



The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Fossil Road Show was held on Saturday, March 9, at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (MMNS) in Jackson. Modeled after PBS's *Antique Road Show*, the event features experts who identify fossils, including their significance and rarity, but not their monetary value. In addition, this year David Dockery (MDEQ Office of Geology) and George Phillips (MMNS) gave presentations on current paleontological research and news from the Office of Geology and the Museum.

MDEQ geologist James Starnes was one of the experts identifying fossils brought in by the public. Starnes also identified Native American artifacts as did his friend Derek



Fig. 1

Anderson, an archaeologist with the Cobb Institute at Mississippi State University (Figure 1). As part of his job mapping the state's surface geology, Starnes has identified bedrock sources used by Native Americans to knap their stone tools, something of great interest to archaeologists.

The most significant find at this year's Fossil Road Show was the tooth of a Pleistocene gomphothere (an elephant relative) found on a Mississippi River gravel bar by Vic Pin-



Fig. 2

ion (Figure 2) and his friend Matt Azlin (not pictured). To the left of Vic is his friend and fellow fossil collector Jeffrey Jones and Jeffrey's daughter, Bracey, holding the fossil tooth.





Fig. 3

Other significant moments included Nora Michael, daughter of once MMNS Director B. E. Gandy, presenting a titanotherium tooth from the Dakota badlands from her father's collection to George Phillips and the Museum. Also in Figure 3, Phillips examines a mastodon tusk fragment found and brought in by Marilyn Pettis.

The table for the North Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society included a very dedicated member of the Society, and Registered Professional Geologist Robert Langford, who made it to the show even though his house in Saltillo was flooded with a foot of water the week before (Figure 4). He did tell me that one of the first things that he removed from his house was a copy of my book, *The Geology of Mississippi*: "I put it in the cradle of my arm and took it to my Jeep and from there to dry ground." (Thanks for that testimonial!).



Fig. 4

Also, manning a table for the University of Southern Mississippi was Professor Jeremy Deans. Deans was also Vice-Chair for the Geology and Geography Division of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences this year (MDEQ's Paul Parrish was Chair).

As you can tell from these photos, the show is an interesting and learning experience with good people and unusual finds. Make plans to attend next year's show, or if you cannot make it, send a photo of your find through our [Ask a Geologist webpage](#).