

Dr. Stucky to speak in Wray

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

During the summer of 2011 and early spring of 2012, Denver Museum of Nature and Science excavated a site in Phillips County. The Museum team lead by Dr. Richard Stucky, the DMNS curator of paleocology and evolution, recovered a nearly complete vertebral column, part of a front leg, kneecaps, the skull and both tusks of a Stegomastodon from the Weis Site, named after the local landowner. This discovery may be the most complete one ever found in Colorado.

The fossils, which have been removed from the site, along with those of several smaller animals, will provide scientists with more information about life in Colorado more than 1.2 million years ago. The animals were found in deposits that look like an ancient river system, much like the South Platte River is today near Sterling. Stucky said the landscape probably had more trees and could have looked like the African Savanna.

Stucky will present an evening program for the community called Ancient Colorado Ecosystems: From Tropical Forest to Ice Age Mammal Communities on the Great Plains and across the Rocky Mountains on Monday, Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wray School Kitzmiller Auditorium.

The program will be about the overall prehistory of Colorado with special emphasis on local discoveries in Northeastern Colorado. The program is free to the public.

Stucky is curator of paleocology and evolution in the Department of Earth Sciences at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. He received his Ph.D. in anthropology in 1982 from the University of Colorado with a specialization in vertebrate paleontology. After completing a Rea Postdoctoral Fellowship of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1985 he became an assistant curator of vertebrate fossils at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

In 1989, Stucky became the curator of paleontology and chair of the Department of Earth Sciences at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. From 1989 to 1995, he was the science director for Prehistoric Journey, an \$11.2 million exhibition on the history of life on earth at DMNS, which received the American Association of Museum's Curators Award in 1996.

He also has a keen interest in getting youth involved in science to lead them into a scientific career. He currently coordinates the Teen Science Scholar program at DMNS, which partners

Dr. Stucky to speak in Wray

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

scientific researchers with youth to inspire a career in science

Stucky will also give a program: Fossil Elephants, Rhinos and Sabertooth Cats from the Great Plains of Eastern Colorado for middle and high school students during the day. This program will be directly about the discoveries that have been made in Yuma and Phillips counties including those near Wray and Holyoke.

He will tie in the exciting science that is found in the student's own backyard. These programs coincide with the Wray Museum's afterschool program: Bones, Bones, Bountiful Bones for students in second through sixth grade.

For more information about the upcoming program, contact the Wray Museum at 970-332-5063.

Holyoke Enterprise October 18, 2012