

THE STORY OF THE POCATELLO MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BIGFOOT EXHIBIT



IDAHO
MUSEUM
of
NATURAL
HISTORY

Bigfoot Invades Idaho!

"Bigfoot: How Do We Know?" opens June 16, 2006, at the Idaho Museum of Natural History. Come and take a look at the Bigfoot phenomenon and the different ways we "know" about the creature. The exhibit will examine Bigfoot through the lenses of scientific method, belief, mythology, folklore and traditions.

After exploring Bigfoot, stick around to discover Idaho's dinosaurs, Ice-Age mammals, Native American artifacts, volcanic hotspots and more at the IMNH. Kids can play scientist as they experience natural history "hands-on" in the Discovery Room. Plus, the Museum features new exhibits regularly in its seasonal gallery.

The Idaho Museum of Natural History, located on the campus of Idaho State University in Pocatello, is the state's official Museum of Natural History.

Directions: Take I-15 to Exit 69 (Clark St.). Travel down Clark St. to 4th Ave. Turn left on 4th Ave. and proceed to Dillon St. Turn left on Dillon and cross 5th St. into the ISU parking lot. Parking is available near the sculpture of the giant bison in front of the Museum.

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed Sundays, Mondays and holidays

Admission:
Adult - \$5.00
Senior - \$4.00
Students with valid ID - \$3.00
Children ages 4 to 11 - \$2.00
Children under 4 - Free
Museum Members - Free

Contact Us:
Phone: (208) 282-3317
E-mail: imnh@isu.edu
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Idaho Museum of Natural History
South 5th Avenue and Dillon Street
Pocatello, ID 83209

Bring this card to the Idaho
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In June 2006, the Museum of Natural History in Pocatello, Idaho became the second city museum to host my bigfoot exhibit. It followed an exhibit at the Vancouver Museum in British Columbia, Canada that ran from June 17, 2004 through January 2005.

I started working with the museum some six months before the opening. Brandon Tennant invited me to talk and have a display at his Bigfoot Rendezvous, whereupon the museum suggested a full-scale exhibit. It opened on June 16, 2006 and ended September 11, 2007.

The museum is a part of Idaho State University, where Dr. Jeff Meldrum teaches anthropology. Jeff, as we know, is highly involved in sasquatch/bigfoot studies and is author of the book, *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science*, published in late 2006.

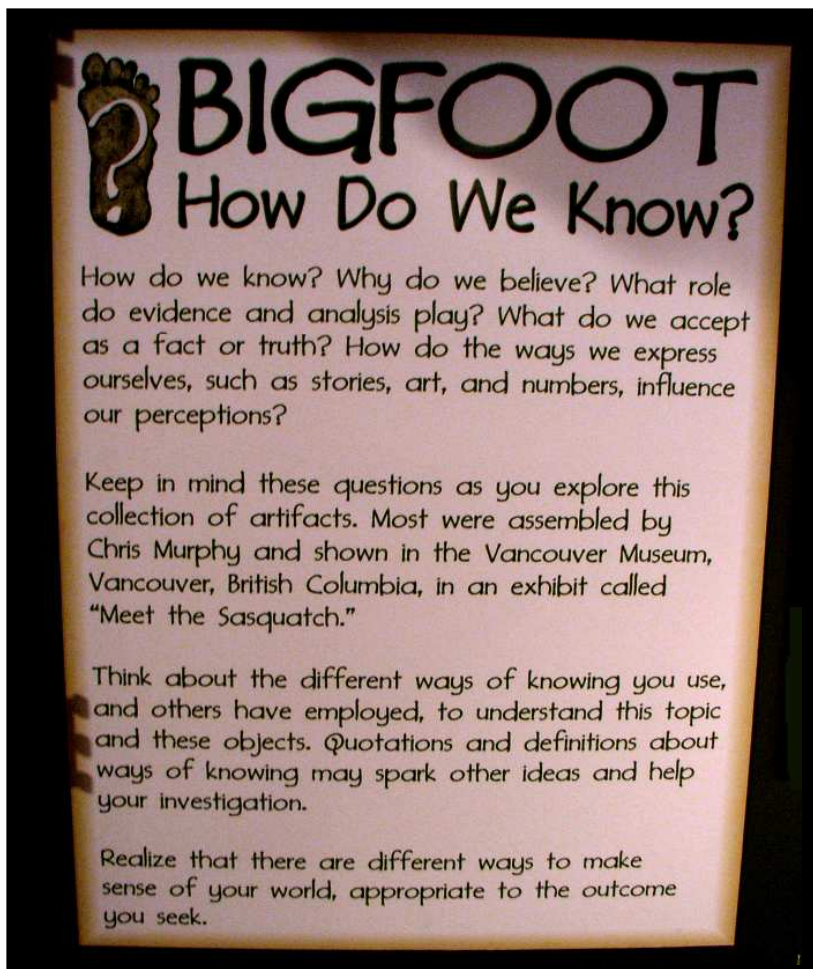
How it came about that I created a sasquatch exhibit is a little amusing. While working on my book *Meet the Sasquatch*, my daughter, Donna, suggested I see an exhibit at the Vancouver Museum on the 1950s. Well, I have many fond memories of that decade, so I went down to have a look. As I reminisced, the thought occurred to me that the museum did not have anything on display about the sasquatch. Keep in mind that British Columbia is the heart of sasquatch domain. I had a few artifacts, so I wrote to the museum people and suggested that they display them in a little corner. To my surprise, they came back with a suggestion for a full-blown exhibit.

