2025

Annual Report

Idaho Museum of Natural History

IDAHO MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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St. Maries Public Library visit, August 27, 2025.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2025 will go down as a milestone year for the IMNH and Idaho education! Now in our 91st year, the IMNH is positioned to serve the Great (and very large) State of Idaho.

Our recent agreement with the University of Idaho has created the North Idaho Affiliate of IMNH. This new museum will be an education hub serving the northern part of the state, founded on the extensive heritage collections preserved at UI over the last century. Similar to our founding on the ISU campus in 1934, we're starting small, laying groundwork for future growth of exhibits and teaching spaces on the UI campus.

Meanwhile, our Mobile Museum project ramped up its education programming this year, visiting rural communities across our beautiful state. With 3,000 students, for a total of 6,300, visited in just 3 months, the Mobile Museum travel van is an exciting new way to spread the joy of Idaho's history and nature to her citizens.

Behind the scenes this year, we've been busy reorganizing spaces at our Pocatello campus so that we can grow our public programming and exhibits in the near future. There's a lot of momentum here at IMNH and we thank you for your continued support!

Serving Our Mission

Fiscal Year 2025, July 2024-June 2025

TOTAL SERVED BY IMNH
29,633

EXHIBIT VISITORS
9,114

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SERVED
8,335 children
12,184 adults

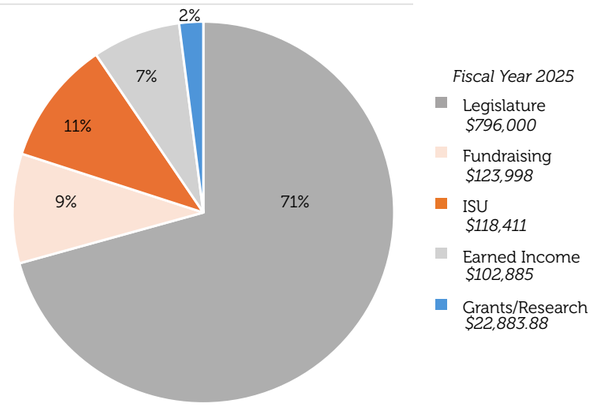
MUSEUM OBJECTS IN COLLECTIONS
1.65 MILLION
held in trust public trust

STUDENT INTERNSHIPS
12,000
hours

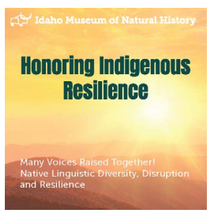
DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT
924,661

NATURE OF IDAHO RADIO AUDIENCE
200,000

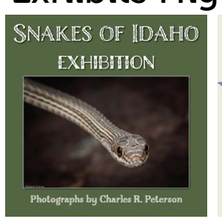
Financial

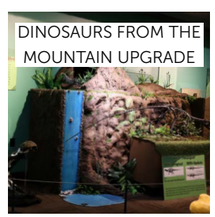


Education Highlights



Exhibits Highlights





OUR STATEWIDE MISSION

MOBILE MUSEUM LAUNCH

Pam Pascali launching the Mobile Museum in August 2025.

The IMNH has been proud to launch a new, statewide program in 2025! Thanks to the funding from the David B. Jones Foundation, a non-profit that supports research in paleontology and educational programs for young and amateur fossil hunters,we were able to initiate the Museum Everywhere Program and its flagship, the Mobile Museum.

This ambitious program brings authentic connections with Idaho's prehistoric past directly to communities across the state through a mobile, interactive experience that engages audiences in Idaho's shared natural heritage.

As an extension to our Pocatello Museum location, this van is equipped with an exhibit for visitors to walk through and interact with original and exact replicas of objects directly from our collection. Since this summer the exhibit featured Idaho's dinosaurs and was able to conduct parking lot, auditorium and classroom visits.

"We are exceptionally excited to begin this program," said Robert Gay, IMNH Education Manager. "We've got an amazingly talented educator who will be delivering programs across the state with this van, and the exhibit we've designed for the Mobile Museum is going to allow everyone in the state to be able to get hands-on with Idaho's dinosaur fossils! Idaho scientists have just begun to scratch the surface of the Age of Dinosaurs here in the Gem State, and this program both educates and inspires Idahoans in our cool, unique and scientifically important dinosaur record!"

This grant-funded project is working to reach every library district in the state, on a rotating three-year basis, at no cost to the communities served. Costs are only applicable to visits to schools, universities, departments or other institutions, outside of our library schedule. Reach out to the IMNH for quotes based on travel mileage.
In addition to the Mobile Museum, the Museum Everywhere program includes a nine-month educator, Pam Pascali, who travels statewide providing dynamic educational programming to schools, libraries, and community centers. Pam joins the IMNH from the Bannock County Historical Museum where she provided educational programming to the Bannock County community.

Through this partnership with the David B. Jones Foundation and support from the Melvin and Mary Jackson Endowment and Rick Carron, IMNH is fulfilling its vision of making Idaho's natural history accessible to all parts of Idaho.

August to October 2025 Mobile Museum Stats

•50 programs •6,300 people served •35 counties visited

St. Maries Public Library visit, August 27, 2025.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

North Idaho Affiliate

Idaho Museum of Natural History

A landmark partnership between the IMNH at ISU and the University of Idaho (UI) is strengthening statewide collaboration between Idaho's public universities and bringing natural history exhibits and educational programming to northern Idaho through the creation of a North Idaho Affiliate of the Museum.

As Idaho's designated state museum of natural history, the IMNH at ISU serves as the official steward of Idaho's natural heritage. This partnership reflects ISU's leadership in preserving and sharing that heritage statewide.

Formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), this collaboration establishes a fiscally responsible, long-term commitment to protect, share and expand access to Idaho's natural history collections using existing state resources. The affiliate will be housed within UI's Department of Earth and Spatial Sciences and serve as a regional hub for community access, student learning and Idaho-based research.

