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From left, geological consultant Uwe Krautwarst, Ravea Lillich, Krautwarst's assistant and seasonal volunteer at Ten Sleep Dinosaur Quarry, and resident paleontologist Wesley Linster look at the fossil of a sauropod nicknamed Naomi, foreground, outside Ten Sleep, Wyo.

Diggers have high hopes for dino find



TEN SLEEP, Wyo. (AP) — A dinosaur fossil being excavated near here could be up to 90 feet long, and researchers are hopeful the find is one of the most complete sauropods found.

The find, named Naomi, is a sauropod from the Upper Jurassic Morrison Formation, according to Wesley Linster, paleontologist for Maxilla and Mandible International, the company overseeing the dig.

"The fossil skeleton we are excavating now may be one of the finest complete sauropod dinosaurs ever discovered, and may reach between 70 and 90 feet in length when assembled. An important aspect is that it is mostly preserved in articulation," said Henry Galiano, owner and founder of Maxilla and Mandible.

At the Ten Sleep dinosaur quarry, located on a farm 15 miles northwest of Worland, Linster pointed out vertebrae and other bones that belong to the giant sauropod.

Linster named the fossil Naomi after supermodel Naomi Campbell because of its long legs.

The partially exposed sauropod lay under the glaring sun for the first time in nearly 150 million years earlier this summer. Its head, shoulder and leg were still embedded in sever-

al feet of rock.

A jackhammer and other tools lay scattered about in the pit, and the sound of picks and trowels scraping away earth could be heard in the quarry.

Linster said he has spent the past two summers in Ten Sleep helping unearth dinosaurs.

Recently, he and other paleontologists uncovered an Apatosaurus that was unearthed with a nearly complete braincase, making it a scientifically significant find. Not a month later, Linster found an Allosaurus and then the giant sauropod.

"It was pretty nice to find another dinosaur, especially in this great of shape and quality. In the 18 years I have been doing this, I have never dug on a dinosaur that has been articulated the way this one is," said Linster.

Sauropod, a dinosaur marked by its large size, long neck and tail, four-legged stance and an herbivorous diet, was among the largest of all dinosaurs and land animals that ever lived, Linster said.

The genera of the specimen at the Ten Sleep quarry wasn't immediately identified, but Linster said they

Please see Dino, 11C

Linster brushes dirt off the bones of Naomi, recently discovered outside of Ten Sleep. Naomi is a sauropod from the Upper Jurassic Morrison Formation and could be up to 90 feet in length.

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would know more as they unearthed Naomi.

Galiano said this specimen has unique features and is in need of further comparisons before species determination can be established.

"The possibility of it representing some interesting rare species, or an unknown growth stage of a known species is strong," Galiano said.

The specimen, like the others, is part of a mass-species mortality site, Galiano said.

Linster speculates that the dinosaur quarry was once a riverbed.

The quarry could have been a slow part in the river, he said, or a bend that collected dead

dinosaurs from farther upstream. The dinosaurs were then buried under layers of fine sediment, preserving their remains.

The Ten Sleep dinosaur quarry has attracted paleontologists from around the world.

"There will be more people coming through this year as well to work on this dinosaur — some sauropod experts and other experts in the field," Linster said.

More dinosaurs are already being discovered.

Linster said that during the excavation of the sauropod, a raptor was found and the bones of yet another sauropod were also exposed.

Wesley and Galiano both hope that their findings are just the "tip of the iceberg" and that their discoveries continue for many more years.