

2021 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 2066

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2066
1/8/2021

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-17.4-09.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to use of funds from the fossil excavation and restoration fund; and to provide a continuing appropriation.

Chairman Kreun calls the hearing to order at 9:46am

Roll Call Senators	
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Jim Roers	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	Y
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Jessica Bell	Y
Senator Don Schaible	Y

All Senators are present.

Discussion Topics:

- North Dakota Fossil Fund
- Providing an appropriation

Clint Boyd, NDGS, submits written testimony #244 in favor of SB 2066, and testifies in favor of SB 2066 (9:46am)

Robyn Loumer, NDDMR, submits written testimony #247 in favor of SB 2066, and testifies in favor of SB 2066 (9:51am)

Senator Piepkorn moves DO PASS on SB 2066 (10:02am)
Senator Roers seconds DO PASS on SB 2066 (10:02am)

DO PASS Vote	Vote
Senator Curt Kreun	Y
Senator Jim Roers	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	Y
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Jessica Bell	Y
Senator Don Schaible	Y

Senate Judiciary Committee

SB 2066

1/8/21

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Vote Passed 6-0-0

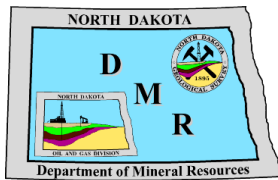
Sen. Piepkorn Carries

Chairman Kreun adjourns the meeting on SB 2066 at 10:04am.

Dave Owen, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2066: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Kreun, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB
2066 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.



Senate Bill 2066

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

January 08, 2021

Testimony of Ed Murphy, State Geologist, NDIC - DMR – Geological Survey
Presented by Clint Boyd, Senior Paleontologist

The Fossil Excavation and Restoration Fund (North Dakota Century Code 54-17.4-9.1) was established during the 1997 legislative session. The fund contains both appropriated monies and donations to the Department of Mineral Resources -- Geological Survey to pay for excavation and restoration of fossils for display in the North Dakota Heritage Center and other museums and public venues across the state. Fossil restoration is very time intensive and fossil exhibits also require considerable time and expense to plan, prepare, and maintain. This continuing appropriation fund enables the monies to be carried across bienniums for these multi-biennial projects.

Since 1997, \$250,000 in appropriated funds and \$900,000 in donations (78% of the total) has been deposited into the fund. Conversely, \$1,150,000 has been withdrawn from the fund to pay for a multitude of projects:

2000	Mosasaur exhibit at the Heritage Center (~\$74,000)
2004	Mesohippus (early horse) Exhibit at the Cowboy Hall of Fame (\$7,000)
2006	Dinosaur exhibit at the Heritage Center (\$84,000)
2007	Paleocene (crocodile) exhibit at the Heritage Center (\$51,000)
2008	Final phase of exhibit updates at the Heritage Center (\$170,000)
2008 - 2013:	Preparation work on Dakota (\$167,000)
2008 & 2011:	Bismarck airport exhibit and update (Pterosaurs added) (\$5,000)
2012 - 2014:	New exhibit hall (Corridor of Time) at the Heritage Center (\$265,000)
2016:	Cretascope update at the Heritage Center (\$105,000)
2018 to present:	Dakota (mummified hadrosaur) exhibit update (\$95,000 so far)
<i>The current balance in the Fossil Excavation and Restoration Fund is \$43,780.</i>	

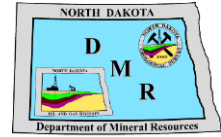
The Geological Survey's Public Fossil Dig Program has grown from a few dozen dig slots in 2000 to well over 600 slots in 2018. For a number of years, three of the five fossil digs we participated in charged a registration fee (Medora, Walhalla, and Marmarth) with that money going to our partners who handled all of the costs for their particular dig (Medora Foundation, Walhalla Convention and Visitors Bureau, ND Parks and Recreation, and the Marmarth Foundation). In recent years the Geological Survey has taken over the accounting side of all the digs from our partners and began charging a registration fee for those digs as well as for the digs that we have always run alone (Bismarck and Dickinson digs).

We have kept the dig registration fee low (\$25 per person) in order to not price out North Dakotans. Roughly half of our dig participants are from North Dakota. Over the years, the fossil dig program has become the primary source for state fossils that will eventually go on display at the Heritage Center or other museums and venues across the state.