"This is the birth of a new museum for north Idaho," said Leif Tapanila, Director of the IMNH. "Our museum began at ISU in a similar way back in 1934, with the university committing to protect its natural history objects. We're excited to partner with U of I to create new educational opportunities based out of Moscow."

Displays are planned throughout the Mines and McClure buildings on the UI campus, with long-term goals to create an inviting, communal space that celebrates the natural resources and rich history of mining in northern Idaho. The first exhibit, located in the basement foyer of McClure Hall, is already open to the public, with more to come in the months ahead.

The roots of the affiliation began with a conversation about responsible stewardship of Idaho's public collections, many of which have grown over decades at UI but lacked formal protection. With leadership from the chair of the Department of Earth and Spatial Sciences, Alistair Smith, and support from university leadership, including Ginger E. Carney, Dean of the College of Science, the idea of creating a regional affiliate began to take shape. "This partnership enables us to not only preserve our collections for Idaho's citizens for generations to come, it also reflects good stewardship of state assets and helps the University of Idaho enhance its Land Grant mission," said Smith.

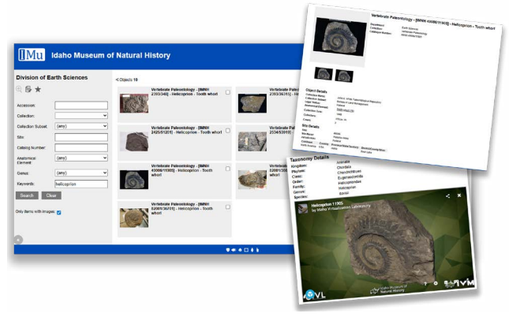
The affiliation will highlight UI's Earth Sciences Collection, including the Smiley Paleobotany Collection—one of the most significant fossil leaf collections in North America—along with the Williams Geological Teaching Collection and the Gunter Mineralogy Collection. Together, these resources form one of the most comprehensive natural history holdings in the region.

"We're excited about the potential of this museum to broaden research and education in the earth and life sciences," Carney said.

"This collaboration reflects the shared public mission we share with Idaho State University—to serve all Idahoans through discovery, learning and outreach."

A dedicated email address (uofi-museum@uidaho.edu) has been established for inquiries, and in the future, a museum webpage under the College of Science will share updates, exhibit details, and opportunities for public involvement.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS NOW ONLINE



At long last our collections are now online! You can access our databases through the Collections & Research tab on our website: https://www.isu.edu/imnh/imnh-collections-and-research/search-our-collections/. All of our Earth and Life Sciences collections are currently accessible (over 140,000 catalog entries), as well as a portion of our Anthropology Collection. We will continue to place our anthropological objects online as we complete consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on materials and/or information that may be culturally sensitive.

We are so proud to provide this service, giving everyone the opportunity to learn and explore our collections from anywhere in the world! While this project was made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services back in 2021, it will be constantly updated and refined as we add objects to our collections, conduct quality reviews of our databases, and make upgrades to the interface to increase functionality (so let us know what you think!).

IDAHO MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY RESEARCH

ANCIENT INTERMOUNTAIN WEST WAS ONCE COVERED IN SEA SPONGES

While they didn't live in a pineapple under the Phosphoria Sea, it turns out a good chunk of the prehistoric Intermountain West was once blanketed in sea sponges.

"It was like this part of the world was taken over by sponges," said Leif Tapanila, director of the IMNH and professor of geosciences at ISU. "If you were snorkeling, all you'd see would be a meadow of billions of tube-shaped sponges that went off into the distance."

In a new paper published in PLOS One, Tapanila and his co-authors point to tube-shaped chert, a type of quartz, found at dozens of sites across the West and forming a vast, nearly 400-mile horseshoe spanning from the northeast corner of Nevada, through northern Utah, up through western Wyoming and eastern Idaho to southwest Montana. It's not the chert they were interested in so much as what the chert contains: spicules.

"Spicules are tiny pieces of glass that sponges–and only sponges–make to form their skeleton," explains Tapanila. "To us, that supports the idea that this part of the Phosphoria Sea was covered in sponges."

The Phosphoria Sea was an ancient body of water located off the west coast of prehistoric North America, existing approximately 275 million years ago. Today, its geological remnants in East Idaho host phosphate mines for fertilizer. Going back to the 1950s and 1960s, when geologists were searching for new sources of phosphate ore, they discovered tube-shaped chunks of chert. Some paleontologists thought they could be the remnants of fossilized burrows from an extinct animal, or attributed them to an unknown origin.

"Looking back at the old scientific papers, it was hidden in plain sight; they didn't know what they had," said Tapanila.

