

PUTTING A DENT IN DENTON CREEK 052304

After much planning and coordination, Marc de Vries and I met up with about 40 other DPS members along IH-35 north of Fort Worth on a bright Sunday morning. Soon we descended upon our put-in point upstream along Denton Creek and shuttled our various vessels to the water's edge. Marc and I were in my 2 man ocean kayak which proved to be a glove fit for such applications.

With various canoes and kayaks coupled with such a large group, everyone found his own pace and the group was soon strung out along the creek. At one point Marc and I were wondering if we were even in the right creek as exposures were small, sparse, and seemingly devoid of fossils. About 2 miles or so downstream we reached a very large Duck Creek exposure at about the same time another kayak and a canoe load of folks joined us.



FIGURE 1: Duck Creek Ammonites – *Mortoniceras?* *Drakeoceras?*

As we closed within 40 yards of the bluff I spotted a large ammonite jutting out of the exposure. I spent 20 minutes carefully extracting it as more canoes arrived. I ultimately gave this 12 inch specimen to a man and his 2 grandkids as they seemed a little new at this game and didn't appear to have brought along any serious digging equipment. Marc and I each landed a handful of nice ammonites ranging from about 2 inches up to Marc's spectacular 12 inch *Mortoniceras*. Meanwhile, we and several other folks laid hands on a few large *Holaster*



FIGURE 2: Duck Creek echinoids – *Holaster simplex* top, *Macraster subobesus* or *Macraster elegans* bottom

simplex and huge, crushed *Macraster* echinoids. Marc also found a slab of about 100 small *Holasters* with the oral view exposed. Due to space and weight constraints we left the slab where we found it. As we were preparing to leave, I lucked into a nice 3/8 inch diameter fish vertebra, one of the few vert finds of the day.



FIGURE 3: Fish vertebra

Down at the next exposure a few more ammonites came to hand, and I gave 3 of them to a girl about 10 years old. Still farther downstream we met up with a canoe loaded with 3 college girls who had a little trouble keeping their canoe headed in the right direction. We got out and chatted with them for a while, scanning another Duck Creek exposure all the while. I showed them a nice little 3 inch ammonite hiding in the bedrock, then chiseled it out with a couple hammer blows and gave it to one of them.

After helping the group shuttle about a dozen canoes back to the highway in the skull throbbing heat, we admired several 14 inch class ammonites extracted by other collectors, said our goodbyes and headed to an undisclosed Grayson exposure in the Denton area which we were tipped off to by a friendly DPS member. Wow, was this place loaded! Marc and I each walked out of there with a number of ammonites including spirally coiled *Turrilites*, some *Cymatoceras* nautiloids, and echinoids such as *Heteraster* sp. and *Hemiaster calivini*. Marc found the only 2 regular echinoids of the day, a *Phymosoma volana* and perhaps

a *Salenia* or *Goniophorus* of some sort. This was Marc's birthday, so I gave him



FIGURE 4: Grayson nautiloids - *Cymatoceras*



FIGURE 5: Grayson echinoids – *Heteraster* sp. top right, *Hemiaster calvini* remaining 4



FIGURES 6 and 7: Grayson fm – Ammonites *Mariella worthensis* top, various gastropods bottom



FIGURE 8: Grayson ammonites *Paracalycoceras crotaloides*

one of my better *Hemiaster calvini*. By now many of you can clearly see my lack of familiarity with Grayson fossils, hence the sketchy ID information.

I can't think of a better way to cement friendships than with a full day of killer fossils all the way around. I look forward to more long and vigorous days afield with Marc and the DPS. Special thanks to Roger Farish for arranging the trip and mobilizing the DPS armada at Denton Creek.