

Information about BC Fossil Educational Kits – Sharing Natural Heritage and Earth Science in BC Schools

Who created the Fossil Kits?

The BC Fossil Management Office – Heritage Branch created 20 fossil educational kits, in addition to supplementary digital teaching materials to be available online. The project was completed with the assistance of a co-op student and members of paleontological societies.

Why create the Fossil Kits?

Paleontology, the study of fossils, is not a narrow field – it bridges STEM (STEAM) fields – science, technology, engineering, arts and math. Fossils provide a tangible and creative way to make interdisciplinary connections and spark curiosity about the natural world. Studying fossils is relevant to topics of broader societal interest such as climate change, biodiversity, extinction, and evolution.

The BC Fossil Management Office wants to promote awareness about the importance of BC fossils as a natural heritage resource, by engaging students and teachers with hands-on fossil specimens from BC.

What is in the Fossil Kit?

The physical fossil kit is a plastic tote containing a set of fourteen fossil specimens. The specimens are representative of fossils that can be found in B.C. The kit contains a packing list, a spiral-bound teacher’s manual, identification cards for each specimen and a card game called “Is This a Fossil” (cards are double-sided, printed on vinyl).

The spiral-bound teacher’s manual has instructions for four different activities, each linked with a list of B.C.’s curriculum content and competencies. The manual also contains supplemental materials and links to resources such as virtual 3D fossil models.

The online materials, posted on the BC Fossil Management webpage, include two supporting slideshow presentations and guides, as well as activities. Schools without a physical kit can use the digital documents to facilitate learning about B.C.’s natural heritage.

Who are the Fossil Kits for?

The kits and educational materials are for grades K to 8 but could be adapted to students of different ages and skill levels.

Which School Districts will receive a Fossil Kit?

There are 59 school districts in B.C. and more than 1500 public schools. A survey was conducted to gauge interest in the project and obtain relevant information. Response levels varied by district, however, connecting the kit content to the B.C. curriculum was noted as a priority.

Teachers also indicated an interest in digital accessibility of the teacher's manual and associated curriculum-linked activities, information, and links to digital 3D fossil specimens and supplementary knowledge.

Ten districts that expressed a keen interest in the teaching kit based on survey responses were given priority to receive a physical kit. An additional ten districts were contacted to ensure at least one kit is available in all regions of the province, including the Northeast, Cariboo, Kootenay, and Thomson-Okanagan areas.

A specific contact, a district resource librarian or teacher-librarian, was identified to receive a kit and facilitate its transfer between classrooms and within the district.

How will the Fossil Kits be shared and managed?

The fossil kit is a loaned resource that a district resource centre or librarian will receive and catalogue. A description of the resource and keywords will be provided so that each library can describe the resource and inform teachers when it is available in their catalogue. It is intended for the kit to move around to several schools within the district. The librarians contacted have agreed to track usage and provide data regarding use (how many schools, teachers, students, and which grades).

The kits can also be loaned to other school districts. The Fossil Management Office will remain a resource to schools, but the intent is to find another organization to work with to build additional kits if there is interest.