Rare Mammoth Tusk Unearthed in Cub River Area

07/28/2016

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Citizen editor - Source: The Preston Citizen

The fossilized tusk of a Columbian mammoth was unearthed in a private gravel pit in the Cub River area on Tuesday, July 19.

Landowner Kasey Keller said he was excavating gravel for his driveway when he noticed what he thought was an old plastic pipe. Upon closer inspection, he decided he'd better have a better look at it.

The next morning he brought his family to see the object and decided it was a tusk. Dinosaur fans Peyton and Krew Keller, Kasey’s twin boys, were especially excited and began digging in the pit below the find.

What they discovered confirmed to the family that they needed to contact an expert. The boys uncovered another foot-long section of the tusk.

Dr. David Byer, an archeologist at Utah State University inspected the fossil on Thursday, and decided that the tusk is all that is left of a Columbian mammoth, that once roamed the grasslands surrounding Lake Bonneville. The animal is from the Pleistocene era, and would have lived 12,500 years ago or more.

The beast would have stood 12 – 15 feet tall at the shoulder and, unlike the woolly mammoth, was bare skinned. Byers said he thought the tusk was moved by water from where the animal died.

“If we could find out how old this is, we could find out when we had mammoths here,” he said. He took a small piece of the tusk to be carbon dated for its age.

At the present time, Byers said he know of no other mammoth remains found in Cache Valley. “For Cache Valley, this is fairly unusual,” he said.

Keller said archeologists from BYU have been contacted who will excavate the remains for preservation. He would then like to allow the tusk to be displayed in a museum.

Although Keller intends to continue to use his gravel pit, “I’ll definitely be more cautious this time,” he said. Byers told Keller the find was “much more rare than a needle i