In 2019, the fossil digs generated \$21,200 in registration fees and \$20,540 in expenses. In 2020, registration fees were \$10,100 and expenses were \$13,500 due to the COVID19 pandemic. In both years, the registration fees were run through the Office of Management and Budget's Conference Fund. We typically manage three to four fossil digs per year (Medora, Dickinson, Bismarck, and Walhalla), but each dig has to be accounted for separately within the OMB Conference Fund. This means if we run a deficit in one dig, we can't use the surplus from other digs to balance it. Placing the fossil dig registration fees in the Fossil Excavation and Restoration Fund will enable us to spread the fossil dig program budget over the entire summer giving us much more flexibility and making the program more self-sufficient.



Upper Left: The 2000 Mosasaur exhibit at the Heritage Center. Upper Right: Pterosaur casts and a triceratops skull at the Bismarck Airport in 2011. Middle Right: The 2004 Mesohippus Exhibit at the Cowboy Hall of Fame. Lower Left: Children interacting with the updated Cretascope exhibit in the Heritage Center in 2016.



I have signed up for virtual testimony to be available for questions. No other testimony will be provided.

Sincerely,

Robyn Loumer
Accounting Manager
Department of Mineral Resources

Bruce E. Hicks
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

Lynn D. Helms
DIRECTOR
DEPT. OF MINERAL RESOURCES

Edward C. Murphy
STATE GEOLOGIST
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

2021 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 2066

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2066
3/4/2021

Relating to use of funds from the fossil excavation and restoration fund; and to provide a continuing appropriation

9:00 AM

Chairman Porter opened the hearing. Present: Representatives Porter, Damschen, Anderson, Devlin, Heinert, Keiser, Lefor, Marschall, M Ruby, Zubke, Guggisberg, and Ista. Absent: Rep Roers Jones and Bosch

Discussion Topics:

- Fossil Excavation and Restoration Fund
- Time and cost requirement
- Fees
- Main source of fossils
- Affordable fossil dig programs
- Tourism in ND

#7345 Clint Boyd, Senior Paleontologist, DMR

Rep Ruby moved a Do Pass, Rep D Anderson seconded.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Chuck Damschen	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	AB
Representative Bill Devlin	Y
Representative Ron Guggisberg	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Zachary Ista	Y
Representative George Keiser	Y
Representative Mike Lefor	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Shannon Roers Jones	AB
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Denton Zubke	Y

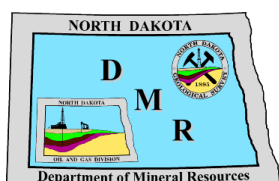
Motion carried. 12 – 0 – 2 Rep Ista is carrier.

9:15 AM hearing closed.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2066: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)
recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB
2066 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.



Senate Bill 2066

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

March 4th, 2021

Comments of Clint Boyd, Senior Paleontologist

The Fossil Excavation and Restoration Fund (North Dakota Century Code 54-17.4-9.1) was established during the 1997 legislative session. The fund contains monies both appropriated and donated to the Department of Mineral Resources -- Geological Survey to pay for excavation and restoration of fossils for display in the North Dakota Heritage Center and other museums and public venues across the state. Fossil restoration is very time intensive and fossil exhibits also take a considerable amount of time to plan and prepare and are also very costly. This continuing appropriation fund enables the monies to be carried across bienniums for these multi-biennium projects.

Since 1997, \$250,000 in appropriated funds and roughly \$900,000 in donations has been deposited into the fund. Conversely, roughly \$1,110,000 has been withdrawn from the fund to pay for a multitude of projects. The current balance of the fund as of February 15, 2021 is \$37,239.64.

