BURPEE

MEMBER MAGAZINE
$10.95 | SUMMER 2025

Out of the Rock

GOING, GOING... GONE

Coming Soon!
A look at the species of Burpee's Upcoming Conservation Coorridor

MUSIC ON THE ROCK

Where the Blues Meets Burpee!
Our FREE music event on the banks of the Rock River

AXOLOTLS:

MORE THAN JUST A MINECRAFT FANTASY

BURPEE

table of contents

06 ***AXOLOTLS: More than a Minecraft Fantasy***

13 **DR. JOSH MATTHEWS**

14 **MUSIC ON THE ROCK**

SCIENCE + BURPEE + INSPIRATION

Summer 2025 Member Magazine

Where Community, Conservation, & Curiosity

CONVERGE

A Letter from the Executive Director

At Burpee Museum of Natural History, we believe in the power of discovery to connect people, inspire action, and shape a brighter future. As we step into a vibrant summer season, we're excited to share all the ways Burpee is growing, evolving, and serving our community.

This year marks the launch of our Youth Board of Trustees - a dynamic leadership initiative that empowers students to learn governance, exhibit design, and project management. Their first major project, a new exhibit exploring how Rockford residents connect to the land, will take guests on a journey from Ice Age ecology to modern conservation efforts.

Our third floor is undergoing a bold transformation. The emerging Conservation Corridor is already sparking powerful conversations around endangered species, invasive pet releases, and wildlife diseases. Guests will encounter fascinating native animals like the Hognose Snake, River Cooter, and the Alligator Snapping Turtle, and exotic endangered species like the Axolotl. This summer we will also introduce a sturgeon petting tank, offering a hands-on opportunity to connect with ancient aquatic life from our own Rock River.

This summer, Burpee is buzzing with energy! We're reopening the Nature Nook, launching a fresh season of Music on the Rock, and welcoming curious minds to summer camps and classes, including adaptive programs for learners of all abilities. Whether you're three or 93, there's something here for everyone to explore.

We're also heading into the field with our Utah Dino Dig led by Dr. Josh Mathew. Here, teachers and students will work side by side with scientists to uncover Jurassic fossils—a true adventure in science and history.

Burpee is more than a museum. It's a living classroom, a conservation catalyst, and a place where Rockford's story meets the wild wonder of the natural world. Thank you for being part of our journey.

With gratitude and excitement,

Anne Weerda

Anne Weerda | Executive Director

The Spring Peeper: Have you heard the mating chorus of these adorable tiny amphibians? Could you identify them by sound?

The Green Frog: Two of the largest frogs in Illinois are the green frog and the American bullfrog! They look and act similar and are easily confused with one another. But their sounds are quite different.

Can you hear the difference?

Tune your ear to the sounds of wildlife at:

burpee.org/frog-sounds

Field Crickets: A familiar sound of summer is the crickets chirping! What other insects could you identify from their sounds?

Test your skills with katydids, trigs, grasshoppers, and other Nothern Illinois insects.

Tune your ear to the sounds of wildlife at:

burpee.org/insects

ANCIENT FISH

Long ago, before dinosaurs went extinct, two groups of remarkable fish were already swimming the ancient waters: gars and sturgeons. With fossil lineages dating back over 200 million years, these “living fossils” have survived mass extinctions, ice ages, and the rise of continents—yet they still swim in our local rivers today, including the Rock River right outside Burpee Museum.

Though often lumped together as “prehistoric fish,” gars and sturgeons are strikingly different in both form and function - living examples of how evolution shapes survival in freshwater ecosystems.

Formidable Features: Gar vs. Sturgeon

Gars belong to the family Lepisosteidae and are defined by their long, slender bodies, needle-like teeth, and bony, diamond-shaped ganoid scales. Their jaws resemble a beak, giving them a distinctive, crocodile-like appearance. These fish are ambush predators, waiting in weedy shallows for smaller fish or crustaceans to wander close, then snapping sideways with lightning speed. Their sharp teeth and aggressive feeding behavior make them some of the fiercest native fish in the rivers of North America.

