A photograph of a forest stream. In the foreground, a large, weathered log lies horizontally across the water. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding trees. In the background, a dark, hairy figure, presumably the Sasquatch, is standing in the water, facing away from the camera. The forest is dense with trees, some with yellow and orange autumn foliage. The overall scene is somewhat blurry, suggesting a candid or historical photograph.

**For centuries the elusive sasquatch has been sighted throughout North America. Thousands of people claim to have seen them, and their huge, human-like footprints provide tangible evidence of their existence. In 1967, a one-minute movie film was taken of what appears to be a sasquatch as it walked along a creek shore in Northern California. This film, the footprints and other evidence continue to be examined and debated by scientists. Here is a summary of what is known at this time and the current situation on this age-old phenomenon.**

# **Do Sasquatch Really Exist?**

by Christopher L. Murphy

A simple check on Google will return millions of results for the term “sasquatch” or “bigfoot.” Although all are not directly associated with the search for these creatures, most are, and as such we can see the extent of interest in the subject.

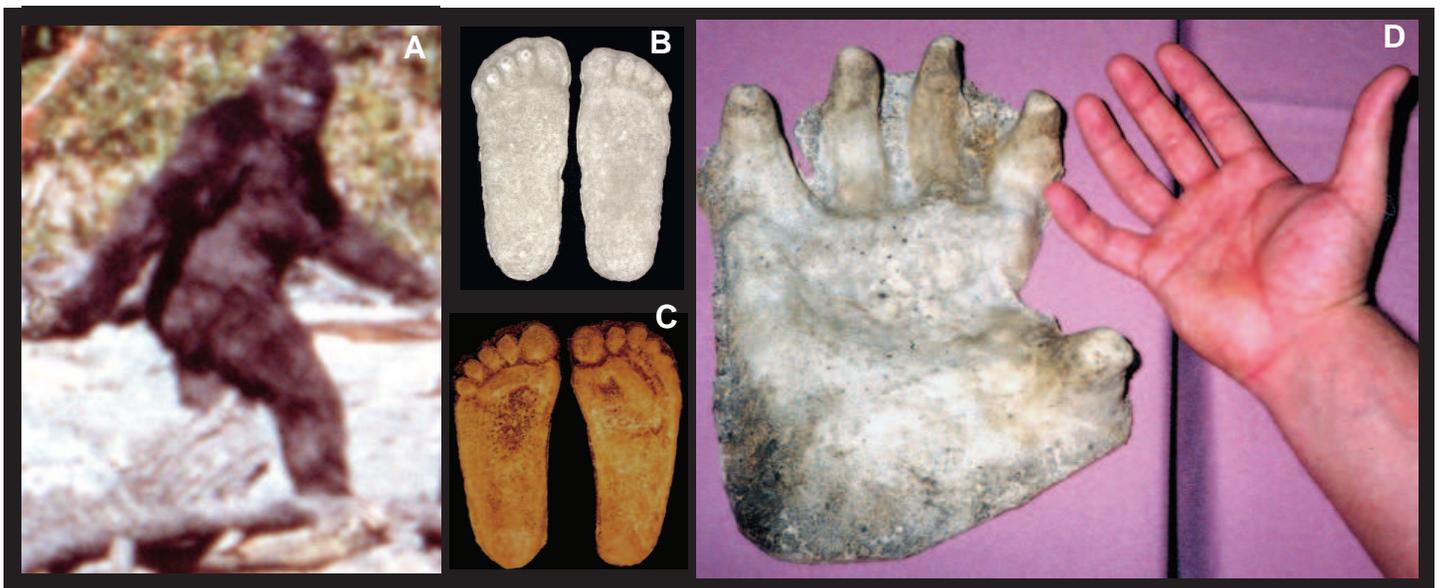
Most certainly, it was the Internet that brought the creatures “out of the shadows” and at the same time provided us with thousands of sasquatch-related experiences which otherwise would have remained generally unknown.