This was a whole new ballgame that required the assistance and cooperation of many bigfoot researchers and others, first and foremost: Erik and Martin Dahinden, John Green, Dr. Jeff Meldrum, Rick Noll and Tom Steenburg. Everyone rallied to the cause so an exhibit was born.

When I arrived in Pocatello the day before the opening, workmen had just finished hanging the Bannon Banner at the museum entrance. The artwork is by Brenden Bannon, who has created six remarkable images of the creature seen in the Patterson/Gimlin film.



Brenden's artwork was also used for an 8-foot cutout that adorned the entrance to the exhibit. Many folks took the opportunity to photograph each other standing by this image.



The theme of the Pocatello exhibit is, “How Do We Know?” A question we ask ourselves about all of the mysteries in life. Bigfoot is a significant North American mystery, and by different names for the same or likely related species, a mystery in several other countries. Everything in the exhibit is, to my knowledge, what it is claimed to be. Nothing, however, provides conclusive proof that the creature exists. One must form his or her own opinion here.

After the opening ceremony in the evening of June 15, 2006, the guests made their way into the exhibit rooms. I felt very good as I watched them gaze at the display material and quietly discuss what they were looking at.

There is something about museum exhibits, as I am sure you have noticed, that seems to give new life and depth to all of the items displayed. Somehow, they sort of speak to you, and you find yourself in a different world. With bigfoot, that world is both strange and intriguing. Although it is hard to believe that such a creature actually exists, when one is confronted with a mass of evidence all at once, the scale tips. Indeed, even if one remains a die-hard skeptic, he or she cannot help but wonder, and will probably harbor a little wish that one-day the creature's existence will be proven.

My main objective in providing bigfoot exhibits is to encourage some interest from scientists in helping to resolve the issue. I do believe the evidence we currently have is sufficient to take it to the "next level," as it were. I think the mere fact that an exhibit of this nature can be assembled testifies to the amount of information we have on the creature.

The exhibit is arranged in several rooms that adjoin one another, and it skillfully takes one on a bit of a journey. Certainly, the best of the evidence we have is displayed. Before the opening ceremonies and admission of the guests, I wandered through alone and took a number of shots, which I now present.



A rather unusual artifact greets visitors upon entering the exhibit. It is the late René Dahinden's "best" sports jacket. To the right is his smoking pipe. René was a colorful part of the bigfoot scene for fifty years. I knew him well and often reflect on our times together. Wanja, René's ex-wife, gave the jacket to me when I collected other material that belonged to René. She had it cleaned and pressed, and as she quietly handed it to me said, "You might wish to use this." I used it in both exhibits and often wonder what René would have thought.

