

Idaho State University Researcher Coordinates Analysis of Body Imprint That May Belong to a Sasquatch

Pocatello – Dr. Jeff Meldrum, associate professor of anatomy and anthropology at Idaho State University, is a member of the scientific team examining a plaster cast of what may be the first documented body imprint of a Sasquatch.

The imprint of what appears to be a large animal's left forearm, hip, thigh, and heel was discovered Sept. 22 in a muddy wallow near Mt. Adams in southern Washington state by a Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (www.BFRO.net) expedition in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The investigating team, including Meldrum; Dr. Grover Krantz, retired physical anthropologist from Washington State University; Dr. John Bindernagel, Canadian wildlife biologist; John Green, retired Canadian journalist and author; and Dr. Ron Brown, exotic animal handler and health care administrator, all examined the cast and agreed that it cannot be attributed to any commonly known Northwest animal and may represent an unknown primate.

Meldrum, whose research includes comparative primate anatomy and the emergence of human walking supervised the careful cleaning of the cast, and will coordinate its analysis by a scientific team. He first became actively interested in the question of the existence of a North American ape after examining fresh Sasquatch (popularly called Bigfoot) tracks in 1996.

"While not definitively proving the existence of a species of North American ape, the cast constitutes significant and compelling new evidence that will hopefully stimulate further serious research and investigation into the presence of these primates in the Northwest mountains and elsewhere," Meldrum said.

Dr. LeRoy Fish, a retired wildlife ecologist from Triangles Lake, Ore., with a doctorate in zoology from Washington State University; Derek Randles, a landscape architect from Belfair, Wash.; and Richard Noll, a tooling metrologist from Edmonds, Wash.; discovered and cast the partial body imprint during the BFRO expedition.

More than 200 pounds of plaster were needed to produce the 3-1/2 x 5-foot cast of the entire impression, which was reinforced with researchers' aluminum tent poles. Other Sasquatch evidence documented by the BFRO expedition includes voice recordings and indistinct 17-inch footprints.

Trace evidence attributed to Sasquatch is usually footprints, but impressions of other body parts, including hands, knuckles, and buttocks, have occasionally been found. This unique instance of a partial body impression provides further insights about this elusive ape species' anatomy. Preliminary measurements indicate its body dimensions are 40 to 50 percent greater than those of a six-foot tall human.

After the cast was cleaned, extensive impressions of hair on the buttock and thigh surfaces and a fringe of longer hair along the forearm were evident. Meldrum identified what appear to be skin ridge patterns on the heel, comparable to fingerprints, that are characteristic of primates.

The ridge characteristics are consistent with other examples from Sasquatch footprints Meldrum has studied in collaboration with officer Jimmy Chilcutt, a latent fingerprint examiner with the Conroe, Texas, Police Department. The anatomy of the heel, ankle, and Achilles tendon are also distinct and consistent with models of the Sasquatch foot derived by Meldrum after examining hundreds of alleged Sasquatch footprints.

Hair samples collected at the scene and from the cast itself and examined by Dr. Henner Fahrenbach, a biomedical research scientist from Beaverton, Ore., were primarily of deer, elk, coyote, and bear, as was expected since tracks in the wallow were mostly of those animals. However, based on characteristics matching those of otherwise indeterminate primate hairs collected in association with other Sasquatch sightings, he identified a single distinctly primate hair as "Sasquatch."

Sasquatch is a species of North American ape suspected to inhabit the mountainous forests of the Northwest. Its existence remains controversial despite numerous eyewitness sightings and the discovery of enormous footprints.

More information about the Skookum Cast can be found at the web site for the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization : <http://www.bfro.net>