

## Woodburn Public Library

The display at the Woodburn Public Library features bones found from 1987 to the present day. Some of the bones on display come from animals that are now extinct. All the bones represent animals that lived over 13,000 years ago.



Mandible of a water shrew (smallest bone found)

Sites in Woodburn to see:

**Woodburn Public Library** has a collection of bones found throughout Woodburn.

**Legion Park** has a playground with interpretive panels describing digs and fossils from Woodburn.

**Woodburn High School @WeBSS** has a collection of bones and plant remains found by high school students including the *Bison antiquus* skeleton.

Sites in the Willamette Valley to see:

**Tualatin City Library** has a skeleton of a Mastodon and other ice age animals.

**Cabalas in Tualatin** has casts of ice age fossils found in the Willamette Valley.

**University of Oregon Natural History Museum in Eugene** has a display of Woodburn fossils including the teratorn bones.

Visit [www.willamettevalleypleistocene.com](http://www.willamettevalleypleistocene.com) for more fossil sites in Oregon

## Ice Age Fossils of Woodburn, Oregon



Display assembled and interpreted by the Woodburn High School SMILE Club and Advisor David Ellingson

# The History of the Digs in Woodburn

Woodburn, Oregon is a rural city located in the heart of the Willamette Valley. Through the middle of the city, runs a slow moving body of water called Mill Creek. Since 1987 scientists, volunteers, and high school students have been looking at an ancient ecosystem beneath the surface that contains bones of ice age animals.

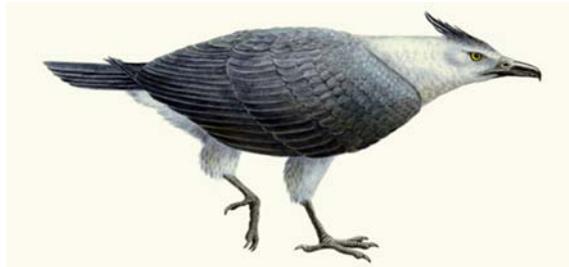


To reach the soils of this ancient ecosystem heavy equipment is used to dig trenches up to 20 feet deep. Over the years many bones from animals such as mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects have been found. The soils also preserve plant remains, including seeds of bog bean and Oregon grape; wood and leaves from willows; and cones from spruce trees.

Together, these bones and plants provide an opportunity to look back at an environment that existed around 13,000 years ago.

In 1987 sewer line repair work being done near Woodburn High School uncovered bones of giant animals like Ground Sloths, Bison, Horses, and Bears.

Some of these animals are now extinct, but carbon dating showed that they lived in Woodburn around 13,000 years ago.



A drawing of a Teratorn found in Southern California

In 1996 the Institute for Archaeological Studies (IAS) under the direction of Drs. Alison Stenger and Chuck Hibbs began excavations at the High School and at Legion Park. The most important discovery they made was in July of 1999 when they discovered the bones of a giant ice age bird called a teratorn, which had a wingspan between 12-14 ft. After careful research, it was later determined that this bird was a new species, and was given the name *Teratornis woodburnensis*. The bones are currently being kept at the University of Oregon, but there are casts of the bones on display at the Public Library.

The largest and most exciting find was made in September of 2008. While Woodburn High School students were underway with their annual dig, an almost completely articulated skeleton of a large mammal was discovered. Students and teachers sifted through the soil finding all sizes of bones, some complete, others in fragments. The bones were identified as an extinct ice age bison called *Bison antiquus*. Today, the skeleton is on display at the



The *Bison antiquus* skeleton on display at the High School

This added to the already large amount of bison bones found in Woodburn. Which indicates that Woodburn and the Willamette Valley was full of all sizes and ages of bison during the ice age.