The late Dr. Grover Krantz's *Gigantopithecus* skull is here (left) compared to a gorilla and human skull. Next, on the right, is a replicated twisted tree branch, and then hair samples. On the extreme right is the heel from the Skookum cast.

Dr. Krantz speculated that bigfoot may be a *Gigantopithecus* -- the thought being that such creatures came to North American and escaped the fate (extinction) of their relatives in Asia.



The cast display above contains all of the most important casts, including the original Bossburg “cripple-foot” casts made by René Dahinden. Dr. Meldrum is pointing to these casts in the left photograph, and seen to the left (facing) of the Bossburg casts are the Patterson/Gimlin film site casts, again Dahinden’s copies. This photograph was taken by Paul Hosefros.



A special section is dedicated to the Patterson/Gimlin film. It has my film site model and the controversial “Dahinden wood fragment.”



The Bourtsev sculpture, which has become one of the icons in bigfoot studies, stares out ominously – a moment in time firmly engraved in the minds of those who have studied the Patterson/Gimlin film. The work was gifted by Igor Bourtsev to René Dahinden in 1971. It was seldom shown to anyone prior to my 2004 museum exhibit in Vancouver.

One of four
bigfoot
heads
created by
Penny
Birnam. She
made them
specifically
for the
Vancouver
exhibit.





Several of my own studies, made to illustrate a point, and a soil sample from Bluff Creek.



Alleged sasquatch hair.

A lowland gorilla sculpture given to Dr. Jeff Meldrum by Paul Freeman. He bought it at a garage sale.



Artwork by RobRoy Menzies, Yvon Leclerc, and myself. There are many other photographs, illustrations, and artistic renderings, some by Paul Smith—too many to show here.

Sasquatch sounds (the Sierra Sounds) are also featured, courtesy of Al Berry. The sounds are transmitted down to the listener when he or she enters a particular area.

BEHIND THE SCENE



These shots show me with Dave Mead and Linda Deck, the museum officials. We are in Dave's "inner sanctum."



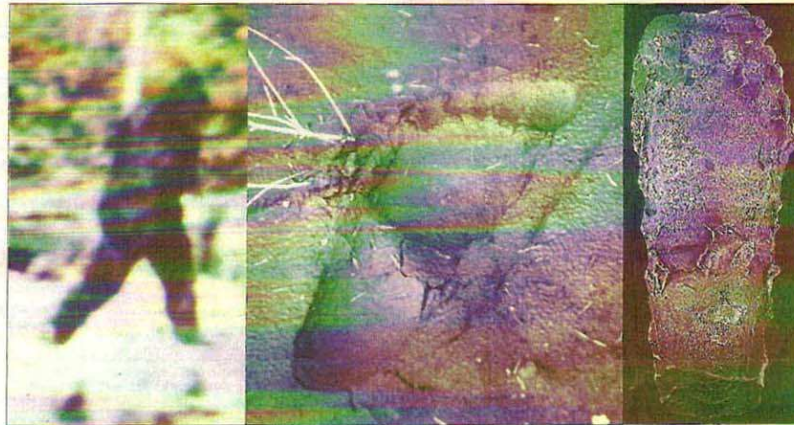
Linda Deck, the museum director, and I at the museum entrance. Behind us is another enlarged image by Brenden Bannon.



Idaho State University from the hill behind the complex. The museum occupies the first floor of the labeled building.

This article by Dr. Jeff Meldrum, published June 11, 2006, was the first to mention the exhibit.

The Footprints and the Film



At left is a frame from the Patterson-Gimlin film that depicts the elevated heel associated with the flexible midfoot of a purported Bigfoot. At center is a photo taken by U.S. Forest Service timber cruiser Lyle Lavery at the film site that shows the midfoot pressure ridge. And at right is a cast made by Bob Timus of same footprint.

Bigfoot Rendezvous here seeks to inform, entertain public

The upcoming Rocky Mountain Bigfoot Rendezvous should be a fun and entertaining event for the Pocatello community and guests from near and far (one pre-registered hails from England).