In contrast, **sturgeons**, members of the family Acipenseridae, are slow-moving, bottom-feeding giants. Instead of scales, their bodies are armored with five rows of bony plates called scutes. They have an elongated snout and a toothless mouth that extends downward to vacuum up aquatic invertebrates, snails, and the occasional fish. Though less flashy than the gar, sturgeons are remarkable in their own right: they live for decades, grow to massive sizes, and retain features from their distant ancestors—a sharklike heterocercal tail and cartilaginous skeletons.

Ancient Lineages, Modern Challenges

The gar lineage stretches back over 240 million years to the Triassic period, making them one of the oldest surviving groups of ray-finned fish. Today’s seven living gar species are the last of a once-widespread group known as Ginglymodi. Most gars can gulp air with a modified swim bladder, allowing them to survive in low-oxygen environments—a trait inherited from ancient ancestors.

Photo Source: US Fish & Wildlife

Sturgeons, with their roots in the Jurassic period, are nearly as ancient. Their close relatives, paddlefish, round out the remaining members of their order, Acipenseriformes. Unfortunately, both gars and sturgeons now face modern pressures—especially sturgeons, many of which are critically endangered due to habitat loss, pollution, and overharvesting for caviar. Their slow growth and late maturity make recovery especially difficult.

Coming Soon: Burpee's Sturgeon Touch Tank

Burpee is thrilled to announce the upcoming Sturgeon Touch Tank, opening this summer. This hands-on exhibit will feature three young sturgeon, allowing visitors to interact directly with one of the oldest and most gentle types of fish on Earth.

Lorem ipsum

Unlike most fish, sturgeons are calm, curious, and slow-moving—perfect for public interaction. They often lift their heads above the water and enjoy gentle touch along their smooth backs. Some even say they behave like aquatic puppies!

While these sturgeon are still small, they're growing quickly—and their presence in the museum is a powerful reminder of our connection to ancient ecosystems and the need for their protection.

SHOVELNOSE STURGEON
(Scaphirhynchus platorynchus)

A River Runs Through Time

Both gar and sturgeon can still be found in the Rock River today—a living link between our prehistoric past and the waterways that surround us. Visitors to Burpee can explore these ancient lineages up close and learn how even the most ancient animals are impacted by human choices. In the Rock River, you can most commonly find Shovelnose Sturgeon and Longnose Gar.

By protecting rivers, reducing pollution, and supporting sustainable fisheries, we can help ensure that these armored relics of the past will still glide beneath the surface for generations to come.

ANCIENT FISH MATCH UP:

FEATURE	GAR	STURGEON
Age of Lineage	240+ Million Years	240+ Million Years
Body Type	Long, Narrow, Bony Scales	Broad, Smooth Skin with Scutes
Feeding Style	Predator – Fast Strike	Bottom-Feeder – Slow Suction
Jaws & Teeth	Beak-Like, Sharp Teeth	No Teeth – Uses Vacuum Mouth
Air Breather	Yes – Modified Swim Bladder	No – Gill Breather Only
Behavior	Aggressive, Solitary	Gentle, Social
Interaction Type	Look, Don't Touch	Touch Tank Friendly!

AXOLOTLS:

MORE THAN JUST A MINECRAFT FANTASY

The inspiration of the Minecraft character: The Leucistic Axolotls

This summer, two new residents represent different phenotypes, or visible characteristics. One displays the wild type coloration—mottled dark gray and olive tones that resemble their natural habitat. The other is leucistic, giving her a pale pink hue with dark eyes. Though often confused with albinism, leucism refers to a partial loss of pigmentation rather than a complete absence of melanin. Leucistic animals can have patches of coloration and retain normal eye color, while albino individuals are pale throughout and typically have pink or red eyes. Both traits are inherited and can vary greatly among offspring.

SKIPPING METAMORPHOSIS

Axolotls are not typical amphibians. They are a paedomorphic species, meaning they retain juvenile features—such as external gills and an aquatic lifestyle—throughout adulthood. Unlike most salamanders, axolotls do not undergo full metamorphosis, and they reach sexual maturity while still in their larval form. Axolotls are closely related to the Eastern Tiger Salamander, a species native to Illinois, though their life histories differ significantly.