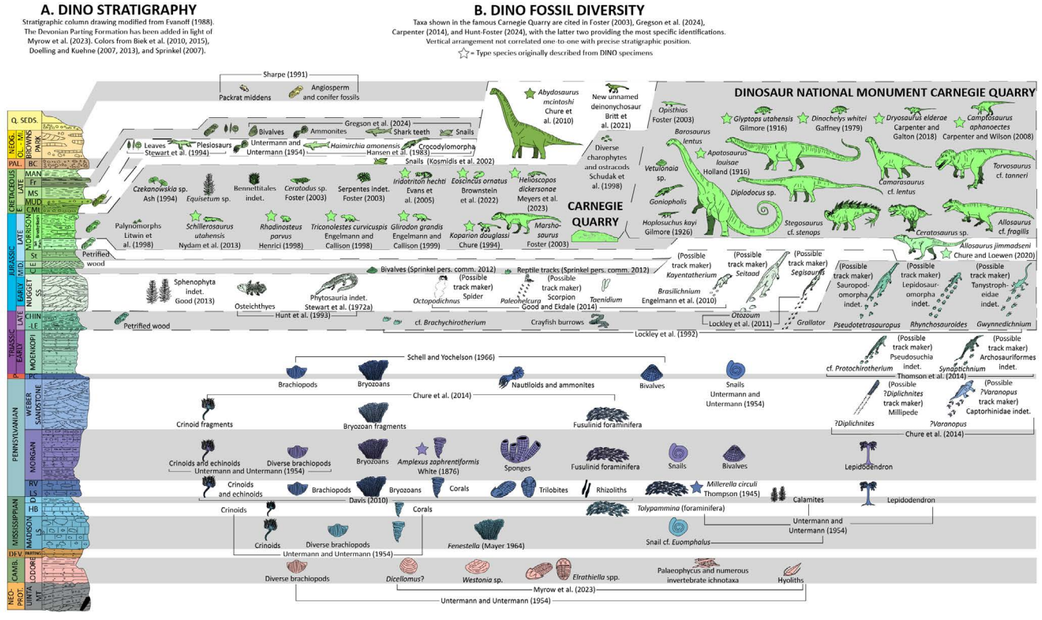
The new findings reveal more about the largest ecosystem of its kind, helping to paint a clearer picture of life in the Phosphoria Sea, which included the largest giant buzzsaw shark, *Helicoprion*, along with nautiloids, a group of shell-wearing squid, and, at times, abundant filter-feeding sponges, says Tapanila.

"It's really one of the most remarkable ecosystems in the history of North America," said Tapanila. "The richness and complexity in the ecosystem of the Phosphoria Sea were off the charts."

Illustration by Ashelee Rasmussen

A VISUAL PALEONTOLOGICAL INVENTORY OF UTAH'S NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AREAS

Education Specialist Tut Tran, together with the NPS Paleontology Program, Utah Geological Survey, St. George Dinosaur Discovery Site, and others, published a benchmark paper covering all fossils known from Utah's 13 NPS-administered parks and monuments. These places (including famous parks like Arches, Bryce Canyon, and Zion) are world-renowned for their scenic landscapes, but they also host a wealth of paleontological resources spanning hundreds of millions of years. Paleontologists and geologists across the country have been documenting fossils in Utah's parks since even before the NPS's establishment in 1916. These records are sprawling in scope, and in spite of literary summaries in the early 2010s, they have continued to expand with recent paleontology preservation efforts (for example, at Bryce Canyon NP, where Tut developed a paleontology program just before coming here to IMNH!). Given these updates, Tut and colleagues sought to compile all records into a singular, easy-to-comprehend document. The paper contains many illustrations, maps, color photographs, and a complete fossil species list for these parks as of 2024. The authors intend for this work to serve as a launchpad for current and future NPS staff, partner researchers, educators, and the public to understand the full scope of the fossils and ancient environments preserved within these iconic public lands.



