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'Einstein' dino preserved in prehistoric mud hole

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TEN SLEEP — Down three miles of dirt road, on a farm outside of Ten Sleep, lays the final resting place of several dinosaurs that met their end in a mud hole 140 million years ago.

Today, paleontologists are slowly and carefully scratching away at the dinosaur graveyard and have recently unearthed the fossilized remains of an Apatosaurus, better known as Brontosaurus. The specimen has been endearingly nicknamed "Einstein, the Brontosaurus with a brain" because of the complete and intact braincase.

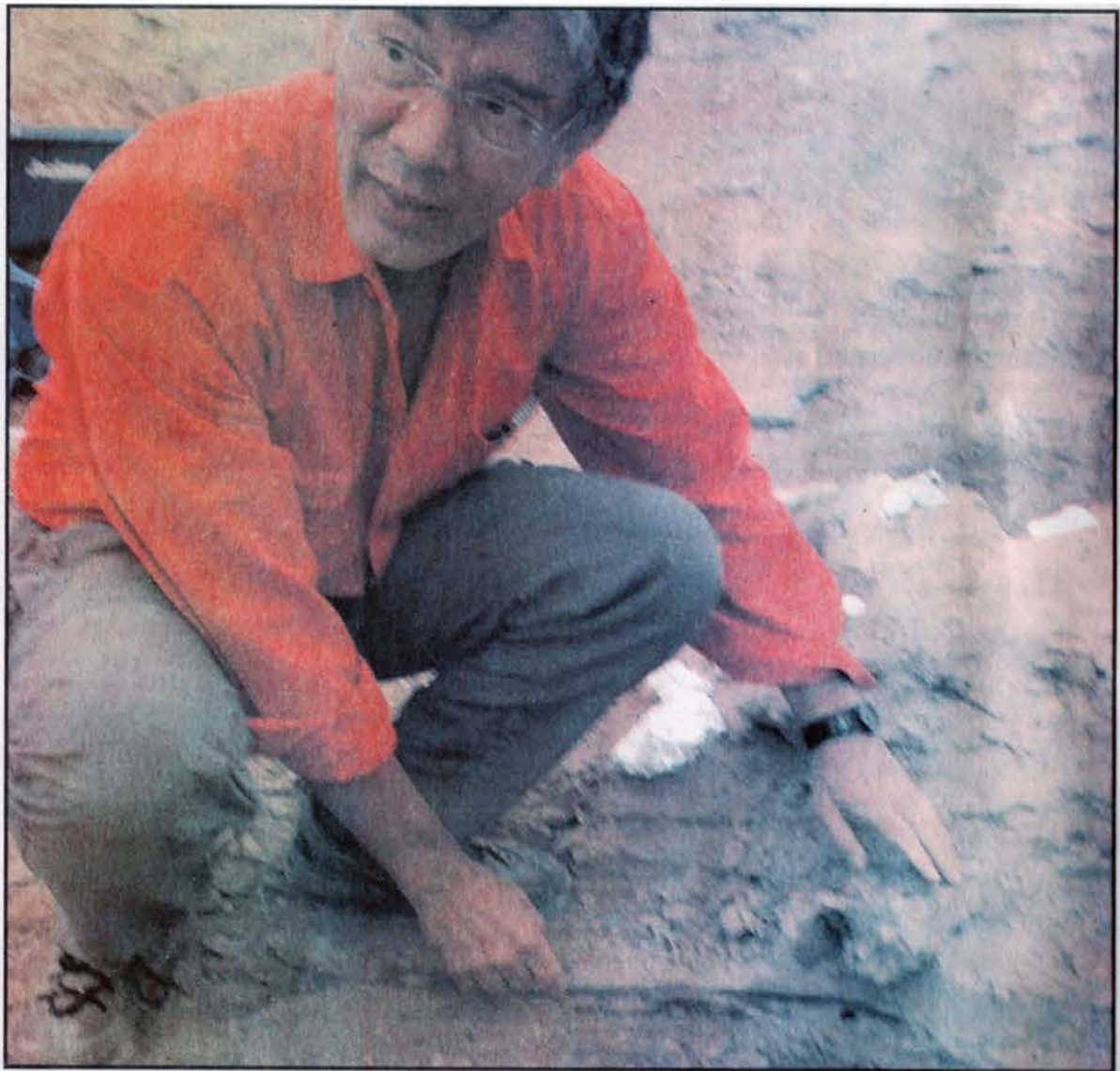
Henry Galiano, founder and owner of Maxilla & Mandible International, LLC, the company responsible for the dig site, said this is a rare and exciting find.