VIRTUALLY EXTINCT

Originally native to high-altitude lakes around Mexico City, including Lake Xochimilco and Lake Chalco, axolotls once thrived in a unique and stable freshwater ecosystem. But following centuries of urban expansion, habitat destruction, and pollution, their numbers have plummeted. Invasive species like tilapia and perch—introduced for food—compete with and prey upon axolotls, further worsening their decline. The draining of Mexico's ancient lakes following the Spanish conquest was a major historical blow to the species' habitat.

Today, axolotls are listed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with wild estimates ranging from only 50 to 1,000 mature individuals. They are also protected under CITES Appendix II, regulating international trade.

Axolotls are members of the tiger salamander, or Ambystoma tigrinum, species complex, along with all other Mexican species. This includes the Illinois Tiger Salamander (as seen on the cover).

REGENERATIVE POWERS

Despite their status in the wild, axolotls are widely bred in captivity and in research labs, where they are studied for their astonishing ability to regenerate body parts. Axolotls can regrow limbs, gills, spinal cord segments, and even parts of their brain and eyes. While this ability diminishes with age, it never fully disappears. Scientists study these traits for potential medical breakthroughs in tissue regeneration and healing.

Donate to support the new Axolotyls!

burpee.org/donate

At Burpee Museum, the arrival of these two GFP axolotls will offer visitors a rare look into both the natural biology and the genetic science of this remarkable species. They will be part of a broader exhibit exploring amphibian adaptation, genetics, and conservation.

Going, Going... GONE?

A Look at the Species of Burpee's Conservation Corridor

By the time a species disappears, the story has already ended. The final chapter may end with a whisper, a flash of feathers last seen decades ago, or a once-common turtle's shell now brittle with disease. At Burpee Museum, the new Conservation Corridor invites guests to step into the stories of the animals fighting to avoid that silent vanishing act—and to learn from those that did not make it.

This summer, the exhibit opens with a focus on three urgent conservation conversations: emerging disease in wild turtles, the threat of invasive species, and the choices we can make to help!

Red-eared Slider
Trachemys scripta elegans

Blanding's Turtle
Emydoidea blandingii

Shell Shock: *The Hidden Threat Facing Native Turtles*

Turtles have survived since the time of the dinosaurs—but now, they face microscopic threats they can not hide from. One of the most concerning is a newly identified fungus, *Emydomyces testavorans*, currently impacting turtle populations in Illinois and beyond.

This fungus has particularly impacted the Blanding's turtles, a species already listed as threatened in Illinois. These turtles, with their charming yellow chins and helmet-shaped shells, are hardy wetland survivors—but the fungus eats away at their shells, exposing bone and inviting deadly infections.

Distinguished by its bright yellow chin and throat, the Blanding's turtle is a mid-sized aquatic turtle with a domed, helmet-shaped shell speckled with yellow. This species, native to northern Illinois and parts of the Midwest, thrives in marshes, bogs, and vegetated lakes. They are excellent swimmers but spend time on land, especially during nesting season in June and July. These omnivorous turtles feed on crayfish, insects, plants, and amphibi-ans—and can live over 70 years in the wild.

Through head-start programs, many Blanding's turtles have been raised and released in Illinois. Unfortunately, Blanding's turtles are very susceptible to *Emydomyces testavorans*, a fungus causing severe shell disease. It starts with small lesions and eventually eats through the bone, exposing the turtle to systemic infections and often death. Once thought to be limited to captive turtles, this fungus is now showing up in wild populations—raising the alarm among conservationists and biologists.

Red-Eared Slider: *Popular Pet, Problematic Release*

Perhaps the most recognizable turtle in the U.S., the red-eared slider is a common pet—easily identified by the red stripes behind its eyes. Native to the southeastern U.S., this adaptable turtle is now found across North America, thanks largely to human activity.

Sliders are often purchased as small, adorable pets. But when they outgrow their tanks or owners lose interest, too many are released into local waterways. That's where the danger begins.

Red-eared sliders have now been identified as potential asymptomatic carriers of the deadly fungus threatening Blanding's turtles. Though the sliders themselves show no signs of illness, they may silently spread the pathogen into wild populations—turning pet abandonment into a conservation crisis.

Letting a pet turtle go "free" may feel kind, but it's incredibly harmful. Not only is the turtle unlikely to survive, it may spread disease, outcompete native species, and disrupt ecosystems. Wild animals belong in the wild; pets belong at home, in responsible care.