2000	Mosasauro exhibit at the Heritage Center (\$74,000)
2004	Mesohippus (early horse) Exhibit at the Cowboy Hall of Fame (\$7,000)
2006	Dinosaur exhibit at the Heritage Center (\$84,000)
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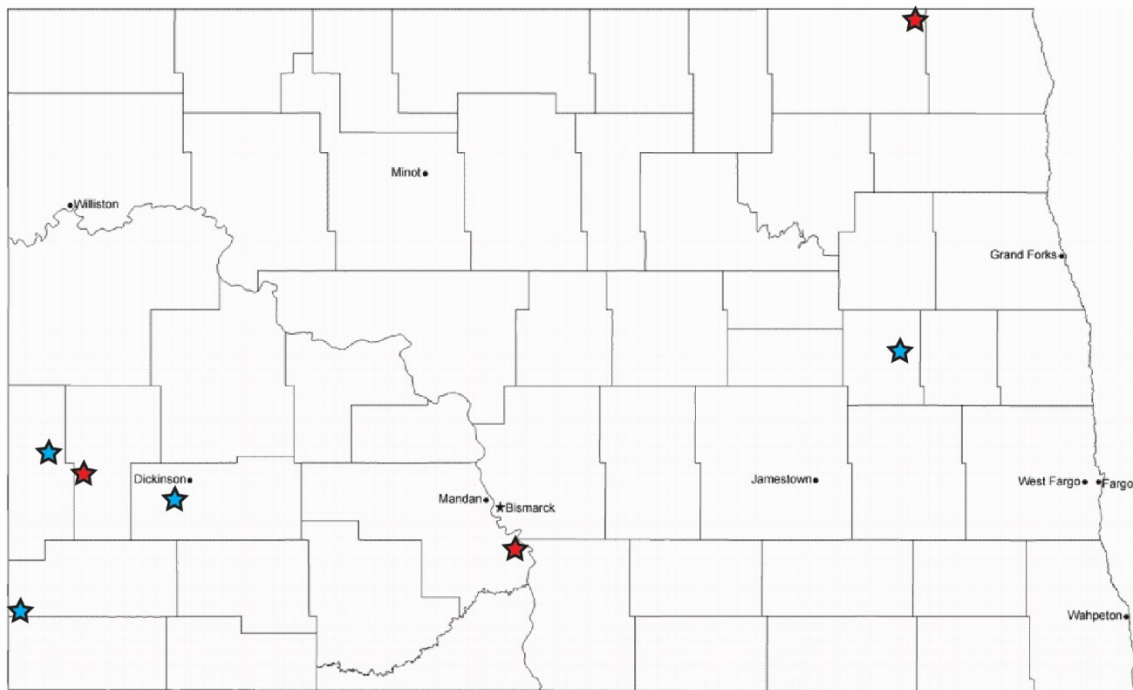
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We have kept the dig registration fee low (\$30 per person) so as to not price out North Dakotans. Roughly half of our dig participants are from North Dakota. Over the years, the fossil dig program has become the primary source for state fossils that will eventually go on display at the Heritage Center or other museums and venues across the state.

