

**HISTORY IN THE MAKING
RIGHT HERE IN HIGHLANDS RANCH**

by Norm Fox
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As most of you are aware, Highlands Ranch has made national news recently with the discovery of dinosaur bones at a local construction site (Wind Crest Retirement Community). It is on private property and they are cooperating with the Museum of Nature and Science in developing and excavating the site as a true archeological site.

The following description is excerpted from an article published by the Museum:

Denver Museum of Nature & Science Confirms Dinosaur Fossils Unearthed at Highlands Ranch Construction Site

HIGHLANDS RANCH, Colo. — May 20 — The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is exploring a Highlands Ranch construction site where dinosaur fossils have been uncovered. The fossils were discovered near Wind Crest, a continuing care retirement community developed and managed by Erickson Living in Highlands Ranch. A limb bone and several ribs from a horned dinosaur were the first fossils uncovered. Work will continue for the next several days to weeks at the secured construction site to determine the size of the bone bed.

“We are so grateful to Wind Crest and Brinkmann Constructors for allowing us the opportunity to evaluate this potentially important scientific find,” said George Sparks, president and CEO of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

“It’s always exciting to get a call about possible fossils, and I can’t wait to share more details as we continue to dig,” said Dr. Tyler Lyson, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. “Finds like this, while relatively rare, are a great reminder of how dynamic our planet is and how much more there is out there to discover.”

Lyson studies the evolution of dinosaurs and turtles and is particularly interested in what was occurring in the Rocky Mountain region 66 to 68 million years ago, which is the age of the rock layer where the fossils are embedded.

“On behalf of the residents and employees of Wind Crest, we are thrilled to be part of such an incredible scientific discovery,” said Craig Erickson, executive director of Wind Crest. “We appreciate the invaluable expertise of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and our partners at Erickson Living and Brinkmann

Constructors as we work together on this exciting opportunity for all of us to learn more about our earth's rich history.”

“This is a remarkable discovery that our team takes great pride in unearthing. We are grateful for the scientific expertise brought to this discovery by the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and Wind Crest's great generosity in sharing it,” said David Rahm, project director with Brinkmann Constructors.

Since the discovery occurred at an active construction site, Lyson and his team will work closely with Wind Crest and Brinkmann to safely explore the site and document the fossils. Construction will continue while the Museum team works to determine the number and type of fossils.

The construction site is not open to the public.

The story behind the discovery:

Brinkman, the Erickson contractor, was excavating the site area to remove overburden and replace existing earth material with a better compacting material in preparation for constructing a new clubhouse in that area. To do this they excavated deep down, and consequently uncovered the find. According to Craig Erickson (Wind Crest CEO) the find is slightly east of the building site and hopefully will not affect the site itself. If it does, Erickson is confident that they can find a suitable work around to accomplish both goals.

Interestingly, because the bones are on private property, the owner “owns the bones”. Mr. Erickson informed me that late last week he signed a fossil

agreement with the Museum of Nature & Science to donate all the recovered artifacts free to the Museum. Makes me proud to be a resident of this community.

Because the site is on private property and at an active construction site, for safety and security reasons, there is no public access to view the site. Public interest will have to be satisfied with news updates and websites such as ours to keep up with the findings.

Fortunately, as a Wind Crest resident, I have access to viewing the site from an existing building about 200 yards distant and especially good viewing with binoculars. I have included some pictures I took with my iPhone the morning after the snowstorm on May 21st and some I took about 8am on May 28th.

Stay tuned to our website and we will attempt to keep you updated as work progresses. Not many historical societies have the opportunity to document history in the making!