With sightings and other sasquatch-related incidents going back hundreds of years, and reports now numbering in the thousands, one would think that by this time we would have either confirmed the creatures’ existence, or firmly established that they simply do not exist. However, the issue is far more complex than what is generally believed. Although indisputable evidence of the creatures’ existence has not been found to date, there continues to be

As it presently stands, we have a mountain of evidence, but it’s not enough to convince the scientific community in general to have a hard look at the issue. The major scientific organizations (Smithsonian Institution, National Geographic, universities) demand a body or bones. The irony here is that if such were found, we would no longer need these organizations to help us resolve the issue.

In some ways, I suppose, this situation itself provides an incentive for sasquatch researchers and witnesses. Every one of them would be able to say “I TOLD YOU SO!” Little solace, I agree, but solace nonetheless.

Having said that, I do need to mention that there are some high profile scientists and other professionals actively involved in the sasquatch issue. In other words, they have taken the time to study the evidence and now provide their expertise in evaluating new evidence. Indeed, there are twelve (12) scientists or professionals on the editorial board of the Relict Hominoid Inquiry, which is associated with



enough additional evidence provided or discovered each year to maintain interest. Granted, most of this new evidence is simply “more of the same” (sightings, footprints, hand prints, body prints and other traces—hair and feces). However, the *number* and *distribution* of incidents alone are important factors. It is one thing to say a sasquatch was sighted, but quite another to say it was sighted say 100 times in as many different locations. Generally speaking, the creatures’ wilderness range and habitat is about the same as that of the North American black bear.

Furthermore, improved “tools,” as it were, coupled with ever increasing general knowledge, enable us to glean little bits of additional information not available to us even two years ago.

Idaho State University <<http://www.isu.edu/rhi/>>. This organization was specifically created to address the sasquatch issue. Furthermore, several scientists have authored books on the subject that support the creatures’ existence.

### The Most Convincing Evidence

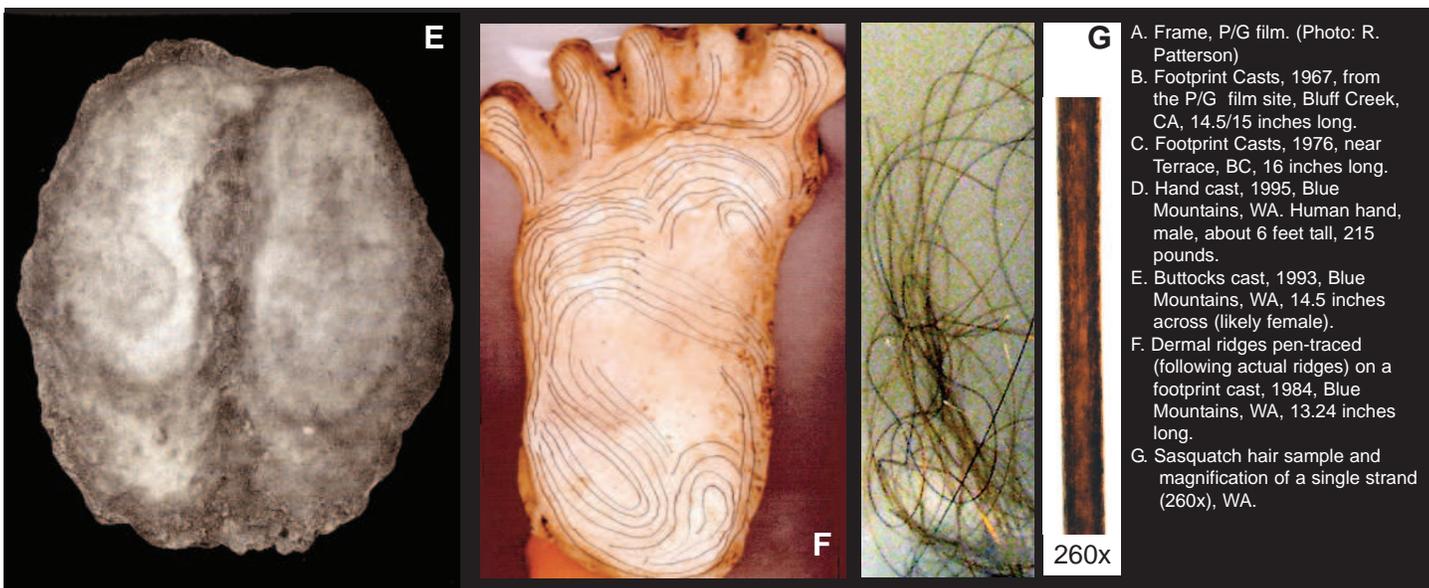
I was recently asked what I thought was the most convincing evidence for the existence of sasquatch, and why I considered such to be so. It is the second part of this question that is important. For certain, almost anything can be fabricated. However, when the circumstances are provided we are confronted with an entirely different situation—*possibility* must give way to *probability*.