Burpee's River Cooter: *A Slow Climb Back From the Brink*

Native to the sloughs and oxbows of major rivers, the River Cooter is a striking aquatic turtle, measuring 9–13 inches long with yellow circular markings and a distinctive "C" shape on its shell scutes. They are herbivorous grazers but also eat mollusks, crustaceans, and insects. Though strong swimmers, they love to bask on logs—and are known for their shy but inquisitive nature.

Once widespread, River Cooters are now endangered in Illinois due to habitat loss and pollution. Burpee's resident cooter, nicknamed Scooter, was found on Forest Preserve land in Winnebago County. Likely a released pet, she was too far north to survive in the wild. She was also very sick. While she tested negative for *Emydomyces*, she suffered from septisis, and advanced shell disease in six locations on her shell. After nearly a year of treatment, quarantined at Executive Director Anne Weerda's home, Scooter is recovering—and with continued progress, will soon greet guests as an ambassador for her species in the Conservation Corridor.

From Common to Gone: *A Timeline of Conservation Status*

The Conservation Corridor shows guests what it means to move from thriving to threatened—and why education matters more than ever:

- **Abundant:** Common Snapping Turtle – still holding on, but not immune to pollution and habitat encroachment.
- **Threatened:** Hognose Snake – surviving in shrinking ranges.
- **Endangered:** River Cooter, Alligator Snapping Turtle, Axolotl – at risk of vanishing without action.
- **Extinct:** Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Passenger Pigeon, Carolina Parakeet – lost, despite once thriving.

Western Hognosed Snake
Heterodon nasicus

Extinction Echoes: *The Ivory-billed Woodpecker*

Towering at nearly 20 inches tall with a signature white flash on each wing, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker once thrived in the old-growth forests of the southeastern U.S. But when its habitat was cut down, its numbers plummeted. Despite hopeful sightings in the early 2000s, no confirmed recordings have been made in over a decade, and the species is now presumed extinct.

Its story serves as a haunting reminder: even large, iconic animals can disappear when we wait too long.

Why Conservation Education Matters

Burpee's Conservation Corridor isn't just about animals - it's about action. By understanding the biology, threats, and ripple effects of human behavior, guests are empowered to become protectors of our planet. Whether it's choosing a pet wisely, preserving wetland habitats, or supporting conservation programs, each decision matters.

Because once something is gone... it's too late to bring it back.

NATURE'S ARMORED AMBUSH PREDITORS

Illinois is home to two species of snapping turtles - Chelydra serpentina, the Common Snapping Turtle, and Macrochelys temminckii, the Alligator Snapping Turtle. Both are members of the family Chelydridae, a group found only in North and South America. These large, aquatic reptiles are notable for their powerful jaws, rugged appearance, and long life spans.

Common Snapping Turtles

Widely distributed throughout Illinois, the Common Snapping Turtle adults typically measure 8 to 12 inches in length and weigh between 10 and 35 pounds. They have large heads, thick limbs, and long, saw-toothed tails. The top of the shell, or carapace, often supports algae and features three faint ridges. The bottom shell, or plastron, is relatively small, limiting the turtle's ability to fully withdraw into its shell—a key distinction from Caroline, or Mr. T, Box Turtles living at Burpee.

Common snapping turtles inhabit nearly any permanent body of water across the state and are frequently seen on land during spring migration or when seeking nesting sites. While they can display defensive behavior out of water—especially if approached—the Common Snapper is typically more passive when submerged. Try telling that to ***Bowser***, Burpee's snappy and aggressive Common Snapping Tutrle. In the wild, this turtle spends much of its time on the bottom, ambushing prey or scavenging. During the winter, it hibernates buried in mud, often communally.

One example of this species resides at Burpee Museum. Nicknamed Bowser, he has lived at the museum since 2017, after his previous owner could no longer care for him due to illness. Bowser is housed individually and is part of the museum's educational efforts focused on native reptile species.

Alligator Snapping Turtles

The Alligator Snapping Turtle is significantly larger and more rare. This species can grow up to 26 inches in length and may exceed 100 pounds in weight. It is identifiable by the three distinct ridges running down its heavily armored carapace and its prominent, hooked beak. Like the Common Snapper, it cannot fully retract into its shell.