It also promises to be an informative event, with presentations by a selection of individuals who have devoted considerable time and effort to thoughtfully and objectively explore this intriguing subject. Whether advocate, skeptic or agnostic, the bottom line is this — beneath the folklore and pop culture, there lays the persistent straightforward question of whether an unrecognized species of giant primate inhabitants the wilder corners of this continent.

Repeated criticisms leveled at the subject have alluded to recent and notorious claims by would-be debunkers. These are directed at two of the most familiar aspects of the sasquatch question: the ubiquitous footprints, and the most popularized film clip purporting to portray a Bigfoot, the Patterson-Gimlin film.

A great deal of disinformation surrounding these claims has been indiscriminately perpetuated by the popular media and the "skeptic." The first claim emerged with the death of Ray Wallace, who had been the contractor on a remote road-building operation in northern California in 1958.

During earth-moving operations, giant footprints periodically showed up near the site. This was certainly not the first time such tracks had been discovered in the region.

The earliest photo of such a footprint in California is said to date to 1947, and regional accounts of such enigmatic tracks came from much earlier. After Wallace's death in his hometown of Toledo, Wash., members of his surviving family unveiled carved wooden feet that they claimed were responsible for the footprints not only at the construction site, but throughout the Pacific Northwest.

They proclaimed that Wallace's antics had given birth to the legend of Bigfoot and now "Bigfoot" was dead. What seemed to be a simple solution to a vexing mystery suffered

About the author

Dr. Jeff Meldrum is a professor of anatomy and an associate professor of biology at Idaho State University. He is the author of the book "The Bigfoot Footprint: A Scientific Analysis of the Footprint Evidence" (2004) and the book "The Bigfoot Footprint: A Scientific Analysis of the Footprint Evidence" (2004). He is also the author of the book "The Bigfoot Footprint: A Scientific Analysis of the Footprint Evidence" (2004).



from at least one glaring drawback — the carved feet simply don't match the footprints they were claimed to have made.

Replicas of footprint casts will be on display at the Idaho Museum of Natural History as part of an exhibit exploring varied ways of interpreting the phenomenon of Bigfoot.

My research at Idaho State University encompasses human anatomy associated with walking on two feet, i.e. bipedalism. I have examined the anatomy of the feet and footprints of humans and non-human primates, as well as fossil hominids and their tracks, all of which provide the context for my evaluation of the footprints attributed to sasquatch.

In an earlier commentary I described my initial first-hand encounter with such footprints, in the Blue Mountains near Walla Walla, Wash. Two features of these tracks particularly caught my attention. Some tracks displayed a distinctive pressure ridge across the midfoot, while yet others were mere half-tracks, lacking a heel imprint. These traits were characteristic of a flat flexible foot more similar to a nonhuman ape than to a human foot with its rigid arch.

These features, combined with the overall animated appearance of the tracks, prompted me to delve further into the nature of sasquatch footprints. After assembling and studying a large sample of footprints attributed to sasquatch, there emerged a consistent but distinct model of the sasquatch foot that is not only biomechanically sound for a bipedal ape of the purported proportions of a sasquatch, but elegantly adapted to

the texture of the habitat it reportedly resides in.

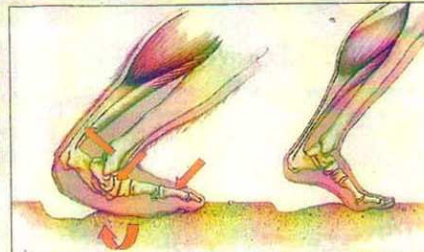
This foot is a natural extension of the anatomical trends evident in a series of progressively larger and more ground-dwelling primates from, for example, gibbons, to chimps, to lowland gorillas, to mountain gorillas.

In this series we observe a lengthening and broadening of the heel, a shortening of the toes, and less divergence of the big toe. The inferred sasquatch foot falls along this very trajectory, while notably retaining the apish characteristic of a flat, flexible midfoot.