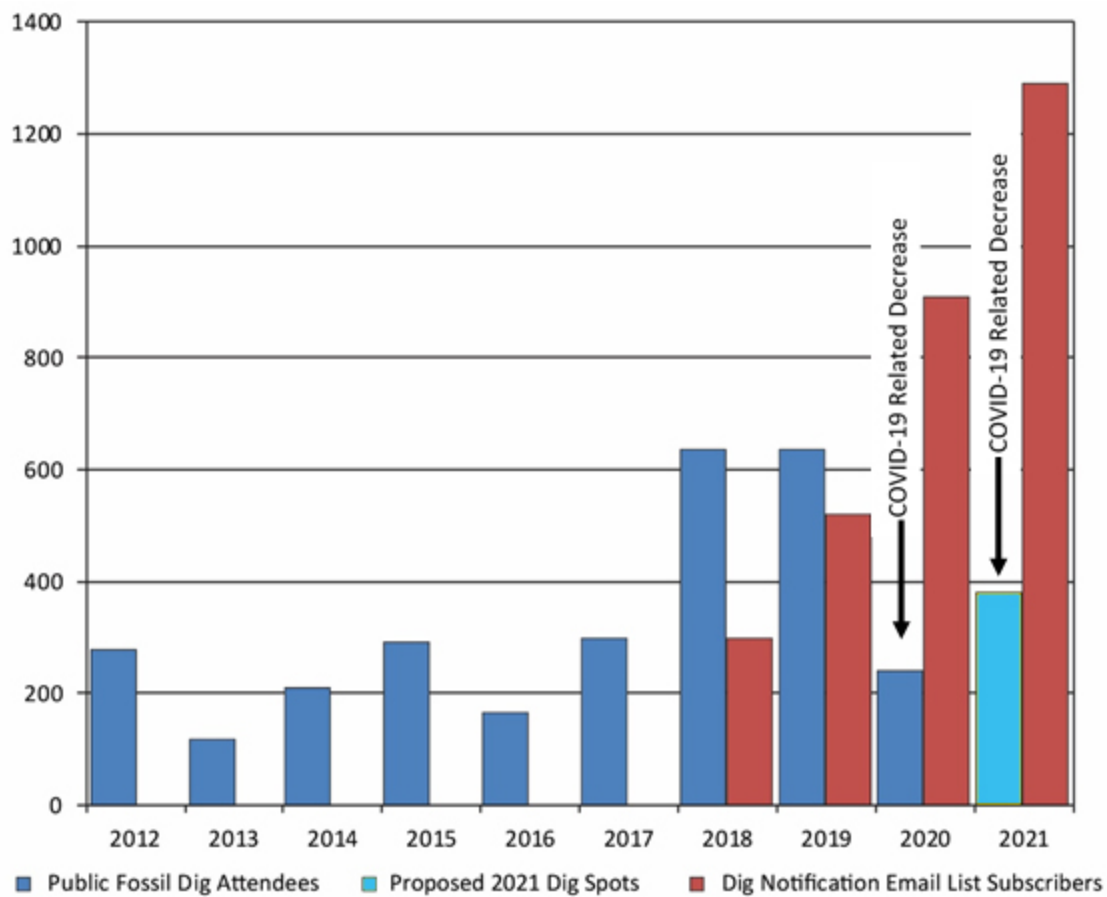
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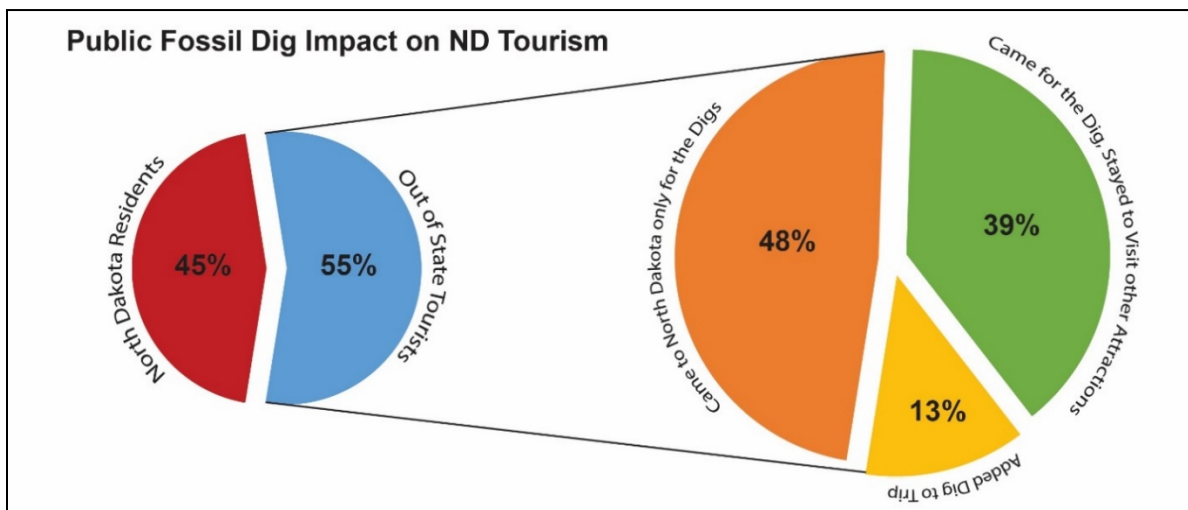
Map of North Dakota showing the locations of current Public Fossil Digs in Bismarck, Medora, and Walhalla (red stars) and other sites where digs are occasionally held (blue stars).



Interest in the Public Fossil Dig Program greatly increased beginning in 2018 and the number of people subscribed to receive the annual dig announcement email far surpasses our current capacity.



Members of the public participate in the Public Fossil Digs at the Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area near Walhalla (top left), the Little Badlands area south of Dickinson (top right), a cooperative dig with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation east of Medora (bottom left), and on private land south of the Bismarck-Mandan area (bottom right).



Slightly more than half of participants are from out of state, and 87% of them came to North Dakota because of the Public Fossil Dig Program.