



FLORIDA PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 25 NO. 2

Fall 2008

Florida Paleontological Society, Inc. Spring Meeting – May 2-4, 2008 Andalusia, Alabama

“BETTER LATE THAN NEVER! COME TO SWEET HOME ALABAMA FOR SOME FINE EOCENE FOSSILS, AND GOOD FOOD” as George Hecht wrote in the notice for the FPS Spring Meeting

we ate Roger’s favorite food and we were treated to an early view of Carol and Bernie Peterson’s new book, “Southern Florida’s Fossil Seashells”, with a forward written by our very own Roger Portell. After a very filling meal, we met back at the motel lobby to sign liability waivers so we could get an early start to the Point “A” Dam as storms were expected the next day.

Saturday morning started quite early as we had to meet back in the motel lobby to get some breakfast



Some happy FPS members after collecting hundreds of sharks teeth (and a few crabs!) from the middle Eocene deposits exposed along the Conecuh River in southern Alabama.

in Andalusia, Alabama on May 2nd- 4th, 2008. Unfortunately, George wasn’t able to attend as he was recovering from the flu, but 19 other members of the Florida Paleontological Society geared up for the long trip to Alabama. Most arrived Friday night, May 2nd, to meet at 6:30 PM in the lobby of the Day’s Inn Motel. I wonder how many had forgotten that Andalusia, AL, is located in the Central Time Zone? Later, we all drove, just down the road, to Larry’s Bar-B-Q where

and be ready to leave by 8:30 AM. Larry Spann of PowerSouth, and his sons, met us to open the gate in order to drive closer to the dam (and the fossil site). As it was, we still had to walk the very slippery path down to the Conecuh River and the fossil bearing wall of 45 million year old Eocene sediments. We would be looking for small shark’s teeth, sawfish teeth, turtle shell fragments, sea and land snake vertebra, crocodile parts, and Roger’s wonderful, rare crab, *Costacopluma*

**FLORIDA PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OFFICERS AND BOARD**

President:	Melissa Cole, 904 Red Bird Lane, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701 leaf123456@aol.com
President-Elect:	Marge Fantozzi, 475 New Hearth Circle, Winter Garden, FL 34787 mfantozzi@aol.com
Past President:	Roger Portell, Florida Museum of Natural History Box 117800, Gainesville, FL 32611 portell@flmnh.ufl.edu
Vice President:	Harley Means, Florida Geological Survey, Gunter Building MS 72, 903 West Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, FL 32304 Guy.Means@dep.state.fl.us
Secretary:	Marcia Wright, 1550 Mizell Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789 mmorganw@aol.com
Treasurer:	George Hecht, Florida Museum of Natural History Box 117800, Gainesville, FL 31611 ghecht@flmnh.ufl.edu

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Herbert, Tampa, 2008	Wally Ward, Houston, TX, 2009
Terry Lott, Gainesville, 2008	Jonathan Bloch, Gainesville, 2010
Greta Polites, Athens, GA, 2009	Phyllis Diegel, W Palm Bch, 2010
Gordon Hubbell, Gainesville, 2009	Gary Schmelz, Naples, 2010

COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS

Book Committee:	R. Hulbert
Nominations:	M. Cole
Finance:	G. Hecht, R. Portell
Membership:	G. Hecht
Honorary Members and Awards:	B. Toomey
Historical:	G. Hecht
Board of Editors:	R. Portell, J. Herrera, R. Hulbert
Resident Agent:	B. MacFadden

HONORARY MEMBERS

Anita Brown, Robin Brown, Barbara & Reed Toomey,
Gary Morgan, Clifford Jeremiah, Gordon Hubbell, David Webb

LIFE MEMBERS

Barbara Fite
Joan Herrera
Richard Hulbert
Roger Portell
James Toomey
Barbara Toomey

