



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FOSSIL LEAVES DATING 64 MILLION YEARS OLD FOUND ON FASTTRACKS WEST CORRIDOR CONSTRUCTION SITE**

**Denver Museum of Nature and Science digs into history of the earth below the  
West Corridor Light Rail line**

Lakewood, September 14, 2009 – While preparing the area just west of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Simms Street for retaining wall construction, Denver Transit Construction Group, the construction contractor for the RTD West Corridor and the Colorado Department of Transportation unearthed what appeared to be plant fossils.

Representatives from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science were brought in to explore the area and found fossil leaves in rock layers deposited between 64 and 66 million years ago. These layers grew during the early Paleocene epoch, just after dinosaur extinction. In this time of Earth's history, mammals were just beginning to dominate the landscape. The fossil leaves were from ancient palm trees, ferns and flowering plants deposited on a river bank and then buried with sand and mud, which eventually turned to stone. There were also some fossilized tree stumps found in the same area.

“One of the truly incredible things about our area is that we can collect fossils that have a Denver street address,” said Dr. Ian Miller, curator of paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. “Museum visitors find it amazing that discoveries like this happen right here under the footprint of the city. From a scientific perspective, this discovery adds to our knowledge about the evolution of life and the events that took place at the end of the time of the dinosaurs, their extinction and then radiation of the mammals following that extinction.” Miller was assisted on the dig Friday, Sept. 11 and Saturday, Sept. 12 by several volunteers from the museum's Paleontology Certification Program. Dr. Miller and a FasTracks representative will be available for interviews and comments; and media will be afforded the opportunity to shoot video of the fossils at the museum.

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## West Corridor Fossil Find

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While in some instances, historical finds like this could delay a construction project, there will be no delay in the West Corridor construction schedule. Since none of the fossils were new species, the museum was able to gather quality specimens within a few days. If you are interested in a video or interview opportunity, please contact Kathy Berumen at 303-626-6762 or by e-mail at [kberumen@dtcgjv.com](mailto:kberumen@dtcgjv.com) to arrange it.

FasTracks is RTD's voter-approved transit program to expand rail and bus service throughout the RTD service area. FasTracks will build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit service, add 21,000 new parking spaces, redevelop Denver Union Station and redirect bus service to better connect the eight-county District. The FasTracks investment initiative is projected to create more than 10,000 jobs during the height of construction, and will pump billions of dollars into the regional economy.

For more information, visit the FasTracks Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com).

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