

10-year-old boy trips over 1.2M-year-old fossil in desert

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A boy's misstep on a family hike in New Mexico has given the world a prehistoric wonder.

Ten-year-old Jude Sparks was on a desert hike in Las Cruces in November when he tripped over what turned out to be the fossilized tusk of a 1.2 million-year-old elephant-like creature, called a stegomastodon.

The family contacted New Mexico State University professor Peter Houde, and he and a team from the university spent a week digging up the skull in May after getting permission from the landowner.

Houde estimates the entire skull weighs about a ton.

He expects the [university](#) to put the skull on exhibit after it's studied and reconstructed, which could take years.

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