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Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum (UMZM)

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MUSEUM CREATES WEB PAGE! ☆

When Jon Hardes came to the University of Montana to begin his graduate studies in anthropology, he already had a strong interest in zooarchaeology. However he had no idea that the Division of Biological Sciences had a zoological museum and comparative skeletal collection, which are integral to any zooarchaeological study. Once at U.M. he took the museum's vertebrate osteology course and learned about our museum. Then later, as a museum employee, he thought that a museum web page linked to the Anthropology Department would help future students discover the museum. Jon took the lead in creating our web page which now reaches to students in biological sciences, wildlife biology, anthropology and other disciplines. It also is a valuable resource for visiting researchers, forensic scientists, paleontologists, local teachers, and many others interested in the museum.

Visit our web page at: www.zoologicalmuseum.dbs.umt.edu to learn about collections, exhibits, educational programs, news, staff, volunteers, and research associates. The web page is always evolving so check back often. Also look for an upcoming section on our new fund-raising group to help support the museum's programs. In the future we hope to link our museum collections database to the web site. Then researchers will have access to the museum's extensive collections data from any computer. Thanks to Jon Hardes, Lauren Easom of Spectral Fusion, and Dan Whaley of DBS for making our web page a reality!

The Montana Comparative Skeletal Collection

By Jon Hardes

Due to the heavy use it has received in recent years and its significance, the museum has designated its vertebrate skeletal collection as the Montana Comparative Skeletal Collection (MCSC). This collection is geared specifically towards aiding faunal analysts, particularly zooarchaeologists, with their studies. However it also serves vertebrate osteologists, zoologists, wildlife biologists, forensic scientists, and any others interested in the vertebrate

skeleton. MCSC has ties to the U.M Anthropology Department and is readily used by students conducting faunal based studies.

Although ever expanding, thus far MCSC consists of 750 complete skeletons and over 13,000 skulls of mammals, 300 complete skeletons of birds, 100 fish skeletons, and a newly formed herpetile skeletal collection. Faunal remains from a number of archaeological sites throughout Montana and from other states have been analyzed using MCSC. These include the Tongue River Bison Jump, the Tree Frog Site, and Pictograph Cave. Results from this research have been used in several graduate thesis projects and in technical archaeological reports. Two recent thesis projects were based entirely on the MCSC and a third is underway. None of these would have been possible without the museum's collections.

The collection has also assisted scientists with almost 100 forensic cases. Bone samples identified as "non-human" are brought to the museum from the UM Anthropology Department for further identification. This service has assisted law enforcement and county coroners from across the state of Montana.



Meet the Staff! David Dyer - Curator; Jon Hardes - Assistant Curator & Museum Collections Intern; Charles Miller - Museum Preparation Lab & Head Volunteer; Becky Bigley, Shannon Gilbert - Research Associates. Phone - 243-4743.

Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum
Division of Biological Sciences
The University of Montana
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