Wallace also claimed to have film footage of Bigfoot, which, it was now acknowledged, was actually Mrs. Ray Wallace in a cheesy fur suit. Naturally, the press equated the Wallace's amateurish films with the well-known Patterson-Gimlin film, which indeed portrayed a female Bigfoot. Although initially disclaiming any involvement in the Patterson-Gimlin incident, the Wallaces soon climbed onto the media bandwagon and agreeably asserted that indeed their matriarch was the erstwhile Mrs. Bigfoot, parading briefly in a fur costume in Patterson's film.

But hold on now — she would have to get in line, because the queue of pretenders for the role had already grown considerably in number. The latest claimant was one Bob Heironimus, from Patterson's hometown of Yakima, Wash. Joined by costume fabricator Phillip Morris, and other collaborators, he avowed that he had done the deed. But yet another simplistic explanation falls short, in both the case of the Wallaces and Heironimus et al. — they can't produce a costume that holds a candle to the supposed costume appearing in the film clip.

The Heironimus affair became embroiled with infighting that produced lawsuits, but no convincing fur suit. Sentinels the drama of the debunkers



This illustration shows the contrast between the inferred skeleton of the sasquatch foot, based on the footprint shown above, and a human foot. Arrows indicate the elongated heel, midfoot flexibility, long toes and pressure ridge of the sasquatch footprint.

aside, what is to be made of the Patterson-Gimlin film itself? After nearly 40 years, repeated claims of hoaxing have not withstood critical scrutiny, while the film itself has held up under repeated examination by serious experts in photography and human movement and anatomy. The application of modern digital techniques of image analysis has produced stabilized enhancements of the film that reveal new details of the subject's anatomy and its footprints never before apprehended, let alone appreciated.

Many of these observations are credited to Rick Noll and MK Davis, both slated as speakers at the Bigfoot Rendezvous where they will discuss their observations in greater detail. From the narrow perspective of the appearance and dynamics of the foot of the film subject, and the associated footprints, the case for the credibility of the Patterson-Gimlin film is quite compelling.

WHAT DO YOU THINK

What will be the value of the planned Bigfoot Rendezvous in Pocatello June 16-18?

Send your letters to:
Idaho State Journal
P.O. Box 431
Pocatello, ID 83201
or e-mail:
henner@journalnet.com

A series of footprints photographed by Lyle Lavery, a U.S. Forest Service timber cruiser on hand at the scene, and later casts made by Bob Timus, an investigator from Canada, include examples of midfoot pressure ridges similar to those I observed in the tracks near Walla Walla.

The flexion of the midfoot necessary to produce this artifact in the print can be readily seen in the film itself. The elongated heel suggested by the placement of the midfoot joints, in turn based on the pressure ridge, is attested to by the apparent thick ankles and protruding heel manifest when the Achilles tendon is slack.

The variations in toe position, and a flexion crease at the forefoot present in the casts, are correlated with toe length evident in the film. All these interrelated features attest to a foot designed to support great weight on two legs, while preserving a large degree of flexibility and prehension in the toes useful for navigating the broken terrain of mountainous environments.

These features are hardly the product of rigid whittled planks loosely harnessed to work boots. This is but a small sampling of the evidence that bears on the ultimate question of whether sasquatch exists as a biological entity or is merely a figurative thread in the tapestry of human experience. The conference element of the Bigfoot Rendezvous will provide the opportunity to consider these and other aspects of the question.

This article came out four days before the exhibit.

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Idaho State Journal

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006

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Bigfoot brouhaha

Exhibit fuels dialogue on elusive beast

By John O'Connell
Journal Writer

POCATELLO — Among the members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, legend has it the sought-after hominid creature Bigfoot finds winter sanctuary in the Fort Hall Bottoms.

Linda Deck, director of the Idaho Museum of Natural History and curator of a new Bigfoot exhibit, has heard several accounts from local Native Americans about brushes with the elusive Sasquatch.



"A lot of people from Fort Hall talk about personal encounters. It's part of their traditional knowledge, and it plays a big role," said Deck, who interviewed Native Americans and others in attendance about the subject during a recent Cowboy Expo. "It was really fascinating."