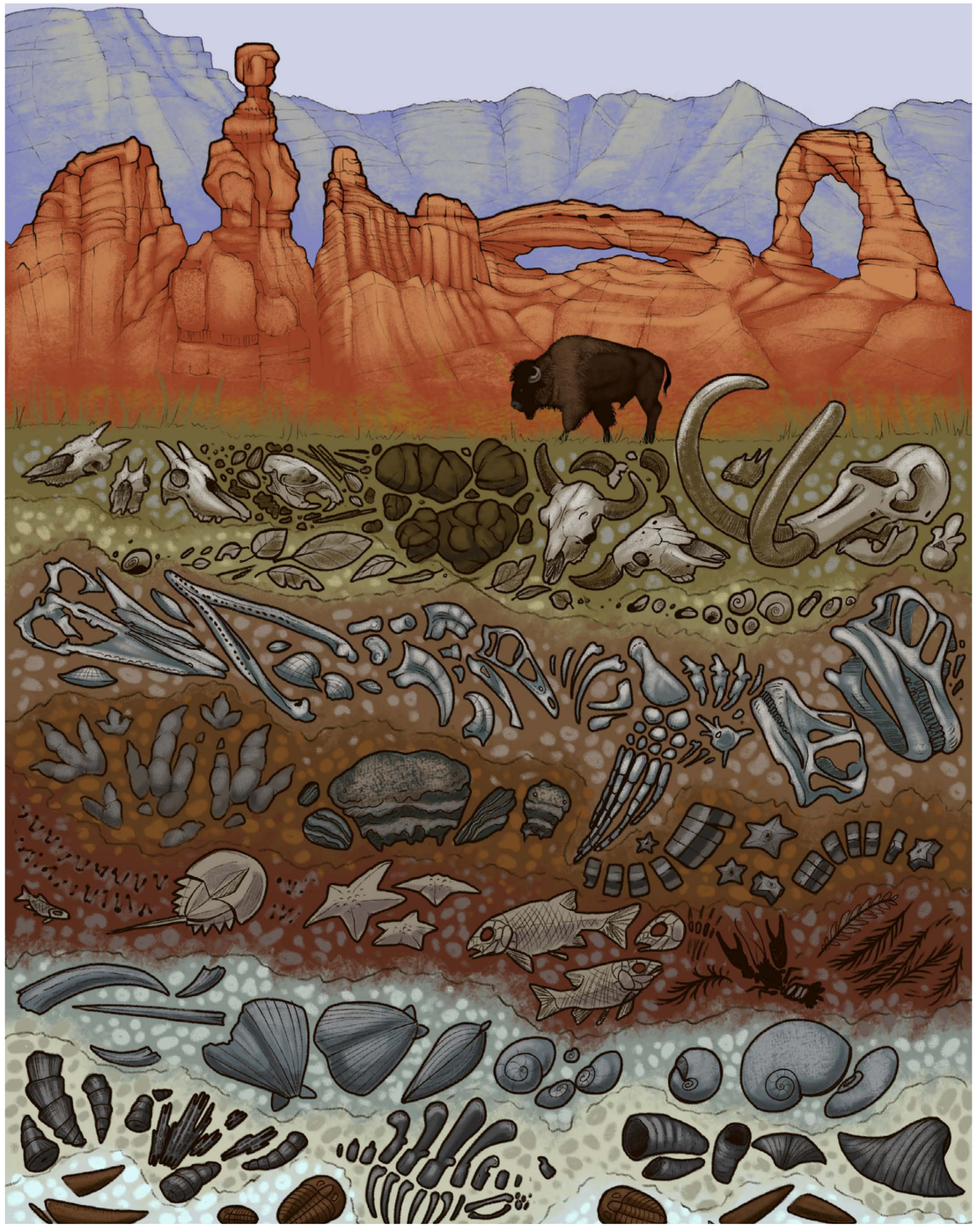


Illustration by Benji Paysnoe

Read "A visual paleontological inventory of Utah's National Park Service areas" Geology of the Intermountain West Vol. 12, 2025

SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY MEMOIR

The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) is the preeminent international organization of vertebrate paleontologists in the world. Each year the SVP publishes an Annual Memoir as a stand-alone contribution to the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology. The 2025 Memoir focused on the late Permian (~255 million years old) fossils found by IMNH Curator Dr. Brandon Peecook and his colleagues in Zambia and Tanzania. There are 14 manuscripts within the Memoir, with a great showing from ISU and the IMNH: From Zambia, Xavier Jenkins* led a team in naming a new genus of early reptile-like animal *Amenoyengi* (meaning 'many teeth'), and Henry Thomas* named a new dicynodont *Aulacephalodon kapoliwacela* (the species name meaning 'iron pig'); while Brenlee Shipps* also named a new species of dicynodont, *Dicynodontoides kubwa*, from Tanzania.

Dr. Peecook also co-wrote articles on the therapsid predators, gorgonopsians and therocephalians, and led the submission outlining a new scheme for ecosystem turnover in the late Permian of Zambia in the Luangwa Basin. This area is incredibly important as it is one of the best windows paleontologists have into life on land leading up to the worst mass extinction in Earth history at the end of the Permian Period. Dr. Peecook also commissioned the mural of a late Permian water hole that serves as the Memoir's cover from the renowned paleoartist Gabriel Ugueto.

*ISU and IMNH alumni

Top: Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Permian Reconstruction
Right: Dr. Brandon Peecook with Dr. Xavier Jensen, 2025 Idaho State University Ph.D. graduate

TAKING REPTILE EVOLUTION FROM POCATELLO TO THE BIG APPLE

Congratulations are in order for Dr. Xavier Jenkins! Xavier earned his PhD in Biology from ISU under the mentorship of Dr. Brandon Peecook. His work focused on the evolution of the first reptiles, especially on the anatomical details of their brains and ears. During his dissertation, Xavier took full advantage of the incredible resources in the Idaho Virtualization Lab (IVL) within the IMNH and processed very high-powered scans of fossils he and Dr. Peecook collected at the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility in France. Much of Xavier's work is already published in the scientific literature and a staggering five Bengal undergraduate researchers are co-authors! During his time in Pocatello he married his partner Zoie and the couple welcomed two children. The family now lives in New York City as Xavier managed to secure a prestigious National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship to continue his work on reptile origins at the American Museum of Natural History.

EXPEDITION TO AFRICA!

Over the summer Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology Dr. Brandon Peecook led an international team of paleontologists to fossil-rich rocks of eastern Zambia to find fossil remains of the oldest mammal and dinosaur relatives. This was the team's sixth trip to Zambia in collaboration with the government, and the first since the pandemic! The fossils there are from the end of the Permian Period and Middle of the Triassic period and provide incredible insight into the evolution of land-living ecosystems before and after the worst mass extinction in Earth history. Not only are the fossils abundant and gorgeous once prepared, but they provide Dr. Peecook and his colleagues with information on the growth, metabolism, senses, and biodiversity of extinct lineages. ISU Biology Masters student Dakota Pittinger and alumna Brenlee Shipps were on the expedition, getting their first taste of African fieldwork. The fossil localities in eastern Zambia are coincidentally and fortuitously also within the boundaries of National Parks, making every workday a safari!

Top: The saber-teeth of a gorgonopsian still in the ground 255 million years later.
Bottom: The expedition vehicles are manually pulled across the crocodile and hippo-rich Luangwa River.

BONE, BONE ON THE RANGE

For the third year in a row IMNH paleontology continued its collaboration with Loyola University Chicago collecting fossils from eastern Wyoming alongside local friends. The goal is to find 'microfossils' (tiny bones and teeth belonging to small animals like mammals, lizards, and fishes) to better understand the Cretaceous ecosystems containing famous dinosaurs like *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Triceratops*. The work is funded by a grant to Dr. Brandon Peecook from the David B. Jones Foundation to take undergraduate students through the scientific process from start to finish. Students find fossils in the field, identify and curate them, develop research questions, collect and analyze data, present at conferences, and ultimately will publish their results. A highlight this year, besides the growing friendships, was the discovery of a partial duck-billed dinosaur skull! The microfossils are all destined to greatly increase the IMNH research collections for the Cretaceous Period.

Top: ISU and Loyola undergraduates and graduate students combing the hillside for Cretaceous microfossils.
Bottom: The Wyoming crew with the ISU contingent (from back right): Dr. Brandon Peecook, Gary McGaughey, Cy Marchant, and Dakota Pittinger.

DIGGING IN ST. GEORGE

Idaho State University students excavating at the St. George dinosaur quarry, March 2025.