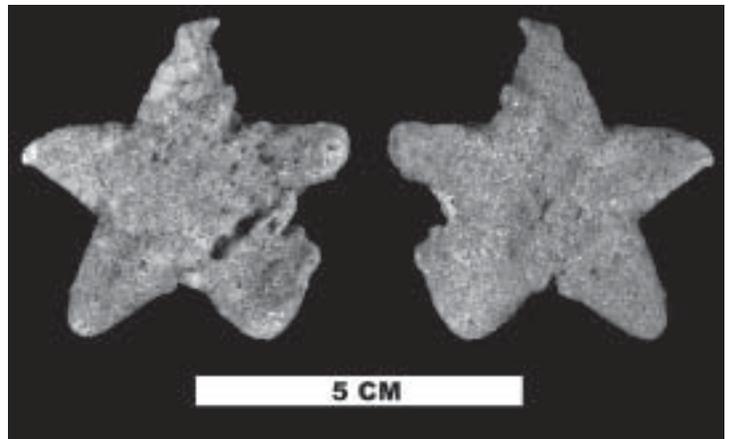
INFORMATION, MEMBERSHIP, AND PUBLICATIONS

Address: Secretary, Florida Paleontological Society, Inc.
Florida Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 117800
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-7800
(352) 273-2106 - email: fps@flmnh.ufl.edu
website: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fps/>

grayi. Of course, Roger always gets any crabs and besides, he named this one.

As I said, the forecast for that day was rain. It started getting darker, and darker, and darker. WOW, here it comes! Most of us were so intent on fossil hunting that we didn't get our rain ponchos out in time. When the deluge began, we rushed, as best we could over the slippery path, up to our cars and trucks; and at 10:30 AM we left, really wet and dirty. It was pouring! The word was to meet back in the motel lobby at 12:45 PM to see how the weather looked on radar. Meanwhile, Roger talked to Larry and he said to wait a bit longer, and then we probably could go back. We returned to the dam about 2:30 PM; the rain had stopped and it was almost sunny. But, we could only dig 2 more hours since we had dinner reservations at 6 PM. Everyone hated to leave the site as we were finding great stuff; however, the crabs were rare. Although we were sifting with really small-gauge screen, only four of the ½ inch crabs were found. After a great day of fossil hunting, we had a nice dinner at the Buckboard Steak and Seafood House. It's an attractive little restaurant with a great view of a lake, and music on Friday nights. Dinner was tasty, but the glare of the setting sun was a problem for some. Many walked down to the dock after dinner to look at the view, and maybe for a little exercise after a big dinner. Although the notice for this FPS trip was a little short, due to things beyond Roger's and George's control, a wonderful time was had by all.

Marge Fantozzi



Newly discovered sea star donated to the FLMNH by Carol and Bernie Peterson. This sandstone-coated goniasterid from the Chipola Formation is the very first articulated specimen from the Miocene of Florida. Preparation of the specimen most likely will reveal an undescribed taxon.

**Florida Paleontological Society,
Inc. (FPS) Minutes of Board Meet-
ing, Andalusia, Alabama, May 4,
2008 – 8:00 AM**

The meeting was called to order by FPS president, Melissa Cole. Others in attendance were: Roger Portell, Marge Fantozzi, Wally Ward, and Marcia Wright. Although there was no quorum, there were items that could be discussed by those present.

Society copies of the two R. Sinibaldi books were given to each member attending the spring meeting.

Carol and Bernie Peterson have completed their fossil shell book and it has gone to the printer.

Melissa has talked to Russell Brown about designing a T-shirt logo for the Society. He has agreed to do one for us and yet will not accept any payment. He will do several designs from which we can choose. When completed, we will scan them and send to board members for their vote.

The Bronzini that the board authorized for purchase has yet to be obtained. It will be done soon. Both the digital laptop and the projector have been purchased for the Society.

Board members are reminded to take a photo (head-shot) of themselves and submit with a 2-3 sentence bio. for inclusion on the society website. Send these as soon as possible to Melissa Cole. leaf123456@aol.com

Roger Portell reported that Barbara Toomey has compiled an up-to-date list of fossil, shell, and mineral clubs in Florida. Links to these will also be on the website. Roger will also see if he can find someone at the museum to assist George Hecht with some of his FPS responsibilities – sales and mailing for example.

There was no treasurer's report.

Mark your calendars - the fall meeting of FPS will be in Gainesville, FL the weekend of Nov. 7-9, 2008.

