



SUMMER PALAEOLOGY FIELD ASSISTANT

The Summer Palaeontology Field

Assistant will serve a specific role in the research and education mandate assisting with fossil collection in the field. The student will assist as necessary in the field and with supervision of a paid public excavation program at our Pipestone Creek fossil site. The position will both make use of proper palaeontological field techniques and teach those field techniques to museum visitors. In addition to fieldwork, as necessary, the position will assist the Assistant Curator, Summer Palaeontology Technician & Collections Assistant in the lab with fossil preparation and volunteer supervision.

The Summer Palaeontology Field Assistant will be based out of the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum, with many days spent primarily outdoors at various fossil sites.

This position will be very important for the PJCDM by assisting it to fulfill its mission and a number of its objectives, including:



This position will be very important for the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum by assisting it to fulfill its mission and a number of its objectives, including:

- 1.** To preserve and protect palaeontological resources as historical resources for future generations.
- 2.** To promote an understanding of palaeontology within the Peace Region of Alberta by using fossils to educate students and the public.
- 3.** To promote scientific research of palaeontology resources in the Peace Region.

Specifically, the position will assist in the collection of new local fossils for research and display, assist the museum as it continues to offer an exciting new educational program, and protect and conserve the local fossil resources of the area. Fossils found and collected by the Summer Palaeontology Field Assistant will assist the museum in furthering palaeontology in the Peace Region, acquiring specimens for scientific, educational, display, and interpretive use.



Local communities and tourists will benefit from the work completed by the position, as the experience at the museum and in our programs improve with exciting new discoveries. These fossil finds will also give families an opportunity to experience, to understand, to learn, and to appreciate Alberta's rich palaeontological heritage and the importance of protecting and preserving it for future generations. The position will also serve as an important education tool, helping visitors and program participants learn about the process of collecting vertebrate fossils and the importance of the fossil history of the area.

The Summer Palaeontology Field Assistant will gain invaluable work experience, practical skills for palaeontology (collecting methods for vertebrate fossils), as well as specific collections management skills (storing and cataloguing objects). Additional skills such as working as part of a team and problem solving will be fostered in the field.



The position will not directly contribute to the development of official-language minority communities.

Measurable outcomes:

The measurable outcomes of the project will include the number of fossil sites visited and the number of specimens collected with the help of the Summer Palaeontology Field Assistant. Having additional staff during the summer will increase the amount of area we can cover looking for new sites and increase the chance of discovering more significant fossil sites in the area as well as allow the museum to collect more fossil resources than would otherwise be possible.

There are four main areas in the Peace Region that fieldwork will focus on in addition to our Palaeontologist for a Day program and collaborative work with the University of Alberta. These new areas are under-explored, so success will be determined by being able to spend two weeks (10 days) exploring these new areas.

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The project will also be successful if new fossil material comes to light from these localities that adds to our understanding of fossil vertebrates in the Peace Region. Additionally, as this position will also be assisting with our Palaeontologist for a Day program, the success of the position will also be measured in the number of fossils successfully mapped and collected during that program, as well as positive feedback generated from participants in that program. Last year, 74 fossils were collected from the site. This year will be considered a success if we increase that number by approximately 33%, remove overburden to expose another 1.5 m² at the site, and run the program at over 50% capacity. We will also be hosting a large 40-person travel group from the Dinosaur Research Institute in 2022, and the position will be necessary to prepare for the increased visitation and participation.



The museum will also be introducing a half-day palaeontology program. This position will be critical to the implementation of the program. All of these programs provide hands-on learning experiences at the Pipestone Creek bonebed that distinguish the museum from others in the province. The program will be considered a success if all participants get hands-on experience digging at the Pipestone Creek bonebed. In the lab, success of the position will be measured in the number of preparation projects completed. Given that the position is meant to be mostly outside the lab, this aspect of the position will be a success if one major element is nearly completely prepared by the end of the position.

Description of tasks:

1. Assist museum curatorial team and University of Alberta collaborators in palaeontology fieldwork in the region, prospecting, excavating, and collecting fossils.