In March of 2025 the IMNH assisted with a historic excavation to save a world-class fossil site in St. George, Utah. The site, owned by the City of St. George, preserves a lake from the start of the Age of Dinosaurs that was slated to be demolished in order to build an electrical substation. The IMNH was joined by crews from across the United States and from Europe, taking part in saving this important and irreplaceable piece of our shared natural history.

Our team not only helped save incredible fish, crocodile, and dinosaur fossils from destruction but also provided real-world, hands-on training and job experience for ISU students. The team stayed for a week and made some incredible discoveries, some of which Education Manager Robert Gay was a co-presenter on at this year's Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meeting in Birmingham, UK. Interested in joining us in 2026? We're returning to the site to help out again, and we'd love for you to join us.

Robert Gay and Andrew RC Milner presenting research at SVP 2025.

WELCOMING INDAH HUEGELE TO THE TEAM

In April 2025 we welcomed our new Collections Manager for the Life Sciences Division, Dr. Indah Huegele. Indah came to us from the University of Michigan, where she had just completed a postdoctoral fellowship focused on evolution & adaptations of plants in the Cretaceous. She earned her PhD in Botany from the University of Florida, where she spent five years in the basement of the Florida Museum of Natural History studying the evolution of the sycamore tree family (Platanaceae) and its fossil record, which spans more than 100 million years. Prior to that, Indah earned her BS in Geology from the University of Texas, where she did undergraduate research on a Triassic Traversodont, *Exaeretodon*, and worked in the UTCT lab, which provided her first experiences working with relational databases and herpetology collections. Indah has been working in museums since she was 15 years old, when she had an internship with the herbarium at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. Indah loves museums, caring for specimens, and doing whatever she can to facilitate exciting research projects and connect people with their geoheritage. This has been evident in all the things she has accomplished since she arrived at the museum – making great strides in collections backlogs, updating division policies and procedures, hosting public outreach & educational activities, writing and receiving grants, recruiting numerous volunteers, field work, facilitating external research, and publishing her own research, to name a few - she truly hit the ground running! We are lucky to have her, and excited about all the things she will bring to the museum and our visitors.

2025 IMNH STAFF PUBLICATIONS

Acker, A., **Peecook, B. R.,** Sidor, C. A., & Whitney, M. R. (2025). The first occurrence of Cyonosaurus (Therapsida, Gorgonopsia) from the Luangwa Basin of Zambia. Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 45(sup1), 2444407.

Buffa, V., **Jenkins, X. A.**, & Benoit, J. (2025). Galesphyrus capensis from the Permian of South Africa and the origin of Neodiapsida. Journal of Systematic Palaeontology, 23(1), 2563582.

Huegele, I. B. (2025) Updates from the Ray J. Davis Herbarium. Sage Notes 47(4), 3.

Huttenlocker, A. K., Browning, C., **Peecook, B. R.**, Smith, R. M., & Viglietti, P. A. (2025). The stratigraphic record of the therocephalian Theriognathus (Synapsida) and its utility as a biostratigraphic index in Karoo-Aged basins. Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 45(sup1), 2441899.

Jenkins, X. A., Benson, R. B., Elliott, M., Jeppson, G., Dollman, K., Fernandez, V., ... & **Peecook, B. R.** (2025). New information on the anatomically derived millerettid *Milleretta rubidgei* from the latest Permian based on µCT data. Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society, 203(3), zlaf004.

Jenkins, X. A., Benson, R. B., Ford, D. P., Browning, C., Fernandez, V., Dollman, K., ... & **Peecook, B. R.** (2025). Evolutionary assembly of crown reptile anatomy clarified by late Paleozoic relatives of Neodiapsida. Peer Community Journal, 5.

Jenkins, X. A., Benson, R. B., Ford, D. P., Browning, C., Fernandez, V., Griffiths, E., ... & **Peecook, B. R.** (2025). Cranial osteology and neuroanatomy of the late Permian reptile *Milleropsis pricei* and implications for early reptile evolution. Royal Society Open Science, 12(1), 241298.

Jenkins, X. A., Browning, C., Choiniere, J., & **Peecook, B. R.** (2025). A new moradisaurine captorhinid from the Upper Permian (Lopingian) upper Madumabisa Mudstone Formation (Luangwa Basin) of Zambia. Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 45(sup1), e2427529.

Lovegrove, J., Chapelle, K. E., **Peecook, B. R.**, Upchurch, P., & Barrett, P. M. (2025). A new large 'silesaur'specimen from the? Late Triassic of Zambia; taxonomic, ecological and evolutionary implications. Royal Society Open Science, 12(7).

Nares, F. R., **Huegele, I. B.**, & Manchester, S. R. (2025). Compound-leaved Platanaceae in the Eocene of western North America. International Journal of Plant Sciences, 186(1), 68-79.

Peecook, B. R., Sidor, C. A., McIntosh, J. A., Viglietti, P. A., Smith, R. M., Tabor, N. J., ... & Angielczyk, K. D. (2025). Successive assemblages of upper Permian vertebrates in the upper Madumabisa Mudstone Formation of the Luangwa Basin, Zambia. Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 45(sup1), e2486065.

Smith, S. A., Pease, J. B., Carruthers, T., Bradburd, G. S., **Huegele, I. B.**, Stull, G. W., ... & Beaulieu, J. M. (2025). Longevity in plants impacts phylogenetic and population dynamics. New Phytologist.

Speer, C. A. (2025). Simulating Organic Projectile Point Damage to Bison Pelves. EXARC Journal, (1).

Thomas, H. N., Angielczyk, K. D., & **Peecook, B. R.** (2025). The first geikiid dicynodont, *Aulacephalodon kapoliwacela*, sp. nov. (Therapsida, Anomodontia), from the upper Madumabisa Mudstone Formation, Zambia. Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, 45(sup1), e2446603.