The deadline for articles for the newsletter is June 1st, 2008. Melissa will contact Richard Hulbert for a FLMNH vertebrate news article. She will also send out a ballot for the vote on new officers and board members.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marcia Wright, Secretary*

President's Address

Dear FPS Members,

I thank you for a wonderful two years as your president. I have enjoyed our adventures and the learning that takes place whenever our club gets together. My final meeting as president will be the fall meeting in Gainesville in November. I am sure that it will be full of learning, lots of interesting information, and hopefully a chance to find some awesome fossils at the field-trip. Please take the time to vote for our new officers and board members. Just a reminder, dues will be raised in January, so please keep this in mind when you pay your 2009 dues. I will still help out on the board as past president, so do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in any way. I encourage you to welcome our new president Marge Fantozzi at our next meeting! I look forward to seeing you in November. Thanks for everything!

Melissa Cole

News from the FLMNH Vertebrate Paleontology Division

The three-year-long “Tapir Challenge” Fossil Dig of the Florida Museum of Natural History’s Division of Vertebrate Paleontology ended in April, 2008, not with a bang, nor a whimper, but a whinny. With only a couple of days left to work the site (Haile 7G), and after finding over 600 skeletons of different animals, VP collections manager Richard Hulbert discovered the first skeleton of horse to be found at Haile 7G. The specimen turned out to be the posterior half of an adult *Equus*, with a bonus. Tucked away near the pelvis and lumbar vertebrae were some of the bones and teeth of a fetus. The 2007-2008 field season at Haile 7G actually produced fewer tapir skeletons compared to the first two seasons, but did include many excellent finds including two skulls of the Pliocene porcupine *Erethizon poyeri*, large numbers of bird bones, several Alligator skeletons, and many dozens of complete turtle shells. The best specimen was found in late October by curator Jonathan Bloch, a relatively complete skull and skeleton of *Trigonictis macrodon*, an extinct member of the mustelid family (weasels, mink, wolverine, and badgers). It is the first skeleton ever found for this species, as well as being the most complete skeleton and the best skull ever found for the genus. It has long been hypothesized that the closest living relatives of *Trigonictis* are two medium-sized species from Central and South America, the grison (*Galic-tis vittata*) and the tayra (*Eira barbara*). The new specimen will allow us to test this hypothesis with a number of skeletal features which were previously unknown in the extinct genus. Detailed analysis of the limb, wrist, ankle, and foot bones should allow us to determine if its primary mode of life was on the ground, like the grison, or in trees, like the tayra.

On-going research of Haile 7G fossils includes work on the turtles (Jason Bourque), birds (David Steadman), porcupine (Alex Hastings), small rodents and rabbits (Art Poyer and Richard Hulbert), tapirs (Richard Hulbert), and stable isotope paleoecology (Larisa Grawe DeSantis). There is still several years worth of

work ahead of us to prepare and catalog all the Haile 7G specimens.

FLMNH curators Jonathan Bloch and Bruce MacFadden have continued to lead collecting expeditions outside of Florida. Bruce’s primary field interest these days is in Panama, where early Miocene sediments are being exposed during a massive construction project to widen the Panama Canal. This field work is being done in collaboration with researchers at the Smithsonian’s Tropical Research Institute and Panamanian scientists and students. Many of the recovered mammals are also found at the Thomas Farm site in Florida, or are close relatives of Thomas Farm species. One of the goals of Bruce’s research is to determine the relative antiquity of the Central American rain forest. Jonathan and his students continue their work on Paleocene (ca. 55 million years ago) vertebrates from Colombia, as reported in our last FPS newsletter contribution. Many of the specimens collected in years past have been prepared, and studies on the major components of the fauna (crocodilians, turtles, and a very large boa) have been submitted for publication by various combinations of Jonathan and his graduate students Alex Hastings, Edwin Cadena, and Jason Bourque. Jonathan’s work on fossils of early primates from early Tertiary basins of Wyoming and Montana were featured on the PBS program Nova Science Now in an episode first broadcast in July 2008. Jonathan and his collaborators have spent most of their collecting efforts during the summer 2007 and 2008 seasons finding precisely dated specimens of vertebrates and plants from the Bighorn Basin of Wyoming just before, during, and just after a period of intense global warming known as the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum.

