

National Geographic and NOVA feature Ice Age fossil find in early 2012

Media Contact:

Heather Hope, Public Relations Manager
Denver Museum of Nature & Science
303-370-8372 - Heather.hope@dmns.org

DENVER—December 15, 2011— In early 2012 both National Geographic magazine and PBS member stations will feature the Ice Age fossil find near Snowmass Village. The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is planning a related program and currently offering visitors the opportunity to learn more online and onsite.

“We are thrilled with the level of interest in this important project,” said Dr. Kirk Johnson, the leader of the Snowmastodon Project™ excavation team and vice president of the Research and Collections Division at the Museum. “The involvement of these esteemed organizations helps us share this discovery with an incredible number of people.”

National Geographic Magazine – February 2012

A short illustrated article about the fossil find will appear in the February 2012 issue of [National Geographic](#) magazine, available on newsstands Tuesday, January 31.

NOVA on Rocky Mountain PBS – February 1, 2012

“Ice Age Death Trap,” a one-hour NOVA-National Geographic program about the fossil find, will premiere on [Rocky Mountain PBS](#) Wednesday, February 1. The television special follows scientists as they race against time to uncover this unique site packed with astonishingly well-preserved bones of mammoths, mastodons, and other giant extinct beasts, opening a vivid window into the vanished world of the Ice Age. They unearth evidence that entire families of mastodons died as they grazed beside an ancient lake. Patiently, clue by clue, the team reconstructs a macabre scenario in which the soil beside the lake liquefies, then hardens, swiftly trapping entire mastodon families. Unable to move, the mighty tusked beasts slowly starve to death. Featuring ingenious scientific work and spectacular fossils, “Ice Age Death Trap” reveals intimate secrets of the life and death of North America’s most exotic and extreme creatures.

Program at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science – January 26, 2012

The Museum is presenting a related event, “NOVA Sneak Peek: Ice Age Death Trap,” at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 26. Scientists Kirk Johnson and Ian Miller will host an evening to celebrate the NOVA-National Geographic program. Guests will be the first to view excerpts from the program, hear behind-the-scenes stories from the dig site, and get the latest scientific updates. Visit www.dmns.org beginning Thursday, January 12, for reservations and more information.

Snowmastodon Project™ Museum Experiences: Online and Onsite – Ongoing

NEW: Museum visitors can view a giant bison skull, one of the iconic specimens from the discovery. On display for a limited time on Level 2 near the IMAX Theater entrance, the Ice Age bison (*Bison latifrons*) horn spread is more than seven feet wide compared to less than three feet wide for a modern bison. Additionally, visitors can watch as fossils from the site are prepared by staff and volunteers in the Schlessman Family Preparation Laboratory, near the exit of Prehistoric Journey. Also in the area, the Mammoth Discoveries cart features photos, video, and interpretive information about the discoveries; a volunteer facilitator to answer visitor questions; and real tusk fragments from Snowmass Village to touch. Online, www.dmns.org/science/the-snowmastodon-project features photos, videos, a discovery timeline, activities for families, and more.

NOTE: High resolution images of bison skull and bison drawing are available upon request



Bison latifrons – Ice Age Bison – © Denver Museum of Nature & Science

###

About The Snowmastodon Project™

In October 2010, a bulldozer operator working near a Colorado ski area uncovered the tusk of a young female mammoth. Over the next 10 months, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science conducted its largest-ever fossil excavation, yielding a treasure trove of well-preserved Ice Age fossils. Museum crews uncovered 5,000 bones of 41 kinds of Ice Age animals, including mammoths, mastodons, ground sloths, camels, deer, horses, and giant bison. The preserved series of Ice Age fossil ecosystems is one of the most significant fossil discoveries ever made in Colorado. This discovery at Ziegler Reservoir near Snowmass Village will change forever our understanding of alpine life in the Ice Age.

About the Denver Museum of Nature & Science

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is the Rocky Mountain Region's leading resource for informal science education. A variety of engaging exhibits, discussions, and activities help Museum visitors celebrate and understand the natural wonders of Colorado, Earth, and the universe. The Museum is located at 2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO, 80205. To learn more about the Museum, check www.dmns.org, or call 303-370-6000. Many of the Museum's educational programs and exhibits are made possible in part by generous funding from the citizens of the seven-county metro area through the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District.