Tran , T., Milner , A., Tweet , J., DeBlieux , D., Hunt-Foster , R., Shaffer , A., Kirkland , J., Warner-Cowgill , E., and Santucci , V., 2025, A visual paleontological inventory of Utah's National Park Service areas: Geology of the Intermountain West, v. 12, p. 221-292., doi: 10.31711/giw.v12.pp221-292.

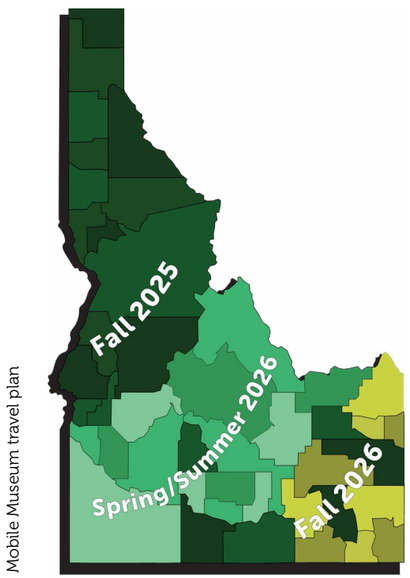
Wistort, Z.**, Tapanila, L.,** Moynihan, W., & Ritterbush, K. (2025). Glass factory found: Basinwide (600 km) preservation of sponges on the Phosphoria glass ramp, Permian, USA. PLoS One, 20(11), e0333211.

12 publications from outside researchers featured IMNH specimens.

IDAHO MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY EDUCATION

Robert Gay, Education Manager

"2025 was a record-breaking year for the IMNH Education Department. Our Mobile Museum started operations this year, as you can read about in its own detailed article here, but many other things set the bar high as we head into 2026. The department ran 318 total programs this year, ranging from museum gallery tours to classroom visits, partner events, kit check-outs, and virtual field trips. In 2025, we served over 20,000 people with our programming, a record high since COVID and twice as many as in 2024. IMNH programming extended to 20 counties in Idaho and also included visits to Bozeman, Montana and Salt Lake City, Utah in order to spread the word about Idaho's world-class natural heritage. We also presented at the SVP annual meeting in Birmingham, UK, this fall about our educational program evaluation system. This evaluation system is being spearheaded by the IMNH with partners all across the western United States and aims to bring scientific rigor into how educational programs are assessed into non-school settings. In 2025 our summer camp program came roaring back, after COVID and parking lot setbacks. We have an ambitious 2026 summer camp schedule planned and our field camps are open for registration now! We look forward to seeing you at the museum in the coming year.



Mobile Museum travel plan

IMNH Statewide Education Impact

26 of 138 school districts

21,000 Idaho learners

318 programs, average 6 per week

2.5x increase over 2024

MUSEUM EDUCATION WELCOMES NEW FACES

Tut Tran is a paleontologist and educator who joins us after working at Bryce Canyon National Park in southern Utah. While working at Bryce, Tut was responsible for the park's summer Geology Festival, preserving, and educating about the park's fossil resources. This year he led tours and student employees with our in-gallery and classroom visit events and published a scientific paper on the fossils of all of Utah's National Park units.

Tut and Pam providing outreach at the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, July 2025.

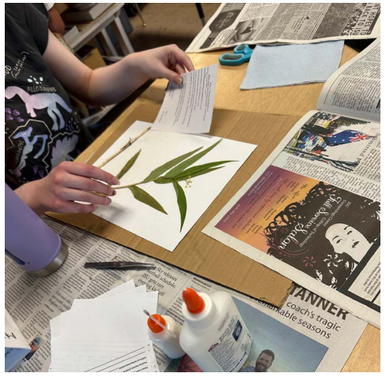
Pam Pascali is an anthropologist and educator who comes to the IMNH from the Bannock County Historical Society. Pam is an Idaho native and grew up in southeastern Idaho. She has spent most of the summer traveling the state and visiting with thousands of Idahoans. Her creativity and ability to engage with everyone powers the education mission of the Mobile Museum.

CAMP IMNH

In 2025 the IMNH returned to a comprehensive summer camp schedule, and what a fun summer we had. Adults and kids from all over the state met in Pocatello to learn about our state's amazing shared natural history. Students were able to uncover real dinosaur fossils in our lab with our Idaho's Dinosaurs and Fossil Prep classes, while younger learners enjoyed painting toys of Idaho's prehistoric wildlife.

Students were also able to get out into the field and find fossils in the wild with our Idaho Dinosaurs Field Camp and our Trilobite Hunting camp, as well as our Pocatello Plants and Survival Skills hikes. People also came to learn about the tools that people made in Idaho and around the West with our Stone Points workshops. Overall, over 50 youths, teens, and adults came to learn with us over the summer.

Are you interested in joining us for more field adventures or learning explorations here at the museum? Sign ups for field camps are now open, and museum-based camps for K-12 will open early in 2026.



MINI MUSEUM TO-GO KITS

In 2025 our Mini-Museum To-Go Kits really took off in a big way. Allowing every part of the state to have a slice of the museum delivered to their classroom or library free of charge, these kits cover Idaho's dinosaurs, our state dinosaur *Oryctodromeus*, Idaho's ancient oceans, furs and pelts, modern animal bones, and our state fossil the Hagerman Horse.

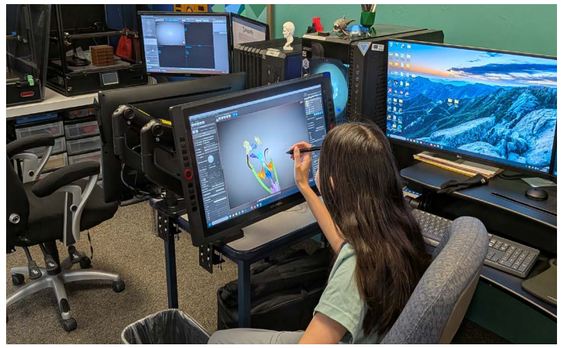
In total, the kits were used 71 times across the state (more than once a week), from Boundary County to Bear Lake.