In December 2007, FLMNH researchers David Steadman, Richard Franz, Terry Lott, David Jarzen, and David Dilcher and others published the first report on fossil assemblages of plants and vertebrates from Great Abaco Island in the Bahamas in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America. Found underwater in a sinkhole, the well preserved fossils derive from two different deposits. One is a large talus cone pri-

marily consisting of peat. In addition to fossil plant material, the peat deposit has produced a number of skeletons of crocodiles and tortoises. Radiocarbon dating on specimens from the peat ranged between 4,000 and 1,000 years before present. The tortoise is not the familiar North American genus *Hesperotestudo*, but rather is a new species belonging to *Chelenoidis*, the same genus as living tortoises in South America and the Galápagos Islands of the Pacific. The crocodile is not the American crocodile *Crocodylus acutus*, which is now widespread throughout the Caribbean (including south Florida), but is instead the smaller species *Crocodylus rhombifer*, which is today restricted to two smaller regions in Cuba. The crocodile is the most common large species at the site, with over 40 individuals recovered so far. A second, smaller deposit of fossils was found on a ledge of the sinkhole and is thought to represent a Pleistocene owl roost. Three species of snakes, 22 species of birds, and four species of bats were reported from the owl roost deposit. The most significant is a new species (not yet named) of a flightless rail. Many species of flightless rails have been found on islands in the Pacific and elsewhere in the Caribbean, but this is the first record of one from the Bahamas.

This year the vertebrate paleontology collection received major donations of specimens from the Toomey Family, Jim Ranson, and Dr. Cliff Jeremiah. Smaller donations were made by D. and G. Witzel, K. Robinson, P. Roth, Robert Sinibaldi, Donald Miller, Andreas Kerner, M. Jeremiah, Brenda Farlow, and D. Wright.

FLORIDA PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

As stated in the Articles of Incorporation, "The purposes of this Corporation shall be to advance the science of Paleontology, especially in Florida, to disseminate knowledge of this subject and to facilitate cooperations of all persons concerned with the history, stratigraphy, evolution, ecology, anatomy, and taxonomy of Florida's past fauna and flora. The Corporation shall also be concerned with the collection and preservation of Florida fossils." (Article III, Section 1).

CODE OF ETHICS

ARTICLE X

Section 1. Members of the Florida Paleontological Society, Inc., are expected to respect all private and public properties.

Section 2. No member shall collect without appropriate permission on private or public properties.

Section 3. Members should make a sincere effort to keep themselves informed of laws, regulations, and rules on collecting on private or public properties.

Section 4. Members shall not use firearms, blasting equipment or dredging apparatuses without appropriate licenses and permits.

Section 5. Members shall dispose of litter properly.

Section 6. Members shall report to proper state offices any seemingly important paleontological and archaeological sites.

Section 7. Members shall respect and cooperate with field trip leaders or designated authorities in all collecting areas.

Section 8. Members shall appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

Section 9. Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that best represents the Florida Paleontological Society, Inc.

ANNUAL DUES for the FPS are \$10.00 for Associate Membership (persons under age 18) and \$20.00 for Full Membership (persons over age 18) and Institutional Subscriptions. Couples may join for \$25.00, and Family Memberships (3 or more persons) are available for \$30.00. Persons interested in FPS membership need only send their names, addresses, and appropriate dues to the Secretary, Florida Paleontological Society, Inc., at the address on page 2. Please make checks payable to the FPS. Members receive the FPS newsletter, Florida Fossil Invertebrates, Fossil Species of Florida, and other random publications entitled to members.

NEWSLETTER POLICY: All worthy news items, art work, and photographs related to paleontology and various clubs in Florida are welcome. The editors reserve the right not to publish submissions and to edit those which are published. Please address submissions to the Editors, Florida Paleontological Society, Inc. Newsletter, at the address inside the front cover.



Announcing the Florida Paleontological Society's

Gary S. Morgan Student Research

Award

13th ANNUAL COMPETITION

Prospectus and General Overview

The Florida Paleontological Society (FPS) is pleased to announce the 13th annual competition for its student research award. The purpose of this award is to promote a better understanding of **Florida paleontology** through new research discoveries. Eligible fields of relevance within paleontology include invertebrates, vertebrates, microfossils, and plants. This award is open to **any student, undergraduate or graduate**, in good standing at any Florida University or College.

