

# The Bishop's 2022 Nebraska Fossil Expedition Application



## Overview

**Expedition Dates:** June 4 – June 12, 2022

**Mandatory Orientation:** 9am to noon March 26, 2022

**Expedition Cost:** \$800 per pair + Airfare

– *Expedition valued at \$4,400 per pair*

This June, **The Bishop**, with generous support from the Toomey Foundation for the Natural Sciences, is offering students ages 11 to 14 the opportunity to participate in educational and paleontological expeditions in the Nebraska Badlands. The goal is to provide students interested in science with unique experiences that foster their passion and curiosity.

During this week-long expedition, students and their guardians will spend half their time conducting paleontological field work with guidance from experts. The other half of the trip will be spent exploring surrounding sites. Potential excursions include Mount Rushmore, Custer National Park, Wind Cave, and several local museums.

## Details

Finding fossils is challenging work. Nebraska in June can experience temperatures in the upper 90s, and it often takes hours of searching to find a fossil, followed by a lengthy process to remove it. Participants on this expedition need to be ready for long, hot, strenuous days and must be willing to get dirty! You will be walking over rough ground, climbing or scrambling in rocky areas carrying a pack with supplies and tools, and riding in trucks and possibly on ATVs. While in the field, nature is your bathroom, and you must



carry any water you need. That being said, Museum staff and field experts will be with you every step of the way!



The site we'll be working is rich with mammal fossils from the Oligocene epoch. You do get to keep what you find – unless the specimen is considered rare (i.e., a new species or a perfect specimen). In this case, the Toomey Foundation has the right of first refusal. We'll provide you with a half-day orientation at the museum to acquaint you with your tools and practice basic excavation and jacketing techniques. But don't worry, you'll have experienced guides with you throughout the experience to help you excavate your fossils.

Please be aware that dietary restrictions can be difficult to accommodate during the field portion of the expedition. Vegetarians and vegans have participated in the past, supplementing their diet with prepared foods brought from home or picked up on a quick grocery run upon arrival to Rapid City.

The Toomey Foundation leases the land on which we'll be digging. Participants will be required to sign a waiver accepting full responsibility for their own health and safety before heading out into the Badlands. Participants will also be asked to sign a photo and video release at your orientation session.



This expedition is limited to eight pairs of students and their guardians. Students must be from Manatee County, attending public, private, or home school, and aged 11 to 14. One legal guardian must accompany each student. We are only accepting one application per family.

The Nebraska Fossil Expedition will cost each pair \$800. This helps to supplement the expedition's transportation costs. The fee does not include airfare to and from the starting location of Rapid City, South Dakota. Each pair is responsible for finding and purchasing their own airfare. **Please do not purchase any travel arrangements before the March 26 orientation.**

**A completed application for the Fossil Expedition includes:**

- Complete, legible contact information.
- Disclosure of any physical limitations, medical conditions, or special dietary needs.
- Signed waiver forms.
- 300 to 500-word essay by the student explaining their interest.
- Manatee County teacher recommendation letter.

Email the completed application to Christine Michael, Co-Curator of Learning, at [CMichael@BishopScience.org](mailto:CMichael@BishopScience.org).

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- February 15: Applications Due
- March 1: Applicants notified of acceptance
- March 26: Mandatory expedition orientation for students and their guardians
- April 1: Flight confirmation sent to [CMichael@BishopScience.org](mailto:CMichael@BishopScience.org).
- **Please do not purchase any travel arrangements before the March 26 orientation.**
- June 4 – June 12: Dates of fossil expedition

### Student Interest Essay Prompt

We request that each student write a 300 to 500-word essay explaining why they are interested in coming on our fossil expedition. The trip does not require any previous experience.

This is your opportunity to tell us about yourself and why you would be a good fit for this adventure.

*Please attach your typed essay to your completed application.*

### Teacher Recommendation

We request that each student acquires a letter of recommendation from a Manatee County school teacher who has worked directly with the student. We are interested in students that work well independently and, on a team, push through challenges, take direction well, and enjoy learning.

*Please have your teacher email their recommendation to Christine Michael, Co-Curator of Learning at [CMichael@BishopScience.org](mailto:CMichael@BishopScience.org), with the student's name and "Nebraska Fossil Expedition Recommendation" in the subject line by February 15, 2022.*

## Participant Information

Participants on the Nebraska Fossil Expedition must be Manatee County students ages 11-14 accompanied by one legal guardian. The legal guardian should be the one to fill out this form. The following information for both the student and accompanying guardian is required below—one application per family.

Guardian's Full Name:	Student's Full Name:
Guardian's Date of Birth ____/____/____	Student's Date of Birth and Current Grade ____/____/____ Grade: _____
Relationship to Student	School Attending
Guardian Allergies	Student Allergies
Guardian's Address _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	Student's Address (if different) _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Guardian Phone Number  Guardian Alternate Phone Number	Guardian Email Address
Please list ANY physical limitations, medical conditions, and special dietary needs. If either participant is taking medication during the expedition, you will be required to consult with Museum staff. If no special considerations need be made, please write N/A.	

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Do you have a sample itinerary for the week?

Yes. The eight pairs will be split into two groups, Group A & B. Group A will spend the first half of the week in Crawford, Nebraska, looking for fossils while Group B explores surrounding attractions and parks. Halfway through the week, the groups switch. Here is a sample itinerary for Group A. Note that this is just a sample. The actual itinerary may vary.

#### Group A Itinerary

##### **June 4**

Arrive in Rapid City by 12:00 PM. Grab a quick lunch at the airport and make the two-hour drive to Crawford. Fieldwork in the afternoon.

##### **June 5**

Early breakfast and in the field by 8:00 AM. Break for lunch at 12:00 PM. Back to the field after lunch until 5:00 PM.

##### **June 6**

Early breakfast and in the field by 8:00 AM. Break for lunch at 12:00 PM. Afternoon trip to the Hudson-Meng dig site.

##### **June 7**

Early breakfast and in the field by 8:00 AM. Break for lunch at 12:00 PM. Make the hour-long drive to Hot Springs, SD to switch leaders. Stay the night in Hot Springs.

##### **June 8**

Guided tour of Wind Cave in the morning. Then after lunch, a trip to The Mammoth Site & Museum. Spend the night in Hot Springs.

##### **June 9**

Have breakfast in Hot Springs, then make the hour-long drive to Custer State Park. Explore the park in the morning and drive through Bear Country in the afternoon. Spend the night in Rapid City.

##### **June 10**

Visit Mount Rushmore in the morning and explore downtown Rapid City in the afternoon. Spend the night in Rapid City.

## **June 11**

Explore Badlands National Park in the morning and visit the School of Mines Museum in the afternoon. Last night in Rapid City.

## **June 12**

Fly out of Rapid City mid-morning.

### **2. Can participants book their own tours or activities that are different from the group?**

No, it is important that we travel as a group. Most of the excursions require reservations that will be made prior to the expedition.

### **3. My student is only 10 now, but will be 11 during the trip, can they still apply?**

Yes, as long as the students are between the ages of 11 and 14 during the trip, they are welcome to apply.

### **4. What COVID protocols are in place for the trip?**

It is our goal to keep everything safe during this trip. Current CDC guidelines will be followed at all times. Masks must be worn by all participants and leaders while in cars and in other close-proximity situations.

### **5. I have two students that meet the age requirements. Can they both apply?**

We ask that each family only send one application.

### **6. What are the hotels like?**

Each pair of participants will share one hotel room with two queen beds. More details will be provided during orientation.