When her exhibit opens for a sneak preview Thursday, and then to the public on Friday, Deck knows there will be believers who take the Bigfoot hair samples, hand and footprint casts, photographs, videos and other evidence at face value. There will also be skeptics.

To Deck, the validity of the Bigfoot story doesn't matter — the museum is taking a neutral position on Bigfoot and drawing no conclusions from the evidence on display.

The point of the exhibit — which will feature the world's largest collection of Bigfoot artifacts — is to get people to think about a larger question: How do we know things?

"As human beings we make sense of our world in a variety of different ways. We've got our myths, legends and beliefs and a very scientific way of knowing about our world, too, where we make hypotheses and test things and learn and change what we think," Deck said. "What I hope is that people will think more about themselves and how they know and be comfortable with all different ways we know. These ways of knowing are not in competition. They enrich our lives in numerous different ways."

To help focus the exhibit on the different ways we as humans know things

— science, myth, theology, folklore, etc. — Deck consulted local religious leaders, anthropologists and Idaho State University experts.

"I had so much fun researching this thing," Deck said. "We're just saying look at all of these things and think about what belief really is."

A Bigfoot believer, Brandon Ten-

nant, approached Deck about organizing the year-long display in conjunction with a Bigfoot Rendezvous, which will bring all of the world's foremost experts on Bigfoot to Pocatello from June 16-18.

The announcement of the upcoming exhibit has captured the public's imagination and spurred a heated di-



ABOVE: Dave Mead, exhibits director at the Idaho Museum of Natural History, holds up a life-size plaster cast of a purported image of Bigfoot that will be part of the museum's Bigfoot display in Pocatello.

LEFT: A large collection of plaster impressions of Bigfoot tracks will be part of the display at the Idaho Museum of Natural History.

ologue in the community about Bigfoot — and belief and knowledge — that's persisted for months.

On Sunday afternoon, a fresh coat of "Bigfoot green" covered the vacant walls on what will be the display room. Exhibits Director Dave Mead and a helper, Katrina Miller, were busy in another room sorting the eclectic compilation of artifacts and printing banners for their exhibit. Banners explored broad concepts such as myth, belief and truth. They also included appropriate quotes selected by Deck.

There's the Mark Twain quote, "Faith is believing what you know ain't so."

See **BIGFOOT**, A5

IDAHO STATE JOURNAL

Bigfoot

Continued from A1

One of Miller's favorites reads, "Keep an open mind, but not so loose that you're brain falls out."

Mead is confident the exhibit will rival "Dinamation," an exhibit from 15 years ago that featured automated dinosaurs, as one of the museum's biggest draws ever.

"Bigfoot is along the same lines of attraction. He's mysterious and big," Mead said.

To be exact, the Sasquatch is 6 foot, 6 inches tall — if you believe in the renowned Patterson-Gimlin film of a Bigfoot.

At one point in the famed film, the creature believed to be Bigfoot steps on a piece of driftwood. That branch, which will be on display at the exhibit, was used as a comparison to calculate the creature's height, Mead said.

The exhibit also includes Native Americans' depictions of Bigfoot, a stick believed to have been twisted by a Bigfoot, Bigfoot art and sculptures, possible Bigfoot hair samples, a life-sized cutout of Bigfoot, facial casts of Bigfoot, a cast of an impression believed to have been left by Bigfoot's elbow, original frames of the Patterson-Gimlin film and other evidence gathered by people who've dedicated much of their lives to researching the Sasquatch.

A flannel jacket worn by one such researcher, the late Rene Dahinden, who spent 40 years in search of Bigfoot, is included in the display. Dahinden wore the jacket during a series of commercials he did for Kokanee beer.

Those who attend the exhibit will have the chance to watch the Discovery Channel film, "Showing Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science," to the soundtrack, "Bigfoot Recordings."

The exhibit, originally compiled for a museum in Vancouver, British Columbia, by Christopher Murphy, author of "Meet the Sasquatch," also includes casts of skulls of a human, an ape and the

hominid *Gigantopithecus blacki*.