For this 12th competition, the FPS has allocated an award of up to \$500. The grant's purpose is for expenditures such as (but not restricted to) field work, museum research travel, laboratory analyses, research materials, etc. It is not intended to fund travel to scientific meetings, indirect (overhead) costs, salaries, or wages. **Deadline for receipt of proposals is 1 December 2008.**

Applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline and be sent to the Awards Chairman at the address listed below. Applications will be reviewed by committee and judged based on the following criteria: (1) merit of proposed research, (2) feasibility of project, (3) clarity of expression, and (4) strength of recommendation letter from faculty sponsor. The screening/award committee shall consist of both professional and avocational paleontologists. The Awardee will be notified after 15 December 2008 and the FPS Treasurer will send a check for the requested amount (up to \$500) to the recipient.

It is expected that, during or after completion of the research, the recipient(s) will present results of their discoveries in the form of (1) a short article of a non-technical nature to be published in the FPS Newsletter and/or (2) a talk presented at an FPS meeting. In the event of the latter, the student's travel expenses to the meeting shall be paid by the FPS (this expense should not be included in the submitted proposal).

Application Process and Requirements:

The application is intended to be short - **thus, items 1-4 (combined) are limited to two pages (minimum 10 point type, standard 1" margins).** **The application must include:**

1. Title of research project
2. Name, address, and phone number of applicant
3. Current college status (where enrolled, major, degree program, anticipated graduation date).
4. Project description written in general, i.e., to the extent possible, non-technical, terms to include a description of what he/she plans to study, why it is interesting or important, how and when it will be done, and a budget of proposed expenditures.
5. Appended to the proposal, a letter from a faculty sponsor who will vouch for the qualifications of the applicant (as well as the importance of the project) and a short statement that the faculty member will supervise the research.

Applications should be postmarked by 1 December 2008 and sent to:

Roger Portell, Awards Chairman
Florida Paleontological Society
Florida Museum of Natural History
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-2035

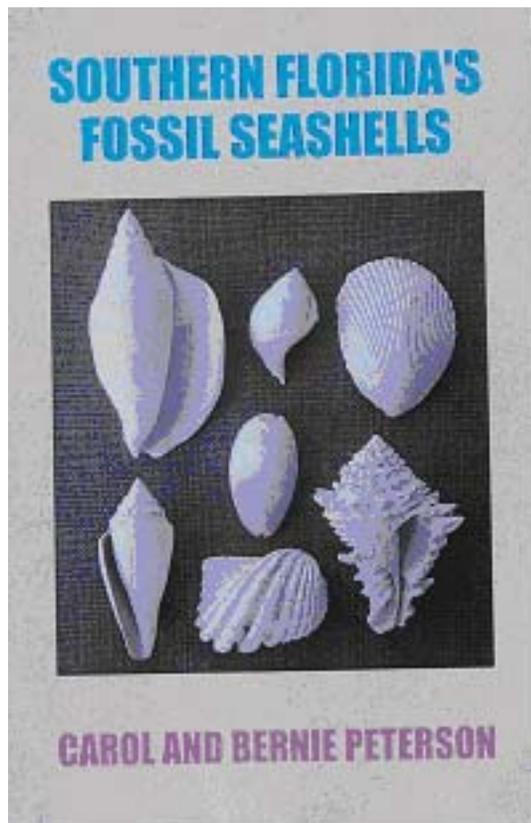
JUST RELEASED: A NEWLY PUBLISHED GUIDE**SOUTHERN FLORIDA'S FOSSIL SEASHELLS
BY FOSSIL SHELL COLLECTORS**

Carol and Bernie Peterson

This new book is geared toward amateur collectors and allows the novice to identify nearly 200 of southern Florida's most common fossil seashells and other invertebrate fossils. More than 280 black and white photos of the back and front of each shell are included along with a brief description of each species. Anyone who enjoys collecting seashells will find this book useful. Collectors of vertebrate fossils will be able to date their finds of bones and teeth, which are often found in association with fossil seashells in Florida, by identifying and dating those shells. The book is 6 inches by 9 inches and 140 pages.