The most convincing evidence is as follows (the order of the entries does not reflect their relative importance):

1. A one-minute 16mm movie film taken in 1967 at Bluff Creek, California shows a creature fitting the description of a sasquatch. The film (commonly known as the Patterson/Gimlin film) has been professionally studied by scientists and could not be found to be a fabrication. It was thoroughly analyzed by a certified forensic examiner who determined that the length of the creature's arms would be present in only one out of 52.5 million people, and the length of its legs in only one out of 1,000 people. The odds that a single human would have both of these characteristics are so remote as to be deemed impossible.

Certainly, some professionals who examined the film expressed reservations. However, with all due respect, not one of them was able to provide a scrap of evidence that proves the creature filmed was a fabrication. In the world of

prints indicate they were made by a primate. A human, of course, is a primate, however, the size of the prints and excessive weight needed to make them (depth of the impressions) essentially rules out humans as we generally know them to be. The fact that the prints indicate they were made with a flexible/animate foot adds to their credibility. As to hoax considerations, given the quantity and wide geographic distribution of the prints, hoaxing appears to be less *probable* than the conclusion that sasquatch actually made the prints. It needs to be mentioned that prints vary considerably in length and width, implying that there are very young, adolescent, and adult sasquatch. The prints have been "scientifically accepted" and given the scientific name, *Anthropoidipes ameriborealis* (North American ape foot). What this means is that the scientific community accepts that *something* (unclassified animal) is making the prints (authenticated prints are not fabrications). Whether or not the print-maker is what we call a sasquatch needs to be determined.



A. Frame, P/G film. (Photo: R. Patterson)  
 B. Footprint Casts, 1967, from the P/G film site, Bluff Creek, CA, 14.5/15 inches long.  
 C. Footprint Casts, 1976, near Terrace, BC, 16 inches long.  
 D. Hand cast, 1995, Blue Mountains, WA. Human hand, male, about 6 feet tall, 215 pounds.  
 E. Buttocks cast, 1993, Blue Mountains, WA, 14.5 inches across (likely female).  
 F. Dermal ridges pen-traced (following actual ridges) on a footprint cast, 1984, Blue Mountains, WA, 13.24 inches long.  
 G. Sasquatch hair sample and magnification of a single strand (260x), WA.

science, by the way, there is a bit of a double standard. A scientist can demand conclusive evidence, but cannot be demanded to provide the same. It is up to the person making the claim (whatever that might be) to prove he or she is right. The fact that a scientist can't prove to the contrary is essentially irrelevant.

There have been other films/videos taken of alleged sasquatch; none, however, are of the quality of the film I am referring to. Furthermore they have not been subjected to the same scrutiny.

2. Large, human-like footprints found in remote wilderness areas suggest the presence of a large, unclassified primate. With an average length of 15.6 inches, the prints significantly differ from bear prints. Characteristics of the

3. Large, human-like hand prints found in both wilderness and rural areas cannot be attributed to any classified wild creature. Although such hand print findings are rare, the size of the prints generally exceeds human norms making fabrication unlikely.