Local Bigfoot expert, ISU anatomy professor Jeff Meldrum, explained a popular theory proposing that *Gigantopithecus blacki*, a giant ape with only a few jaw bones and several hundred teeth to prove it ever existed, did not go extinct about 300,000 years ago as believed, but rather spawned the lineage of Bigfoot.

"I think the (museum's) approach is a very thought-provoking one that recognizes there are a variety of dimensions to the experience of Bigfoot," Meldrum said. "The exhibit attempts to use the topic of Bigfoot as a springboard to analyze different ways of knowing. A variety of those things intersect with the subject matter at hand."

But Meldrum — a believer who recently returned from an interview with a retired Fish and Game officer who took a cast of a 17-inch humanoid footprint in the 1970s — regrets the exhibit lacks interpretation and leaves all conclusions up to the viewer.

Meldrum believes the interpretation will have to come from the Rendezvous and other talks in conjunction with the exhibit.

Some of the events — such as a Sept. 7 free presentation featuring a noted folklorist — will focus more on belief and knowledge than on Bigfoot.

Meldrum is anxious for a panel discussion he believes will provide the first public comments by Native Americans on their beliefs about Bigfoot.

"I certainly have contacts on the reservation who have shared their experiences," Meldrum said. "For many of those people, this being is part of the landscape. They give it considerable deference, and they want it left alone, and they see (the reservation) as a sanctuary."

Meldrum hopes people will keep an open mind and leave behind their preconceptions about what is orthodox when they attend the exhibit — the largest collection of evidence about what may be a missing link or an elaborate hoax.

The answer — at least for the museum's purposes — is irrelevant.

QUOTABLE

We want to get somebody to put some money into this. We can't do it alone."

— Leading Bigfoot expert Chris Murphy, about convincing major organizations to finance efforts to find Bigfoot.



See story, A3

Upon arrival at the museum I was interviewed by a reporter from the *Idaho State Journal*. At that time, a sighting of the presumed-extinct ivory-billed woodpecker was in the news. The headline for the article shown here is, "Experts differ on validity of bird, Bigfoot sightings."

IDAHO STATE JOURNAL

Gateway

Experts differ on validity of bird, Bigfoot sightings

By John O'Connell
Journal Writer

POCATELLO — In the Big Woods of Arkansas, ornithologist Mark Robbins is confident the world was duped last spring by the avian counterpart of Bigfoot.

Today, the Idaho Museum of Natural History will open an exhibit featuring hair samples, footprint casts, blurry photographs and other evidence supporting the existence of the legendary creature known as Sasquatch.

People who have devoted much of their lives to finding this storied hominid, known as Bigfoot in the United States, will rendezvous in Pocatello to share their accumulated knowledge among peers who believe.

To them, Robbins, curator of birds specimens at the University of Kansas Natural History Museum, offers the story of the ivory-billed woodpecker.

The report was miraculous — almost too good to be true. Once a symbol of the toll wrought by development on the nation's wildlife, the ivory-billed woodpecker made a triumphant return from 60 years of perceived extinction.

The bird was sighted by a kayaker in the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, and then confirmed by a pair of ornithologists.

Interior Secretary Gale Norton wasted no time in announcing a \$10 million conservation initiative to save the bird, lauding the sighting as "a rare second chance to preserve through cooperative conservation what was once thought lost forever."

The photographs weren't of the best quality but were deemed conclusive nonetheless.

Although there are still plenty of birders who cling to hope about the specimen's legitimacy, Robbins, who serves on a records committee that evaluates bird sightings, believes it was actually a common pileated woodpecker.

He explained the two varieties could be easily confused, especially from a blurry photograph.



Journal photo by Doug Lindley

Albert Worth and Ivan Salstron, of ISU's Maintenance Department, put up a Bigfoot banner Thursday afternoon at the Idaho Museum of Natural History in preparation for the "Bigfoot Rendezvous" this weekend in Pocatello.

"The people who had been looking for this bird had been looking for it all of their lives," Robbins said. "It's an obsession."