Over 7,600 K-12 students were able to experience real fossils, skins, bones, and 3D prints of Idaho's natural heritage.

With the support of the Melvin and Mary Jackson Endowment we are introducing Hagerman and ancient oceans kits. As well as, working closely with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to roll out kits about tribal history and traditions so that students can learn about Indigenous nations within Idaho.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

TECH UPGRADES



With Rick Carron's support of the Idaho Virtualization Lab (IVL) at the IMNH, the capabilities of our lab have increased significantly by providing two new high-performance PC workstations, new mobile 3D scanners and a suite of essential computer upgrades. These improvements have transformed the efficiency and quality of both student and staff research.

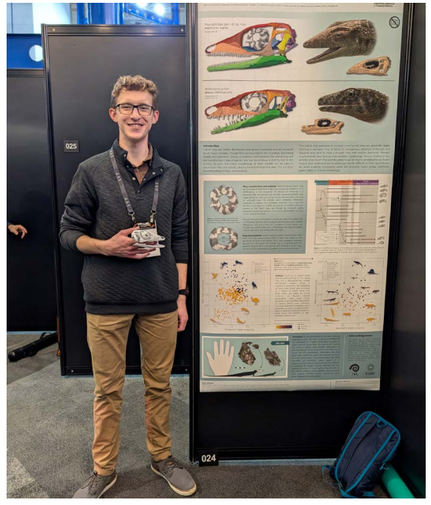
The new 3D scanners allow the lab to take its scanning abilities out of the lab and into the field. All of our upgraded systems and the new workstations offer faster rendering, greater storage capacity, and improved graphics/processing performance.

3D CT and surface scanning tasks that once required long processing times can now be completed more quickly, enabling research staff and students to focus more on analysis and interpretation rather than waiting for results.

For students, these upgrades provide access to professional-level tools that enhance their learning experience and improve the quality of their academic work.

For staff, the improved computational power supports more advanced research methodologies and facilitates the development of innovative workflows.

Overall, Carron's support has strengthened the lab's technological foundation, expanded its research potential, and created a more efficient and productive environment for everyone who depends on high-level 3D data processing.

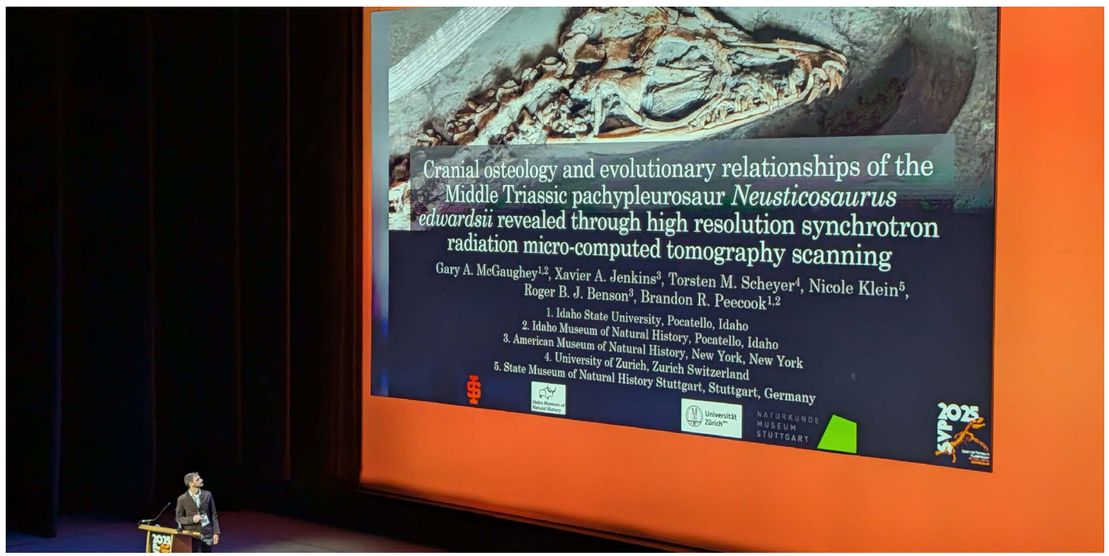


Top: Carmen Urban utilizing the new workstations in the IVL.
Bottom: Cy Marchant presenting his work at SVP, November 2025.

IMNH AT THE 2025 SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY MEETING

The IMNH had a large presence at the November 2025 SVP meeting held in Birmingham, UK with oral and poster presentations led by faculty (Dr. Brandon Peecook), staff (Rob Gay), graduate students (Dakota Pittinger, Gary McGaughey), an undergraduate student (Cy Marchant), and IMNH alumni (Tobias Babcock, Brenlee Shipps, Henry Thomas).

Their presentations were varied and well-received: Gary, Dakota, & Cy demonstrated advances in early reptile evolution, Rob showcased an exciting new Utah dinosaur discovery and outreach programs at the IMNH, Dr. Peecook summarized his teams' findings in Zambia, Henry and Brenlee shared exciting work they started after ISU, and Tobias impressed the fish room with his wonderful thesis work on the bizarre, partially whorl-toothed shark *Sarcoprion* under his advisor IMNH Director Dr. Leif Tapanila.



Top: Dr. Brandon Peecook presenting at SVP.
Bottom: Gary McGaughey presenting at SVP.