4. Prints of other body parts (besides footprints and hand prints) found in remote wilderness areas indicate that they were made by some sort of large, unclassified primates. A cast of a clear set of large buttocks prints showing streaming hair impressions defies explanation other than attributing the prints to those of a sasquatch. Furthermore, a full set of various body impressions in soft earth and mud appears to indicate that a large, unclassified primate reclined in the area. A deep impression appears to show its heel and the

back of its leg. It is reasoned that the creature probably dug its foot into the ground to reposition itself. Several professionals (a primatologist, two anthropologists, a biologist, and a zoologist/anatomist) examined a large plaster cast made from the prints and all agreed that the impressions appear to have been made by a large primate. I will, however, acknowledge that at least one additional professional believes the prints were made by a known large animal (possibly an elk). However, the lack of hoof prints at crucial locations within the impressions renders this explanation unlikely. Furthermore, a hair found in the impressions was not that of an elk and could not be associated with any other known animal. It is reasoned that a hoax is essentially out of the question because the impressions were found by a group of well-known and respected researchers who had actually baited the area in the hopes of attracting a sasquatch.

5. What appear to be dermal ridges (like fingerprints) observed in some footprint casts imply that the prints were made by a natural (probably primate) foot. The ridge patterns do not correspond to that of humans. To conclude that the ridges were fabricated (i.e., somehow provided in a fake foot) is highly improbable, but it has been done. Another consideration is a rare occurrence associated with plaster flow in the process of making casts. Very simply, the warm water and wicking action of the plaster “dust” causes the liquid plaster to kick rapidly as it flows, producing parallel ridges resembling skin ridge detail (known as casting artifacts). I have never personally experienced such in my cast-making activities. The anomaly was discovered by a researcher who was experimenting with plaster. We have to acknowledge that as such casting artifacts resulted in his experiments, then such could result when either original casts, or cast copies, are made. Nevertheless, we must weigh this against the fact that a sasquatch, like all primates, would have dermal ridges, and that such can (depending on the soil) transfer into a footprint and subsequently “register” in a plaster cast made of the print. We have at least one case where a researcher observed what appeared to be dermal ridges in a reasonably fresh footprint.

6. Hair samples have been recovered in association with sightings of sasquatch or the discovery of their footprints. These hairs defy attribution to any commonly known North American wildlife. In many ways the samples resemble human hair, but show no indication of ever having been cut with scissors or a razor (after one’s first haircut, every hair thereafter has at least one cut end). These long single strands are parallel-sided and lack the distinctive features of mammalian guard hairs. They resemble primate hair, that is

described as a sort of modified guard hair. A consistent distinction with alleged sasquatch hair is the lack of a cellular medulla. In other words, the core of the hair shaft does not contain stacked cells. This fact makes extraction of DNA from the samples problematic. All we can say at this time is, something is definitely shedding unclassified primate-like hair in the forests of North America, and very likely other parts of the world.

7. Feces (droppings or scat) found in remote areas does not appear to match that of known animals. In some cases, it is human-like (tubular), but the circumference is far too large for a human. Furthermore, the quantity greatly exceeds that of a normal human “evacuation.” Whatever left the feces had to be a “giant” of some sort. Analysis indicates that the diet is similar or the same as that of a bear (fruit, vegetables, animal matter). As a result, analysis results in concluding that it is “probably bear droppings.” Experienced outdoorsmen, however, point to the difference in configuration. In one case, unusual parasite eggs were found in a feces sample which had only been previously observed in some Northwest Native tribal groups, and animals (swine) along with humans in south/southwest China. This finding added some support to the theory that the sasquatch originated in China and migrated to North America.

8. Sound recordings of alleged sasquatch loud calls and “chatter” cannot be matched with those of known animals. It has also been determined that some of the sounds were far beyond what could be made by a human, and were not made by any type of instrument (electronic or otherwise). Recently, a professional cryptolinguist concluded that there were indications of language present in recordings of sounds believed to have been made by sasquatch (Sierra Sounds recordings).