The Ten Sleep specimen is 80 percent complete, and 70 feet in length. It has been gathered over the past two years by paleontologists from around the world, two from Germany are there now. Generally speaking, Apatosaurus skeletons more than 50 percent complete are rare, said Galiano. There exists only 10 unearthed adult skeletons and two other fragmentary skulls, making this find an "extreme rarity." In fact, he said, most dinosaurs that you see are "Frankensteins" put together using pieces from several specimens.

"What's particularly frustrating to paleontologists who study these beasts is that we haven't had a clue what a complete associated Apatosaurus skull and skeleton looks like," said Dr. Robert Bakker, curator at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. "Einstein gives us our first view of an Apatosaurus from head to tail."

Galiano said part of the fun of paleontology is making discoveries, finding a dinosaur of historical and scientific significance such as Einstein is the fantasy of most paleontologists.

"It is like treasure hunting, you are hunting down your leads and clues and you are reconstructing something that happened 100's of millions of years ago, that's exciting," said Galiano. "When you make a dis-



DAILY NEWS photo by Jilaena Childs

DRESSED IN RED FOR THE PRESS: Above, Henry Galiano, institutional freelance appraiser and consultant for Natural History Museums, points to the rib of an Allosaurus at the Ten Sleep dig site. Galiano wears a red shirt as is the tradition of paleontologists when dealing with the press. He recounted that a famous paleontologist was giving a seminar when he remarked on the audacity of a reporter who, when taking shots of a significant finding, asked the paleontologist if he had a "red shirt or something else to wear" for the photo opportunity. The paleontologist was in shock that this was of any importance whatsoever, especially in light of his findings. To this day, Galiano says that when you see a photo of a paleontologist he will often be wearing red, as it has become a common practice.

covery that is of historical importance that's the cherry on the cake, everyone wants to do that."

Mark Norell, chairman and curator for the American Museum of Natural History in New York,

said that the skulls and braincases of any dinosaur, let alone these giant dinosaurs, are very poorly known.

"Skulls are incredibly fragile and it just seems that
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we find a lot of necks but not a lot of heads. Finding a braincase like this is a great discovery, there are just a handful of these in collections around the world," said Norell.

Fields of alfalfa surround the Ten Sleep dinosaur quarry, which looks more like a giant hole in the ground than a dinosaur-resting place. There, paleontologists perch with their brushes, picks and trowels, scraping at the earth. White jackets made from burlap and plaster sit nearby the last of Einstein's vertebrates, packaged in preparation for transport.

At the site, Galiano enthusiastically remarked on the remnants of an Allosaurus that lay exposed and pointed at the barren ground where Einstein slept the last 140 million years.

Paleontologists hovered over the specimen with careful precision, trying not to disturb or step on any bones.

Galiano said that the multi-species quarry in which Einstein was recovered was most likely a dried up, muddy watering hole. He speculates that Einstein came upon

the dried up lake in search of water and became stuck in a mud hole where he died. This may have attracted other Carnosaurs, or meat-eating dinosaurs to the site.

One of the factors that further confirms the watering hole theory is Einstein's position in the earth, Galiano said that he was very vertical, almost standing up.

Wesley Linster, paleontologist for Maxilla & Mandible, International LLC, has been unearthing Einstein for the last two summers and is currently digging on the Allosaurus.

"We have many, many theories, we come up with a new one everyday," said Linster.

Galiano concurred, "we feel that this lake attracted dinosaurs and they died for some reason, whether it be that they drowned or got stuck in the mud — they attracted Carnosaurs. Already half a dozen dinosaurs have been discovered at the Ten Sleep quarry. It is possible that the deposit will continue with a lot more dinosaurs and that this is just the tip of the iceberg."

Linster, who is also responsible

for documenting and has worked every day for the last two summers at the site, described a day in his life as a paleontologist in Ten Sleep, "I crawl out of bed in the morning, throw on my crusty, old, dirty clothes, start scratching around for stuff, hoping for new bones everyday. The best thing about digging bones is anytime you find anything out there, no matter what it may be, you're the first one to have laid eyes on it."

Currently Einstein, in his many pieces, resides in Pennsylvania and New York while scientists preserve him with various forms of adhesive, and hardeners, a delicate and tedious task, Galiano said.

The next step in Einstein's life is to reconstruct any gaps in bones, according to Galiano that is an art form and involves lots of technology and borrowed knowledge from other specimens. Then Einstein will be assembled and put up for sale.

Einstein's status, according to Galiano, is that it is both a research quality specimen and an exhibit worthy specimen, because of its completeness.