Native to large river systems and permanent freshwater bodies, the Alligator Snapper is a nocturnal predator that prefers to remain still on the bottom of its habitat. It uses a specialized adaptation to hunt: a worm-like appendage on its tongue that it wiggles to attract fish.

Alligator Snapping Turtle
Macrochelys temminckii

Common Snapping Turtle
Chelydra serpentina

When prey ventures too close, the turtle snaps its jaws shut with tremendous force. This species reaches reproductive maturity around age 11 and is long-lived—some individuals are known to live more than 70 years.

Due to habitat degradation and overharvesting, the Alligator Snapping Turtle is listed as state endangered in Illinois. Conservation efforts include habitat protection, population monitoring, and regulation of the pet and food trades.

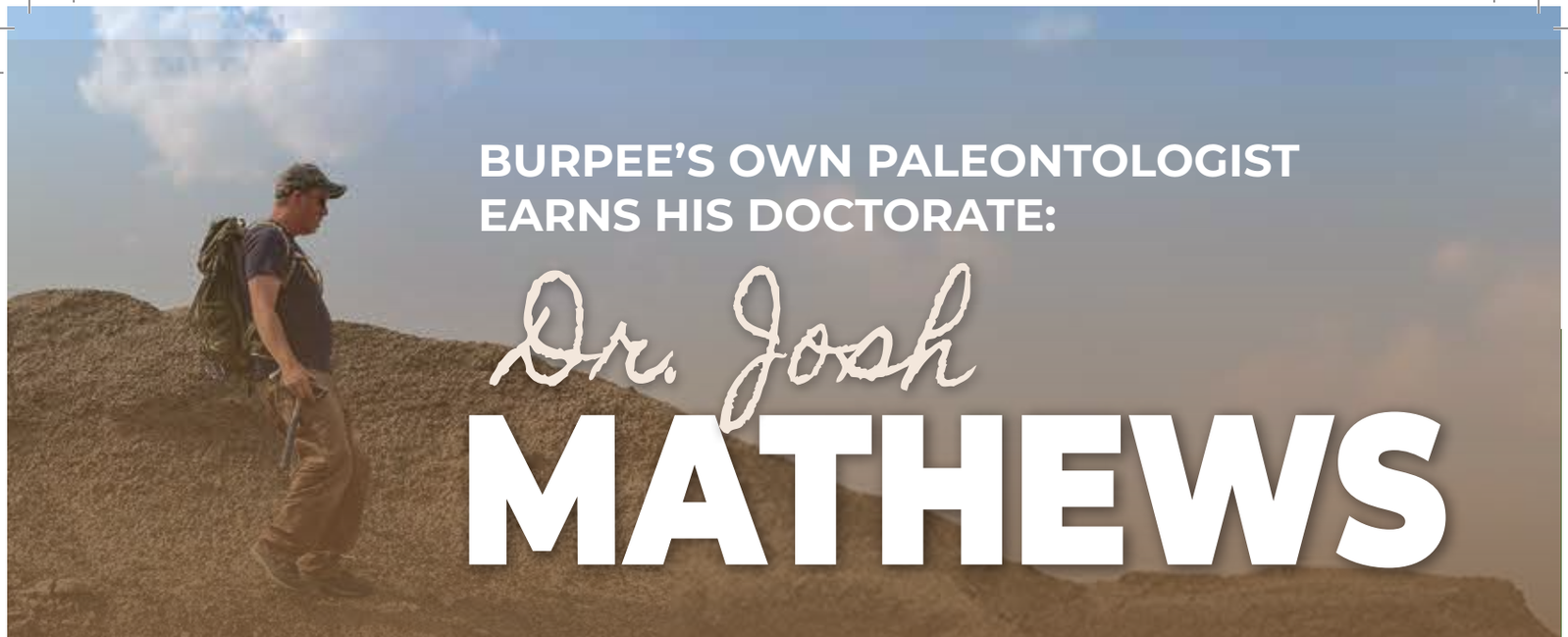
Burpee Snapping Turtles

Burpee Museum is preparing to welcome a 50-year-old Alligator Snapping Turtle in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This individual will be housed separately from Bowser in its own custom aquatic enclosure, reflecting the territorial nature and size of the species. Like Bowser, this turtle will help visitors learn about the ecological role and conservation needs of these important reptiles.