2. Assist with paid Palaeontologist for a Day program supervising participants and excavating fossils.
3. Learn proper palaeontological techniques for prospecting for fossils.
4. Learn proper palaeontological techniques for excavating fossils.
5. Learn proper palaeontological techniques for collecting fossils.
6. Prepare fossil specimens in the lab.
7. Carry out standards of best practice for fossil collection in the field.
8. Teach about the palaeontology, geology, and natural history of Alberta and the Peace Country region.
9. Assist museum staff with organization of fossil collection as necessary.

Work plan: The student will usually work Friday, Saturday, & Sunday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm assisting with the Palaeontologist for a Day



program, and Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm working in either the fossil preparation lab or assisting with other fieldwork at one of four new research areas in the Peace Region. During training, the student will work Tuesday to Saturday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm until the week of May 25 when they will switch to their regular schedule. The first two days will involve general orientation to the museum and to the position expectations. The employee will be

given necessary paperwork, shown around the facility, shown workplace safety features, given fieldwork safety training, introduced to staff and volunteers, and given training with required tools, equipment, and workstation

The remainder of the position will be spent either assisting in the field, preparing for fieldwork, or preparing fossils in the preparation lab.

A typical workday may involve touring Palaeontologist for a Day participants through the facility, readying and loading relevant field gear,



teaching participants proper palaeontological collection techniques, uncovering the fossil site through overburden removal, assisting in the mapping and collecting of specimens, and organizing newly collected specimens in the museum collection.

On fieldwork days when not running the Palaeontologist for a Day program, work will involve working closely with their supervisor to ready gear, prospect areas for fossils as well as collect and transport any fossils they find back to the museum. On days working in the lab, the student will focus on preparation of fossil specimens with the help of the Summer Palaeontology Technician and Collection Assistant or assisting with other museum tasks as necessary such as museum events. Weekly, the position supervisor will assess the progress made both in terms of number of fossils collected and number of participants in the program to evaluate whether or not



sufficient progress is being made towards the desired outcomes. Progress on additional fieldwork will be difficult to assess except for the number of days worked, which should progress at an expected rate during the summer. Fieldwork with the University of Alberta field crew will be concentrated over four weeks in July and August.

This position will build on skills typically taught in an academic program, but are best acquired by on-the-job training and regular first-hand experience. The student will develop their ability to communicate and work as part of a team in an outdoor collaborative setting working daily with their supervisor and other team members. They will develop a keen eye for fossil identification and prospecting methods, applying the information they have learned in class to work expediently in the field. Detailed mapping and excavation of fossils are highly specialized skills that the student will learn as best practices and will be



a boon to students pursuing employment in palaeontology and natural history fields. These tasks will also foster attention to detail, fine motor skills, working as part of a larger project, problem-solving, and patience. The student will learn to safely work with tools and equipment for which they have received instructions. Potential unexpected problems may arise in the field, and the student will gain creative problem-solving skills and the ability to adapt to changing situations to overcome these obstacles. The student will also gain invaluable communication experience and the ability to present a positive attitude working one-on-one with program participants, personably teaching about the collection techniques and the fossils as they are being discovered.

The ideal candidate must have the following qualities: **1.**

Currently attending and will be returning to post-secondary education with a degree in palaeontology, geology, archaeology, museum studies, zoology, biology, science, engineering, or equivalent.



2. An Alberta Class 5 or higher Driver's License or equivalent.
3. Knowledgeable or interested in Alberta's palaeontology, geology, and/or natural history.
4. Attention to detail, good organizational skills, and the ability to work independently on focussed tasks.
5. Fluent in written and spoken English.
6. Basic computer and technology skills, including experience using Microsoft Excel.
7. The ability to lift moderately heavy objects.

Preference will be given to candidates who have:

1. Experience preparing and/or handling fossils in a lab or field setting.
2. Supervision experience.

We are an equal opportunity employer, and any eligible person is welcome to apply for this position. To apply, visit the following website to register in the YCW online candidate inventory:

<https://young-canada-works.canada.ca>.



Application deadline: Sunday, April 6th.

Please email your cover letter and resume to the following address: hr@dinomuseum.ca

A shortlist of approximately five candidates will be contacted after the application deadline. Selection will be based on past experience as well as how well the candidate relates those experiences to the listed desired qualities in their cover letter. Please note only successful shortlisted candidates will be contacted and selected for the interview process. Online video interviews are possible. Interviews will be conducted and final selection made by two members of the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum Palaeontology Department. During the interview process, YCW eligibility and registration in the YCW online candidate inventory will be verified.