

Ladonia celebrates National Fossil Day

By Doug Franklin

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National Fossil Day Workshop attendees gathering in Ladonia on Saturday heard SMU paleontologist Dr. Louis Jacobs link fossils found in North Sulphur River to their counterparts found in Angola Africa.

Correlation of the same species of mosasaurs and other cretaceous period fossils in the two locations helped confirm the movement of the continents away from each other.



Louis Jacobs, SMU professor of paleontology

The workshop and a field exploration at Ladonia Fossil Park was organized as part of the National Fossil Day observance of the National Park Service. Bois d' Arc Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist and Ladonia Chamber of Commerce

partnered with the City of Ladonia and NPS. All attendees at the event received a complimentary copy of *Lone Star Fossils* by Dr. Jacobs.



More than 100 people from all across North Texas attended the event

David Hill of the Dallas Paleontological Society gave an account of how he and his children discovered a bed of ancient sea turtles at the intersection of Merrill Creek and the North Sulphur River. There were a number of students in the audience including the Trenton High School Science Club. Mr. Hill told them to look at each exposed rock as a potential fossil as only a six inch diameter area was exposed on the sea turtles.



David Hill, Dallas Paleontological Society

Workshop chair and Ladonia Mayor Pro-Tem PK Kirkpatrick introduced Van Turner, paleontologist who discovered the Dallasaurus fossil recently. His discovery linked land reptiles and mosasaurs common the North Sulphur River.



P.K. Kirkpatrick

Texas Master Naturalist Doug Franklin told how North Sulphur River was built as a twenty by ten channel to the north of the original North Sulphur River in 1928 to control flooding in the river basin and cited severe erosion as the reason for significant fossil finds in the area.



Doug Franklin

Ladonia Police Chief Kevin Mayberry gave information to fossil hunters on safety and legal points for hunting in Fannin County. He stressed hunting together or letting someone know your whereabouts when fossil hunting. He said riverbed hunting is legal, but land adjoining the river is trespassing unless permission is granted by the landowner.

About a hundred attendees went to Ladonia Fossil Park for the field exploration portion of the day's activities. Several paleo experts including Dr. Jacobs, David Hall, PK Kirkpatrick, Van Turner, and consulting geologist Tom Dill identified findings of the day, and most hunters did find something, some by the bags full.



Chair Kirkpatrick said this first National Fossil Day was a big success and thanked all volunteers who contributed to its success. She thanked the Ladonia Volunteer Fire Department for making the day a safe one for fossil hunters.