Turtles, are part of a broader picture of diversity. Of the 260 turtle species found worldwide, 17 are native to Illinois. These animals occupy a wide range of habitats—forests, marshes, lakes, rivers—and many face threats from land development, pollution, and illegal trade.

Among the native and non-native reptiles and amphibians at Burpee—alongside exotic snakes and lizards—snapping turtles stand out as reminders of ancient lineages and the importance of freshwater ecosystems.

Through live animal exhibits and conservation education, Burpee continues to share their story with the public.



BURPEE'S OWN PALEONTOLOGIST EARNS HIS DOCTORATE:

Dr. Josh MATHEWS

After more than two decades of dedication to paleontology, research, and education, Burpee Museum is proud to congratulate Dr. Josh Mathews, newly minted PhD in Biological Sciences from Northern Illinois University.

Dr. Mathews, the **Engelhardt-Moore Director of Paleontology** at Burpee, has long been a cornerstone of our scientific community. His journey with Burpee began in 2004 as a volunteer in the fossil preparation lab. Just a year later, he was part of the field team that unearthed "Homer," a sub-adult Triceratops in southeast Montana. That site would become the centerpiece of his Master's research at NIU and the beginning of a career dedicated to unraveling Earth's deep past.

Transantarctic Vertebrate Paleontology Project

Josh's passion for fieldwork and fossil preparation led him to Augustana College, where he served as Chief Fossil Preparator and Research Assistant to renowned paleontologist Dr. William Hammer. While at Augustana, Josh joined the elite Transantarctic Vertebrate Paleontology Project, trekking to Antarctica during the winter of 2010–2011 in search of ancient vertebrates. The fossils he helped recover from the icy wilderness now reside in collections that continue to shape our understanding of prehistoric life.

MICORVERTIBRATES OF THE UPPER HELL CREEK FORMATION:

Unidentified Lizard Dentry

Multituberculate Mammal Tooth

Unidentified Species of Salamander Jaw

Scapaherpeton tectum atlas (Salamander Vertebrae)

A Circular Vertebra
Dr. Mathews points to a vertebrae that can barely be seen through the top dirt. He will carefully pull it out with the tool in his hand (awl) during surface

Once out of the soil, the vertebra is a bit more visible, but very tiny and delicate

Microfossils are TINY!
The dark item that almost looks like wood is a jaw that was surface collected in 2023

A Doctoral Journey

In 2014, Josh returned to NIU to pursue his PhD under the mentorship of Dr. Karen Samonds and later Dr. Virginia Naples. His doctoral research focused on the biostratigraphy and paleoecology of the Hell Creek Formation in Carter County, Montana—one of the most fossil-rich areas in North America. Over nearly 10 years, Josh painstakingly analyzed more than **25,000 microvertebrate specimens** from **2,500 lbs of sediment**, documenting biodiversity changes in the final 1.5–2 million years of the Cretaceous Period. His work highlights not the towering *T. rex,* but the sometimes overlooked creatures underfoot—salamanders, frogs, fish, and tiny dinosaur remains—that quietly shaped ancient ecosystems.

His dissertation, titled "*Geology, Paleoecology, and Vertebrate Biostratigraphy of the Hell Creek Formation, Carter County, Montana, USA,*" breaks new ground in understanding how ecosystems evolved across the K/Pg boundary, the moment when non-avian dinosaurs disappeared. By organizing fossil localities from oldest to youngest, Dr. Mathews traces ecological change leading up to Earth's most famous mass extinction.

Burpee is Lucky to Have Josh!

Alongside his research, Josh has remained a committed educator, leading Burpee's dinosaur field programs and mentoring students and volunteers. He's been instrumental in guiding Burpee's paleontology team and spearheading expeditions that combine rigorous science with public engagement.

Josh's achievement is a **tremendous** milestone—not only for him, but for Burpee and the broader scientific community. His work adds an invaluable chapter to the story of North American paleontology and exemplifies the museum's mission to inspire lifelong learning through science.

Congratulations, Dr. Mathews! Your dedication, perseverance, and curiosity have not only advanced the field—you've inspired a generation of young scientists who walk the halls of Burpee in your footsteps.

Let's all raise a rock hammer and give a hearty cheer to one of our own!

