1906 Dinosaurs

(Music)

Joan Cartan-Hansen, Host: Hi I’m Joan Cartan-Hansen…. And welcome to Science Trek. I have some guests with me today. Maya, and Paleontologist L.J. KRUMENACKER. We’re gonna go hunting for dinosaurs. Let’s go.

Cartan-Hansen: So why have no real big dinosaur finds been found in Idaho?

L.J. Krumenacker, Paleontologist: that’s a good question. You think of places like Utah or Montana where you have your big giant, you know, ridiculous dinosaurs, and I think for a long time people came out here expecting to see that and we didn’t. And I think part of the reason for that is probably there was some sort of process going on as these rocks formed where big bones didn’t get buried fast enough to get preserved. They just rot away and get destroyed. When you are looking for dinosaur bones, you need to find rocks kind of the right age, from the age of dinosaurs.

Cartan-hansen: YOU ALSO NEED TO LOOK NEAR RIVERS OR STREAMS AND KRUMENACKER FOUND SOMETHING HERE.

KRUMENACKER: Right heres the vertebra poking out of the rock, just starting to come out with probably, hopefully more bones in.

Cartan-hansen: WE’RE JOINED BY FELLOW PALEONTOLOGIST ASHLEY FERGUSON.

KRUMENACKER: I’m going to have to peck around in some of these cracks to see how helpful the rock is so we can get it out.

(hammering)

KRUMENACKER: This is a tailbone probably from this little dinosaur living in its burrow called Oryctodromeus. it’s the most common Idaho dinosaur. It’s a plant eater, maybe about 10-11 foot long, about a seven foot tail, ran around on two legs and again it lived in the burrow with its kids.

(Chiseling)

KRUMENACKER: trying to avoid damaging it. Right now, I’m just trying to see where we might have some loose cracks to work around it and hopefully get it out in one piece.

(chiseling)

KRUMENACKER: I mean if it comes out in two or three decent pieces that’s not bad.

(hammering)

KRUMENACKER: Trying to dig it out of the rock is really hard so I’m going to have to come back and put a lot more work into it. We also found another bone poking out so I suspect as we get into this, if we are lucky, we’ll have a partial skeleton.

Cartan-hansen: SO, WE DECIDE TO MOVE TO ANOTHER SITE. THIS TIME, WE ARE LOOKING FOR DINOSAUR EGG SHELLS.

Ashley Ferguson, Paleontologist: Looks like there’s an egg shell piece there…no never mind that’s a rock!

KRUMENACKER: keep looking, Probably more. There are.

Ferguson: There’s a small piece.

KRUMENACKER: Here’s a little piece of egg shell.

Maya: Is there one right here?

Ferguson: Yup nice.

Krumenacker: Yup, good eye, you’re doing good.

Ferguson: Oh, here’s a nice piece. see how bumpy they are, kind of weird huh?

Cartan-Hansen: THESE EGGS ARE FROM AN OVIRAPTOROSAUR.

KRUMENACKER: Imagine like a big chicken with fingers and claws and kind of a long feathered tail that might eat you. We call it the killer chicken or the boneless chicken ‘cause we find the eggs but we haven’t been able to find the bones.

Ferguson: Eggs are important because it helps us learn how the animal grew and how they care for their young. It’s a way to learn how the animal lived. so in a way, for me, it’s important because it makes the animals more real.

Krumenacker: Good job Maya, you found a lot.

Cartan-Hansen: THE DINOSAUR EGG SHELLS WILL BE TAKEN TO THE IDAHO MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY FOR STUDY.

WE GO ONTO OUR LAST DINOSAUR SITE OF THE DAY.

KRUMENACKER: So where we are standing right here, you wouldn’t have any idea, this is the most important well, at least one of the most important dinosaur spots in Idaho. It’s call the Robinson Bone Bed.

Cartan-Hansen: THE FOREST SERVICE WAS GOING TO PUT A ROAD THROUGH THIS AREA WHEN KRUMENACKER FOUND DINOSAUR BONES.

KRUMENACKER: You’ve got out here teeth from an ancestors of T-rex, little raptor teeth, even a little tiny raptor tooth from some sort of a raptor the size of a crow. Of course you have lots of Oryctodromeus bones.

Cartan-Hansen: SO, THE FOREST SERVICE SET ASIDE THE ROCKS FROM THE HILLSIDE AND PUT THEM IN A FIELD FOR PALENOTOLOGISTS TO STUDY.

KRUMENACKER: The big problem, when they first dumped all the rock here, it was actually piles of rock, that’s all that was here. But the past three, four years it’s just totally over grown with plants so every year it gets harder and harder to work here.

Cartan-Hansen: SO, YOU CAN SEE BETWEEN HAVING TO CHISEL FOSSILS OUT OF a STONE OR FINDING ROCKS HIDDEN BY PLANTS, A PALENOTOLOGIST’S WORK ISN’T EASY. BUT KRUMENACKER SAYS HE LOVES IT.

KRUMENACKER: If I were 8 or 10 like one of my kids and thinking about becoming a paleontologist, I would probably think one of the best things about it is that you get to play outside all day in the summer. So, you get to travel. If you’re lucky, you get paid for what you are doing, you get to meet other students and teach other people. I like teaching. So, it’s a good way to play outside, a good way to learn and a good way to meet other people.

Cartan-Hansen: YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT DINOSAURS BY CHECKING OUT THE DINOSAUR SITE ON THE SCIENCE TREK WEBSITE.

YOU’LL FIND IT AT IDAHOPTV.ORG/SCIENCETREK.

WE’LL SEE YOU NEXT TIME ON SCIENCE TREK.

(Music)

Narrator: Presentation of Science Trek on Idaho Public Television is made possible through the generous support of the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, committed to fulfilling the Moore and Bettis Family legacy of building the great state of Idaho; by the Idaho National Laboratory, mentoring talent and finding solutions for energy and security challenges; by the Friends of Idaho Public Television; and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.