

US construction crew finds triceratops skeleton in Colorado (Update)

August 30 2017



This Monday, Aug. 28, 2017 photo provided by the city of Thornton, Colo., shows a fossil of a triceratops dinosaur discovered by construction workers on Aug. 25 in Thornton. Denver Museum of Nature and Science curator of dinosaurs Joe Sertich says the find is one of three triceratops skulls found along the Colorado Front Range and has likely been there for at least 66 million years. (Lisa Watson/City of Thornton, Colorado, via AP)

Construction crews breaking ground on a new fire and police station

north of Denver, Colorado have unearthed a 66-million-year-old triceratops skeleton, sparking a flurry of scientific interest in this iconic herbivore.

Diggers working on a site in Thornton—population 137,000—encountered an immovable object on August 25.

One of the workers thought it might be a fossil, so they called the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Curator Joseph Sertich arrived at the scene and identified the bones as belonging to a triceratops.

"This is a pretty small triceratops," Sertich said in a Facebook Live broadcast from the work site on Wednesday.

This fossil is about half the size of triceratops unearthed in Montana and North and South Dakota.

"We don't really know why," Sertich said.

"Even though we have hundreds of triceratops from the American West, we only have three good skulls. And this might be one of the best skeletons to tell us why Denver triceratops are smaller than all of their cousins everywhere else."

Paleontologists have found a horn, a shoulder blade, parts of the frill, tailbone and other skeletal remains.

Experts will be digging for the next couple of weeks with brushes and small tools to uncover as many of the bones as possible.



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"All these bones are going to go back to the Denver Museum, we are going to put them right up in our window," Sertich said.

Visitors to the museum could see them as early as this weekend, he said.

Another triceratops was found in 2003 about two miles (three kilometers) away.

"It was found in exactly the same way. A bulldozer operator plowed through it, took half of it away but the other half was perfect and we

were able to salvage that and take it back to the museum," Sertich said.



This Monday, Aug. 28, 2017 photo provided by the city of Thornton, Colo., shows workers unearthing a fossil of a triceratops dinosaur discovered by construction workers on Aug. 25 in Thornton. Denver Museum of Nature and Science curator of dinosaurs Joe Sertich says the find is one of three triceratops skulls found along the Colorado Front Range and has likely been there for at least 66 million years. (Lisa Watson/City of Thornton, Colorado, via AP)

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