MUSIC ON THE ROCK

WHERE THE BLUES MEETS BURPEE!

Warm summer evenings, the steady flow of the Rock River, and the soulful sound of blues drifting through the air—welcome to Music on the Rock, the Burpee Museum's free concert series that turns Wednesday nights into something unforgettable.

From June 4 through August 20, the Burpee Museum's gorgeous outdoor theater becomes a hub of rhythm, community, and summer fun. Starting at 5:30 PM, guests are invited to bring their blankets or lawn chairs and settle in for live performances from some of the finest blues musicians around. And don't worry about a little rain—Burpee's got it covered with indoor backup plans, so the music never misses a beat.

This event isn't just about the music.

Each week, educational pop-up events add a splash of science to the scene. Families can explore rotating topics that range from Ice Age sloths to hands-on animal encounters with Burpee's live collection. It's learning disguised as entertainment—curious kids and adults alike will love diving into the natural world between sets.

A SPECIAL HIGHLIGHT

Join us on **July 2,** when **Midland States Bank** joins as the Financial Empowerment Sponsor. They'll be bringing their legendary "**Money Tornado**"—a swirling booth of flying bills that's as fun as it is inspiring. Come ready to learn about smart saving and maybe even snag a little extra cash!

There's food and drink available for purchase, laughter in the air, and plenty of space to stretch out and soak in the evening vibes. Whether you're a music lover, a science enthusiast, or just someone who enjoys a good sunset, Music on the Rock offers something for everyone!

2025 CONCERT LINEUP

REVEREND RAVEN & THE CSABS *(WITH WESTSIDE ANDY)*

JUNE 4

JOHN PRIMER

JUNE 11

SHERYL YOUNGBLOOD

JUNE 18

MIKE WHEELER

JUNE 25

IVY FORD

MIDLAND BANK: FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT SPONSOR

JULY 2

STEFAN HILLESHEIM

JULY 9

MISSISSIPPI HEAT

JULY 16

ALBERT CASTIGLIA

JULY 23

DOUG DEMING & THE JEWEL TONES

JULY 30

DIG 3

AUGUST 6

SEAN MCKEE

AUGUST 13

LIL' ED & THE BLUES IMPERIALS

AUGUST 20

EVENT INFO AT A GLANCE:

Where: Burpee Museum of Natural History
737 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL

When: Wednesdays: June 4–Aug 20
5:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Admission: FREE!

Bring: Chairs, blankets, and your dancing shoes

Extras: Weekly educational themes, food trucks, and community fun

Summer to Remember

BURPEE
museum of natural history

Sign Up Here!

Burpee Museum's Summer Camps and Classes are the ultimate adventure for the curious! Whether your young explorer loves dinosaurs, wildlife, rocks, or art, we've got a camp for you!

Zoology Camp

June 23rd - 27th 10am-3pm | Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & Up

Explore the Animal Kingdom! Interact with our live animals, and analyze real animal skeletons to uncover key adaptations, and embark on hands-on data collection through Citizen Science adventures working with real, local wildlife.

Non Members $240 | Members $200 *(scholorships available by application)*

Science Innovation Camp

July 14th - 18th 10am-3pm | Age Groups: 12 & Up

Calling makers and innovators! Learn to 3D scan and print to make tools or museum replicas, explore animal behavior with high-speed videography, learn the art of insect pinning and preserving animals, and harness tech tools for cutting-edge science communication. This hands-on camp is perfect for budding innovators ready to blend science and technology!

Non Members $240 | Members $200 *(scholorships available by application)*

Paleontology Camp

July 28th - August 1st 10am-3pm | Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & Up

Join real paleontologists just returning home from Burpee's dinosaur quarry in Utah. Explore the biology of dinosaurs as you work with real fossils, examine the first plants and animals of Earth, learn about prehistoric diversity in an internationally recognized paleontology program.

Non Members $240 | Members $200 *(scholorships available by application)*

Carl's Critter Corner

Summer Mondays @ 1pm

Join our critter expert, Carl, for a 45-minute hands-on adventure with amazing animals! Explore reptiles, amphibians, crustaceans, and arthropods through fun encounters, fascinating facts, themed crafts, and surprises along the way.

