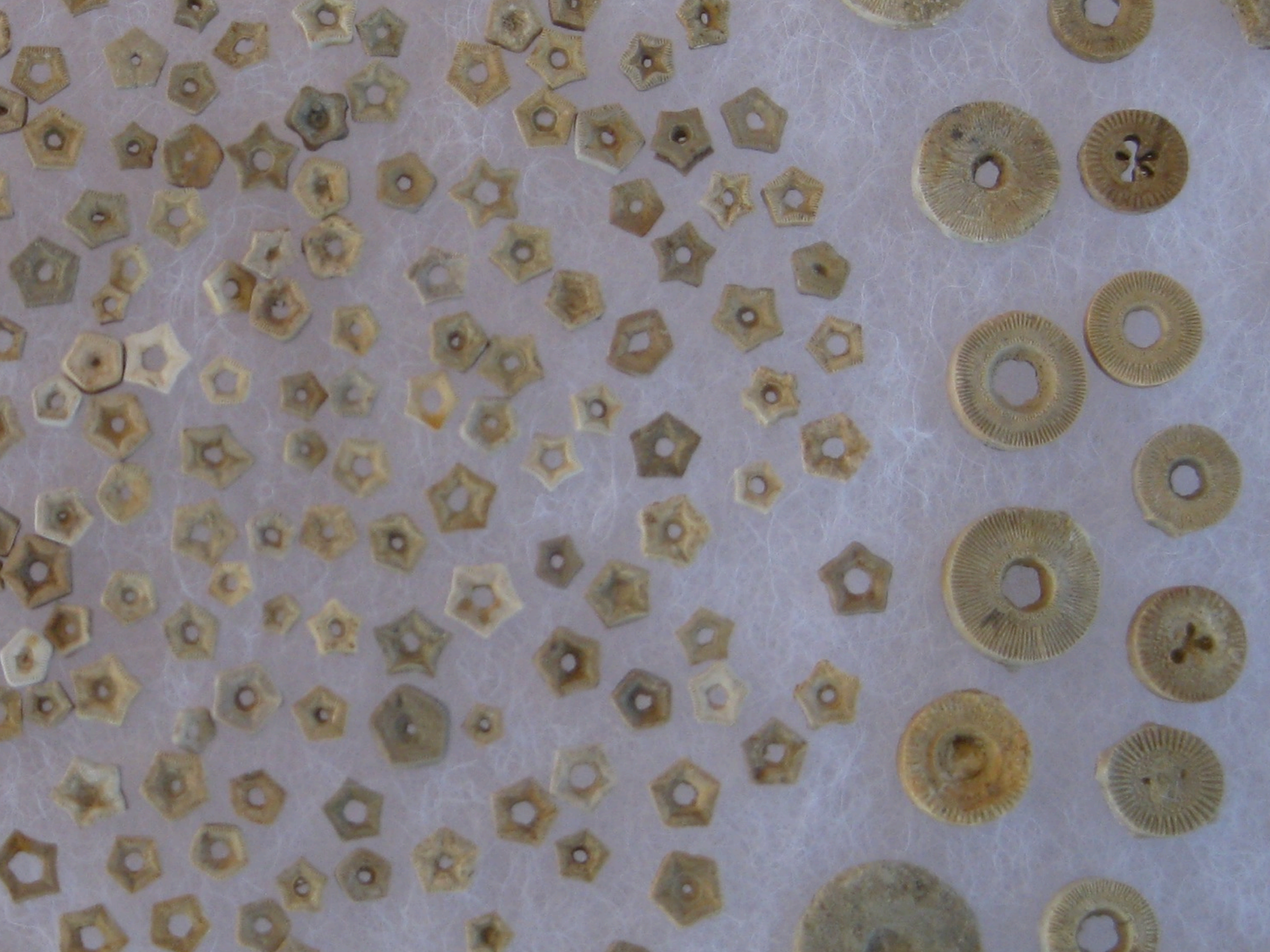


Wells Fossil Park
of Texas
1000 N. 10th St.
and Recreation Department
320-7853
in conjunction with the
Geological Society
of America



























SEYBOLD RANCH

Since
1947

MINERAL WELLS



FOSSIL PARK



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