9. Preliminary DNA findings from a possible sasquatch blood sample obtained in 2002 did not match human DNA, but was very close (as is the case with human and chimpanzee DNA). The blood was obtained from a “screw-board” trap, used to discourage bears from breaking into cabins. Upon stepping on such a trap, sharp screws pierce the sole of the animal’s foot, and when it withdraws its foot, tissue and blood remain on the screws. I will mention here that the people who set the trap did not know they were possibly dealing with a sasquatch. They just wanted to discourage some creature from breaking into their cabin and smashing things around. Unfortunately, the sample obtained was later deemed too degraded to proceed with further testing. In checking the current status of DNA

research I was informed, “DNA has remained elusive. Preliminary analysis of blood and hair has been inconclusive. Recently, the Oxford-Luassane Collateral Hominid Project has undertaken to apply new techniques to the extraction and analysis of DNA from hair attributed to the sasquatch.”

### The Situation

With this somewhat formidable list, one can appreciate the frustration sasquatch researchers face in not being able to resolve the issue. The matter is made even worse when misguided individuals purposely hoax sasquatch-related incidents for publicity.

Most certainly, the question as to why conclusive evidence (absolute proof of sasquatch existence) has not been obtained is a very valid question. However, there are reasonable answers. As to the creatures’ remains or bones, such are virtually impossible to find for any animal that has died of a natural cause, and the sasquatch being a very rare species in comparison, greatly reduces the odds of finding its remains or bones. As to photographs and videos, they depend on a witness having a camera “at the ready” and being able to respond quickly to a very elusive creature—sightings are unexpected and generally very brief. Camera traps and “trail cams” have been used for many years, but all images I have seen are too poor for any scientific purpose. On this point, it needs to be mentioned that independent studies have indicated that predators are often aware of and avoid camera traps. Furthermore, sasquatch elusiveness is really not surprising when its inferred nature is considered—extremely wary, intelligent, mostly (or very often) nocturnal, far-ranging, and generalized in diet and behavior. Such a species is always challenging to locate and observe.

It is interesting to note that Native people (various aboriginal groups), whose stories and artwork of the creatures pre-date written history, don’t have a problem here. I have been told very intently by a Native person, “You will never catch a sasquatch.” Natives simply accept the creatures as an enigma—some kind of spiritual entities, not unlike ghosts.

Several “conventional” sasquatch researchers throughout the years have, as a result of personal experiences, completely changed their opinions on the nature of the creatures. They now profess a modern version of Native belief—that the creatures are paranormal in nature—dimension travelers. These researchers are not without a significant following. Many people claim to have had the same or similar experiences they had. Naturally, this has served to further distance the regular scientists, and has created a “division” in the field of sasquatch research.

Although those who give no credence to this sort of thinking simply wish it would go away, I don’t see that happening. Ironically, if we think about Native belief, then the sasquatch as a paranormal or spiritual entity predates “conventional” (natural or normal creatures) belief by many thousands of years.

Does the sasquatch exist? To the witnesses, researchers, and many Native peoples, definitely. To the scientific community in general, absolutely not, and it is not interested in the matter (but says call us if you get a body). To the general public, highly mixed, but equally highly interested in the subject.

Whatever the case, in Canada, the sasquatch has achieved a mark of distinction reserved for only the most worthy. In 1990 a postage stamp was issued in its honor, and in 2011 a legal tender, 25-cent, “collectors” coin was minted and made available at coin shops.

*Postage stamp, part of the Folklore Series; Canada’s Legendary Creatures.*  
(© Canada Post Corp., 1990)



*Collectors coin; Canadian Mythical Creatures series.*  
(© Royal Canadian Mint, 2011)



*Chris Murphy has authored several books on the sasquatch and has held three public museum exhibits displaying numerous artifacts and scientific findings. He has worked in conjunction with all of the major Pacific Coast researchers and has presented at numerous conferences. His books are published by Hancock House Publishers, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. He has a virtual museum presentation on the Sasquatch Canada site at:  
<<http://www.sasquatchcanada.com/gallery-home.html>>*

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