Perfect for families with young kids (and anyone gentle and curious)

Single Day Adventure Classes:

Dino Days Class #1
June 6, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & Up

Dino Days Class #2
June 18, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & up

Non Members $70 | Members $45

Aquatic Days Class #1
June 19, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & Up

Aquatic Days Class #2
July 10, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
Age Groups: 7-11 | 12 & Up

Non Members $70 | Members $45

Adventure Quests:

Zoo Quest
June 25, 10:30 am-12:30 pm
Age Groups: 4-6

Dino Quest
July 30, 10:30 am-12:30 pm
Age Groups: 4-6

Non Members $50 | Members $25

Accessible Adventures in Science

Animal Adventures
Weds: June 4, 11, 18, 25 | 4:30-5:30
Thurs: June 5, 12, 19, 26 | 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Non Members $20 | Members $10

Dino Adventures
Weds: July 9, 16 | 4:30-5:30 PM
Thurs: July 10, 17 | 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Non Members $20 | Members $10

Backpacking with Burpee

ALL AGES - Saturdays @ 10am **$7 per person**

Adventure Dates:

- June 7: Birding and Bird Calls @ Colored Sands
- July 12: Aquatic Biology @ Seward Bluffs Forest Preserve
- August 2: Insects @ Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve
- September 6: Environmental Art @ Blackhawk Springs Forest Preserve
- October 4: Fossils @ Pecatonica River Forest Preserve

Bring Burpee to your School or Summer Camp!

Burpee's got wheels and we can't wait to bring the fun to you!

UNEARTHING THE PAST:

DISCOVERIES AT THE HANKSVILLE-BURPEE DINOSAUR QUARRY

Nestled in the heart of Utah's desert, the Hanksville-Burpee Dinosaur Quarry offers a unique glimpse into the Late Jurassic period, approximately 150 million years ago. This site, part of the Morrison Formation, has become a focal point for paleontologists and enthusiasts alike, revealing a rich tapestry of prehistoric life.

A Treasure Trove of Fossils

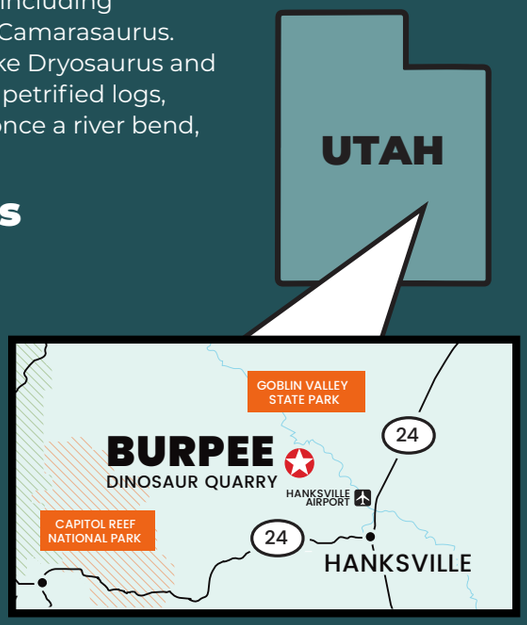
Since its discovery in 2008, the quarry has yielded an impressive array of fossils. Researchers have uncovered remains from at least 15 different dinosaur species, including long-necked sauropods like Diplodocus, Apatosaurus, Barosaurus, and Camarasaurus. Predatory theropods such as Allosaurus, as well as smaller herbivores like Dryosaurus and the armored Mymoorapelta, have also been identified. The presence of petrified logs, freshwater clams, and other invertebrates suggests that this area was once a river bend, where sediment and organic material accumulated over time.

Join the Exploration: Free Guided Tours

From May 12 to June 20, 2025, the Burpee Museum of Natural History invites the public to experience this active dig site firsthand. Free guided tours are available Monday through Friday at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m., and on Saturdays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Visitors will have the opportunity to observe paleontologists at work, learn about excavation techniques, and see dinosaur fossils in the rock. The quarry is located at the end of Cow Dung Road, off Utah State Road 24 in Hanksville, Utah. The road is unpaved, and the final approach requires a short walk beyond a fence to reach the site.

No registration is required for these tours, making it an accessible adventure for families, students, and dinosaur enthusiasts.



For more information, visit the Burpee Museum's official website at burpee.org

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