

January 10, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to recommend Black Hills Institute of Geological Research (BHI) for any project that involves the excavation, preparation, conservation, molding and casting, specimen design, mounting, or purchase of paleontological materials.

The Houston Museum of Nature and Science has had a long and successful relationship with BHI that began more than 20 years ago. At that time we were looking for specimens to be used in a new exhibit "Journey through Time". Through HMNS direct purchase, BHI supplied many of the specimens for this exhibit which opened in 1994. Their principals were also very helpful in recommending specimens that were supplied by other entities.

Among the more important items that were acquired from BHI for the 1994 exhibit included adult and juvenile free-mount skeletons of the duckbilled dinosaur, *Edmontosaurus annectens*. The skeletons were mounted in a modular fashion that allowed our staff to easily move them to alternate locations. These skeletons are now an important part of our 2012 Exhibit.

One of the most important specimens slated for our 1994 exhibit was a very large and historical mount of an original skeleton of *Diplodocus hayi* that had become one of the icons of our Museum. We entrusted BHI with the daunting task of helping with a plan to move this very heavy mount to its new place in the Hall. In addition BHI preformed a complete conservation of the specimen, inspecting and repairing any damage as well as adding new conservation materials. This conservation also included a complete remount of the tail, getting it off the ground and above the heads of our visitors. Today this revised mount is as vital as the day it was completed in 1993.

Based on our previous experience in working with and through the BHI team, we selected them to coordinate all aspects of the major mount preparations (real bone and custom casts) along with their installation. They were also our only contractor for our most relocation and reinstallation of our Paleontology Hall which opened to the public in June 2012.

BHI was an integral part of the planning of our new 2012 Hall, brought in early to work with our designers and the Museum staff to help with the selection of specimens that were to become part of this new 30,000 sq. ft. exhibit. The Museum relied upon BHI to locate and help procure appropriate original and cast specimens and to coordinate and carry out the preparation, conservation and mounting of the newly acquired material.

Two of the most significant additions to our large mount displays feature acquisitions identified by and procured in coordination with BHI: an original *Triceratops horridus*

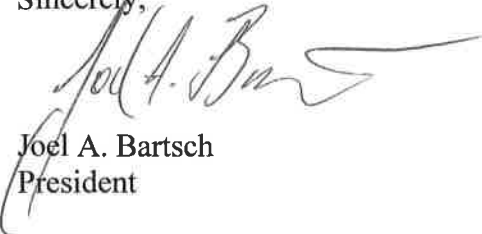
skeleton and an original Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton, both taken from excavation to exhibit by BHI staff. These were mounted specifically to support scientific study in that the mount allows for the removal of any single bone from the mount, within a matter of minutes. In fact, each of these original mounts may be completely disassembled and put up in a new location in a single day.

In total, BHI mounted more than 40 large original and cast skeletons of dinosaurs, reptiles and mammals for the new Morian Hall of Paleontology. BHI staff was present for the final stage of the construction of our new hall, and installed or assisted in the installation of most of the larger specimens. They were called upon to repair and conserve many items, transferred from the 1994 exhibit and from our collections.

The conservation work was completed quickly and efficiently, using the best possible standards.

Throughout our interactions we have relied upon the knowledge and expertise of the owners and staff of the Black Hills Institute of Geological Research for the engineering, science, conservation and exhibition of fossil specimens. BHI staff are team players and can be counted upon to solve difficult problems for the benefit of everyone concerned. I recommend Black Hills Institute for any project that can take advantage of their experience, knowledge and expertise. I cannot recommend Black Hills Institute more highly.

Sincerely,



Joel A. Bartsch  
President