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**Remains to be seen**



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

The skeletal remains of a bulldog tarpon, Xiphactenus, are on display at the Mesozoic Gallery in Morrill Hall. The gallery is scheduled to open Oct. 1.

**Mesozoic Monsters invade hall**

By Katie Schwalm  
Staff Reporter

A walk through Morrill Hall will soon seem like less of a trip to a museum and more like a trip back in time.

Mesozoic Monsters, Mammals and Magnolias, the new Mesozoic Gallery at the University of Nebraska State Museum, opens this month.

It features some of the largest and most original exhibits throughout the world, said Judy Diamond, the museum's assistant director of public programs.

The exhibits include an interactive multimedia display where people can learn about eight famous sites around North America. The multimedia exhibit has eight computer games, one for each of the locations.

"Each of the games recreates some bit of real science behind each excursion," Diamond said.

For example, the game from an excursion in Canon City, Colo., shows a screen with a pile of dinosaur bones. The object of the game is to build a complete stegosaurus skeleton. The most complete stegosaurus skeleton was found in Canon City.

Each excavation site also has a five-minute movie that tells the history of each excursion. The movies are narrated by Mike Voorhies, the museum's curator of vertebrate paleontology. Each movie is also closed-

*"The head of Exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History in New York called me when he saw photographs of our exhibits..."*

**JUDY DIAMOND**

assistant director of public programs  
NU State Museum

captioned for the hearing impaired.

Two of the eight excavation sites are in Nebraska. The first flowering plant in the world was found in Pleasant Dale, about an hour from Lincoln. The Pleasant Dale game shows a screen full of dirt and a small shovel. As the user clicks the shovel on different spots of the screen, different fossils appear, along with a picture of what the live plant looks like. A fossil of a mosasaur that was found in the Niobrara State Park also is in the gallery.

Other exhibits include a table where museum visitors can search for microfossils and identify what kind of animals the fossils came from.

The floor itself is also an exhibit. "The floor is a trackway," Diamond said. "It's a chasmosaurus game so you can see the story of how those

tracks were laid down. A chasmosaurus is atypical of the kind of dinosaurs that might have been found in Nebraska."

Along one wall of the first room is a mural that is a recreation of a 90-million-year-old marine aquarium. All the creatures painted in the mural have their skeletons either mounted on the wall or are imbedded in the floor and covered with the heaviest glass available. A map along another wall shows that Nebraska was covered by water.

The exhibits are already getting national attention, even though they haven't officially been opened to the public.

"The head of Exhibits at the American Museum of Natural History in New York called me when he saw photographs of our exhibits because he was interested in duplicating the exhibits," Diamond said.

Debra Meier, supervisor of exhibits, and Scott Clarke, coordinator of exhibits, designed the gallery.

The \$600,000 gallery officially opens Sept. 30 with a "Dig Site Spectacular" dinner from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the State Museum. A family celebration will be Oct. 1 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The celebration will feature "Dinosaur Craziest" events, including dinosaur songs and music, dino-dunking activities, a hands-on dinosaur dig and a visit to the new gallery.

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