Robbins has dedicated himself to debunking the ivory-billed woodpecker sighting because "millions of dollars got diverted from higher-priority conservation projects."

Robbins accepts the conventional story about the fate of

what was once among the world's largest woodpeckers. It vanished more than 50 years ago from its last stronghold in North-eastern Louisiana. It doesn't reside today in Arkansas.

Robbins estimates it would have taken at least 20 pairs of interbreeding birds to continue the species into modern times.

He said for Bigfoot to be alive today, there would also have to

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2006 A3

Museum takes neutral stance on Sasquatch

POCATELLO — The Idaho Museum of Natural History's new Bigfoot exhibit has made national news.

Museum Director Linda Deck has been interviewed by a host of programs from throughout the country and has upcoming radio interviews with stations in New Orleans and Seattle.

Wednesday night from 11:10 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., Deck was a guest on Coast to Coast, which has the largest listenership of a night-time AM radio

program in the country. Deck realized it would be an interesting experience when she heard the program's introduction delve into UFOs and extra-terrestrials.

Deck said throughout the interview, the source attempted to pin her down on the museum's stance on Bigfoot. She explained the museum is neutral and simply wants to provoke thought on how people know about things, such as Bigfoot.

— John O'Connell

be a plethora of breeding pairs.

"This could all be explained by other phenomena," Robbins said.

While Robbins spoke via telephone from his office in Kansas, leading Bigfoot expert Chris Murphy arrived at the Idaho Museum of Natural History to drop off a hair sample reportedly taken from an actual Sasquatch.

Murphy supplied original images from the famed Patterson-Gimlin film of Bigfoot, filmed in 1967 with a 16 mm camera, for artist Brandon Bannon to draw the Bigfoot mural now displayed on a 15-foot banner outside of the museum.

Murphy also provided the bulk of the Bigfoot evidence for the exhibit.

"How many footprints does an ivory-billed woodpecker leave, and how many sightings of an ivory-billed woodpecker have there been?" Murphy asked in response to Robbins' parallel. "It appears right now through North America we estimate 400 (big-foot) sightings per year."

Records of Sasquatch sightings date back to the 1700s, Murphy said. Among Native Americans, Murphy said the creature goes by dozens of names, including Omaha

and Gilyuk.

Gilyuk means "big man with a little hat," Murphy explained. He believes Native Americans drew the name from Bigfoot's pointy head, which resembles a small hat.

Ancient Native American artifacts also depict Bigfoot, he said.

"The creature is inbred in almost all Native traditions that go back to time in memorial," said Murphy, author of "Meet the Sasquatch."

Murphy will be among the speakers at the upcoming rendezvous. The larger goal of hosting rendezvous, he explained is to build a case to convince major organizations to finance efforts to find Bigfoot. Murphy is convinced a thriving Sasquatch population exists in British Columbia.

"We want to get somebody to put some money into this. We can't do it alone," said Murphy, who also resides in British Columbia.

The museum is taking a neutral approach on the existence of Bigfoot. Rather than focusing on the validity of Bigfoot, the museum is asking patrons to consider Bigfoot as an example of the different ways people know information.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Unfortunately, I do not believe museums are the attraction they were even 20 years ago. There are now more spectacular attractions for general “outings.” However, one highly positive thing museums do is to have school visits. I have seen the Vancouver museum virtually packed with school children.

Something some people have difficulty with is the totally non-committal stand museums take with regard to sasquatch/bigfoot. While both the Vancouver and Pocatello museums approached the subject from different viewpoints, as museums they distanced themselves from the issue itself. They cannot be seen as supporting the validity of any evidence. I do not have a problem with this. Indeed, I even suggest that museums approach the issue from the history standpoint. Although the sasquatch cannot be proven as a real creature, its history in North American culture is very real.

Christopher L. Murphy



Vancouver exhibit poster.



Entrance to the Vancouver exhibit. It occupied about 1,800 square feet (see presentation on this exhibit).

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS: The contributors for this exhibit were the same as those for my Vancouver Museum exhibit. I have provided a full listing at the end of the Vancouver presentation.