Retail price is \$24.95 plus S&H for mail orders. Dealer inquiries are invited: Contact the authors at bpeter-son11@cfl.rr.com for individual copies or bulk orders.

Order by credit card online at www.bluenotebooks.com

**FPS Product Sales**

Prices are for current FPS members only

Shipping and Handling Extra

Vinac 15 (price per pound)	\$7.00
MC Thomas, Beach and Bank Collecting	\$5.00
H Converse, Paleo Preparation Techniques	\$10.00
Hulbert, Fossil Vertebrates of Florida	\$31.00

Florida Fossil Invertebrates

Part 1, Eocene Echinoids	\$5.00
Part 2, Oligocene and Miocene Echinoids	\$5.00
Part 3, Pliocene and Pleistocene Echinoids	\$5.00
Part 4, Pliocene and Pleistocene Decapod Crustaceans	\$5.00
Part 5, Eocene, Oligocene, and Miocene Decapod Crustaceans	\$5.00
Part 6, Larger Foraminifera (Introduction)	\$5.00
Part 7, Larger Foraminifera (Common Taxa)	\$5.00
Part 8, Brachiopods	\$5.00
Part 9, Mollusca (Shoal River Formation)	\$7.00
Part 10, Eocene and Oligocene Corals	TBA

Fossil Species of Florida

Number 1, <i>Mammut americanum</i>	\$4.00
Number 2, <i>Tapirus veroensis</i>	\$4.00

T-shirt (sm - 2xl)	\$10.00
---------------------------	---------

Coffee Mug	\$4.00
-------------------	--------

Sales Tax (Florida residents) add	6.25%
-----------------------------------	-------

To purchase the above items, please contact:

fps@flmnh.ufl.edu

or

George Hecht, Treasurer

Florida Museum of Natural History

Box 117800

University of Florida

Gainesville, Florida 32611-7800

FLORIDA PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Mail completed form to :
 Florida Paleontological Society
 University of Florida, Box 117800
 Gainesville, FL 32611-7800

New _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. INDIVIDUAL ACTIVE (\$20.00) _____ | 2. INSTITUTIONAL (\$20.00) _____ |
| 3. COUPLES (\$25.00) _____ | 4. FAMILY (3 or more \$30.00) _____ |
| 5. LIFE (\$500.00) _____ | 6. ASSOCIATE (under 18 \$10.00) _____ |

NOTE!! MEMBERSHIPS ARE FOR A CALENDAR YEAR AND ARE DUE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1 EACH YEAR!
 PLEASE RENEW ON TIME!

BIOGRAPHICAL FACT SHEET

1. NUMBER OF YEARS OF INTEREST IN PALEONTOLOGY _____
2. WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR STATUS: COLLECTOR ___ OCCASIONAL DEALER ___ FULL TIME DEALER ___ PROFESSIONAL POSITION ___ JUST STARTING ___

3. PRIMARY AREAS OF INTEREST:

	<u>VERTEBRATE</u>	<u>INVERTEBRATE</u>	<u>BOTANY</u>	<u>MICRO</u>
PLEISTOCENE	___	___	___	___
PLIOCENE	___	___	___	___
MIOCENE	___	___	___	___
OLIGOCENE	___	___	___	___
EARLIER	___	___	___	___

4. LIST ANY PREFERRED TYPES (Echinoids, Crabs, Horses, Sloths, Plants, etc.).

5. LIST ANY PUBLISHED WORKS ON PALEONTOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

6. DO YOU BUY _____ TRADE _____ FIND _____ FOSSILS?

7. LIST ANY SKILLS OR ABILITIES THAT MAY BE OF USE TO THE SOCIETY'S PROJECTS (RESTORATION, PERPARATION, COMPUTER USE, GRAPHICS SKILLS, SPEAKING, PHOTOGRAPHY, PUBLIC RELATIONS, WRITING, FUND RAISING, ETC.).

8. LIST ANY UNUSUAL SPECIMENS FOUND, CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THEY WERE LOCATED AND THEIR DISPOSITION.

PLEASE USE AN ADDITIONAL SHEET IF REQUIRED. THANK YOU!

Payments, contributions, or gifts to the Florida Paleontological Society are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Dues payments may be deductible by members as ordinary or necessary business expenses. We recommend that you consult with your tax advisor.