FOSSIL PREPARATOR

POSITION SUMMARY

The Fossil Preparator is responsible for overseeing and conducting laboratory-based preparation of fossil remains. Will assist with mentoring and training lab volunteers. Communicating paleontological science with the public.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Essential Duties:

- Preparation of vertebrate fossils, especially physical preparation of dinosaur bones.
- Molding and casting of vertebrate fossils.
- Maintenance and care of laboratory equipment; sourcing of supplies.
- Assistance in preparing specimens for exhibit.
- Provide direct mentoring, training of lab volunteers.
- Helps organize and participates in paleontology education, outreach, special events, and donor development.
- Provides support to Curator through preparation, exhibit construction, assisting with fieldwork (including quarrying, and camp management duties) and in research projects as requested.
- Maintains an active role in the professional preparation community.
- Other duties as assigned.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Familiarity with basic and advanced preparation methods. (e.g., macro-preparation, micro-preparation, acid preparation, archival cradling, thin sectioning, molding and casting).
- Strong attention to detail, patience, and fine motor skills; excellent hand-eye coordination.
- Knowledge of appropriate specimen handling and storage techniques.
- Knowledge of anatomy, especially dinosaurs, and awareness of how and where to source appropriate information to aid in preparation.
- Demonstrable interest and knowledge of museums and their role in society.
- Professional interest in working in a museum environment and in playing an active role in museum development.
- Willingness to learn new skills in fossil preparation and related (e.g. preparation equipment and field vehicle maintenance).
- Either experienced or willing to learn how to use cement saws.
- Ability and willingness to work long or unconventional hours in sometimes challenging conditions of remote fieldwork.
- Experienced camping in remote fieldwork areas.
- Comfortable with public speaking.
- Basic proficiency with Microsoft Office software.

FOSSIL PREPARATOR

Additional desirable skills/experience:

- Rock cutting equipment, especially cement saws (fieldwork) and laboratory saws.
- Screenwashing and picking microvertebrate concentrates.
- Specimen photography & photo editing software.
- Three-dimensional modeling and/or printing.
- Video recording and editing.
- Exhibit construction & specimen mounting.
- Website maintenance.
- Engaging with museum visitors.

Judgment/Decision Making:

- Performs tasks and duties under general supervision, using established policies and procedures and some innovation.
- Chooses from limited alternatives to resolve problems. Refers unusual problems to supervisor.
- Occasional independent judgment is required to complete work assignments.

RELATIONSHIPS

Leadership/Supervisory Responsibilities:

- No supervisory responsibility for full-time, part-time or temporary employees.
- Will assist with mentoring and training lab volunteers.

Relation to Others:

- Position requires regular contact with volunteers and employees and must be able to communicate effectively.
- Communications may be one-on-one and groups of people.

SKILLS

Education and Experience (position requirements at entry):

- No education Required. High School diploma (HSD) or general equivalency education (GED) preferred.
- One to three years demonstrated experience in preparation of large and small vertebrate fossils.

Special Requirements (position requirements at entry):

- Valid Driver's License

WORKING CONDITIONS

Working Environment:

- Willingness to work long or unconventional hours in sometimes challenging conditions of remote fieldwork.

FOSSIL PREPARATOR

- And note that the job involves dirt, vibrating tools, chemical glues, physical labor etc.
- Positions in this class typically require: climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, reaching, standing, walking, driving, pushing, pulling, lifting, grasping, talking, hearing, seeing, and repetitive motions.
- Medium Work: Exerting up to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 20 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

CLASSIFICATION: Grade 13 (G-13)
FLSA: Non-Exempt
Approved by City Commission: 12/04/2018
Updated: By Museum Center Director Furman, HR Nameniuk. Classification updated by HR Torgerson to align with the new pay scale, effective June 23, 2025.