

Alberta Palaeontological Society

Palaeontological Expeditions to western Greenland in 2014 and 2017

Speaker: Dr. Eva Koppelhus, Assistant Professor and Curator of Palaeobotany and Palynology, University of Alberta

Location: Mount Royal University, Room B108

Time: January 19, 2018, 7:30 pm

Abstract:

In 2014 an expedition to western Greenland was made possible by a donation from a private donor in Cleveland Ohio. The crew included Michael Ryan, Matthew Lamanna, Philip J. Currie, Eva Koppelhus and Wendy Sloboda. The aim was to find dinosaur fossils in the Upper Cretaceous Atana Formation. This formation consists of deltaic deposits, and there are good reasons to believe it should be possible to find dinosaur remains there. We spend two weeks prospecting in the region during the 2014 field season, and one week in 2017. On the last day of the first expedition, one of the expedition members found something that looked like a dinosaur footprint. However, there was no time to confirm the find as the helicopter was picking us up shortly after. It was therefore decided that we would go back in 2017 to either confirm or dismiss the find. Early during the second expedition, the possible footprint from 2014 was examined and identified as a nodule rather than a footprint. However, we found another more convincing possible footprint on the same day. Although it was incomplete and deemed to be of too poor quality for research, thin sections are being prepared for detailed sedimentological examination to determine whether it may be a footprint.

Upper Cretaceous dinosaur remains have been found in Arctic Canada sediments of similar age. Furthermore, dinosaur remains were found more than 20 years ago in the Triassic/Jurassic formations of Jameson Land in eastern Greenland. These finds suggest that dinosaurs will eventually be found in western Greenland.

Biography:

Eva B. Koppelhus is an Assistant Professor and Curator of Palaeobotany and Palynology of the Palaeobotanical Collections at the Department of Biological Sciences of the University of Alberta. From October 2005 and until June 30, 2015 she was a research assistant for Dr. Philip Currie in the Vertebrate Palaeontology research group. Before October 2005, she spent eight years as a research assistant for Dr. Currie at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. She had a postdoctoral position in the same museum in 1996 and 1997, following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship at the Greenland Geological Survey in Copenhagen, Denmark. As a palynologist educated at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, she worked for more than ten years at the Geological Surveys of Denmark and Greenland. Her research focused on floras of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous geological periods. During her postdoctoral position at the Tyrrell Museum, she worked with material from the Centrosaurus bonebeds in Dinosaur

Provincial Park to determine more about the plants associated with this dinosaur. Her research interest is now concentrating on floras of the Upper Cretaceous of northwestern North America. She primarily works with material from dinosaur bearing formations such as the Pachyrhinosaurus bonebed in Pipestone Creek, the Albertosaurus bonebed in Dry Island Park, and the Danek bonebed in Edmonton. Her work has taken her to all corners of the world, including Antarctica, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Europe, Indonesia, Japan, Madagascar, Mongolia, New Zealand, South Korea, South Africa and the USA. In June of 2011 she received the Stefansson Medal of the Explorers Club (Canadian branch) for outstanding contributions to paleontological field research in Canada and internationally. In March 2012 she received the Antarctica Service Medal of the United States of America in recognition of valuable contributions to exploration and scientific achievement under the U.S. Antarctic Program. Furthermore in 2012, a dinosaur was named after her -- Unescoceratops koppelhusea (Ryan, M.J., Evans, D.C., Currie, P.J., Brown, C.M. and D. Brinkman, 2012).

She has been a member of the Explorers Club since 2002 and a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society since 2013.

Information:

This event is presented jointly by the Alberta Palaeontological Society, the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Mount Royal University, and the Palaeontology Division of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. For details or to present a talk in the future, please contact CSPG Palaeontology Division Chair Jon Noad at jonnoad@hotmail.com or APS Coordinator Harold Whittaker at 403-286-0349 or contact programs1@albertapaleo.org. Visit the APS website for confirmation of event times and upcoming speakers: <http://www.albertapaleo.org/>.