FALL FOSSIL FEST 2025

This year's Fall Fossil Fest was a resounding success! For our 5th year of the event, we made sure things were bigger and more memorable than ever before. It all started the Friday evening before the main event, where 80 members of the public joined ISU faculty and staff to hear Dr. Joshua Lively, Utah State University Prehistoric Museum, talk at our first-ever keynote dinner sponsored by Robert and Pamela Kennedy. This sold-out crowd was able to learn about some of the latest research on dinosaurs from Utah that overlap with Idaho's dinosaur record. The evening guests were thrilled to join our raffle to win one of three 3D printed skulls that we have reconstructed from Idaho's Cretaceous fossils.

The next day was the main Fall Fossil Fest event and it featured vendors and exhibitors from across the west including Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Utah, and beyond. Over 160 people attended the event. Visitors were able to interact with ISU and IMNH researchers, hear about the latest research on Idaho's dinosaur record, visit our brand-new Mobile Museum (sponsored by the David B. Jones Foundation), and see the world-premiere of Idaho's giant dinosaur-eating crocodile skull reconstruction. This meter-long skull belonged to an animal that was larger than the biggest Saltwater Crocodile alive today and thrived in the rivers of eastern Idaho 100 million years ago.

Fall Fossil Fest 2025 attendees learning about Hagerman Fossil Beds with Tut Tran.

The new home for *Oryctodromeus*, created by exhibit fabricator Kristal Herrera, funded by Robert and Pamela Kennedy.

HONORING INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE

In January, thanks to the Mary and Melvin Jackson endowment the Museum hosted the fourth annual "Honoring Indigenous Resilience." Dr. Elizabeth Redd presented the linguistic diversity that once flourished across North America and discussed how colonization and westward expansion disrupted these languages, challenging both culture and identity. This exploration of Native linguistic resilience highlighted how language revitalization efforts are empowering Native communities today, offering evidence of cultural survival and adaptation that is integral to the natural history narrative.

We continue this tradition on January 28, 2026 with Dr. Matthew DeSpain, presenting "Cartographic Encounters and a Rediscovery of the Far West Fur Trade." Dr. Matthew DeSpain will explore how the numerous encounters with Indigenous peoples informed and guided early fur trappers.

MUSEUM RECEIVES A MOON TREE

The Museum in collaboration with ISU is excited to be custodians of an Artemis Moon Tree nurtured by the USFS Lucky Peak Nursery in Boise, Idaho.

NASA's Office of STEM Engagement Next Gen STEM Project partnered with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service to fly five species of tree seeds aboard the Orion spacecraft during the successful uncrewed Artemis I test flight in 2022 as part of a national STEM Engagement and conservation education initiative.

The Artemis Moon Tree species included sweetgums, loblolly pines, sycamores, Douglas-firs, and giant sequoias. The seeds from the first Artemis mission have been nurtured by the USDA into seedlings to be a source of inspiration for the Artemis Generation.

The Moon Tree education initiative is rooted in the legacy of Apollo 14 Moon Tree seeds flown in lunar orbit over 50 years ago by the late Stuart Roosa, a NASA astronaut and Mississippi Coast resident. The Artemis Moon Tree will become part of the IMNH outreach tour programs, bringing additional space exploration to campus and challenging K-12 and college students to ask questions about what it means for a seed to have traveled to the Moon and back. By engaging children with these types of questions early, we normalize their engagement with big ideas that expand beyond their daily lived experiences and offer glimpses of possible futures. "We applied for the Moon Tree because it represents everything IMNH and ISU stand for: education, research, and the drive to explore beyond what we know" Robert Gay, IMNH Education Manager.

The tree will be planted on the quad-side of the Museum Building as part of ISU's 125th anniversary celebration, but until then it will be cared for in the ISU Life Sciences Greenhouse, thanks to the generosity of the Greenhouse Manager, Sunshine Denney. This is more than just planting a tree, it's an opportunity to watch a symbol of the future grow on our campus.

MR. JUNIOR GOES TO WASHINGTON

In preparation for the 2026 America 250 celebrations next summer, the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian reached out to the IMNH to borrow one of our magnificent long-horned bison. Their team is planning a bison exhibit as part of the contribution to the celebrations, and one of our specimens IMNH 48001/2457 (a beautiful bull long-horned bison skull nicknamed 'Junior') will be a centerpiece. To make the journey to DC Junior was removed from his long-time pedestal and placed into a custom 'clamshell' jacket before getting his own private ride from FedEx! See you in DC, Junior!

Top: Creation of form to support Junior during the plastering process.
Bottom Left: Top portion of clamshell complete and drying.
Bottom Right: Junior in his clamshell, ready to be shipped to DC.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND FUNDERS WHO HELPED US RAISE OVER $123,998 IN 2025

The IMNH crew at SVP 2025. Left to Right, Front row: Robert Gay, Tobias Babcock, Miriam Fridel.
Back row: Dakota Pittinger, Henry Thomas, Brenlee Shipps, Dr. Brandon Peecook, Gary McGaughey, Cy Marchant.

Idaho Museum of Natural History

OUR STAFF

Adminstration

Martin Blair, Vice President for Research and Economic Development
Leif Tapanila, Museum Director, Curator of Earth Science
Tabatha Butler, Assistant Vice President for Development
Amber Tews, Assistant Director of Public Operations, Anthropology Collections Manager

Collections

Amy Commendador, Head of Collections and Registration
Brandon Peecook, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology
Charles "Andy" Speer, Curator of Anthropology
Indah Huegele, Life Science Collections Manager

Education

Robert Gay, Education Manager
Tut Tran, Education Specialist
Pam Pascali, Education Specialist

Idaho Virtualization Laboratory

Timothy Gomes, Manager

Store

Stephanie Greeson, Interim Store Manager

Finance

Christina Seal, University Business Officer
Kate Zajanc, Senior Accountant
Kelli Horrocks, Senior Financial Technician

AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Idaho Code, §33-3012, the State Board of Education establishes the Idaho State Museum of Natural History