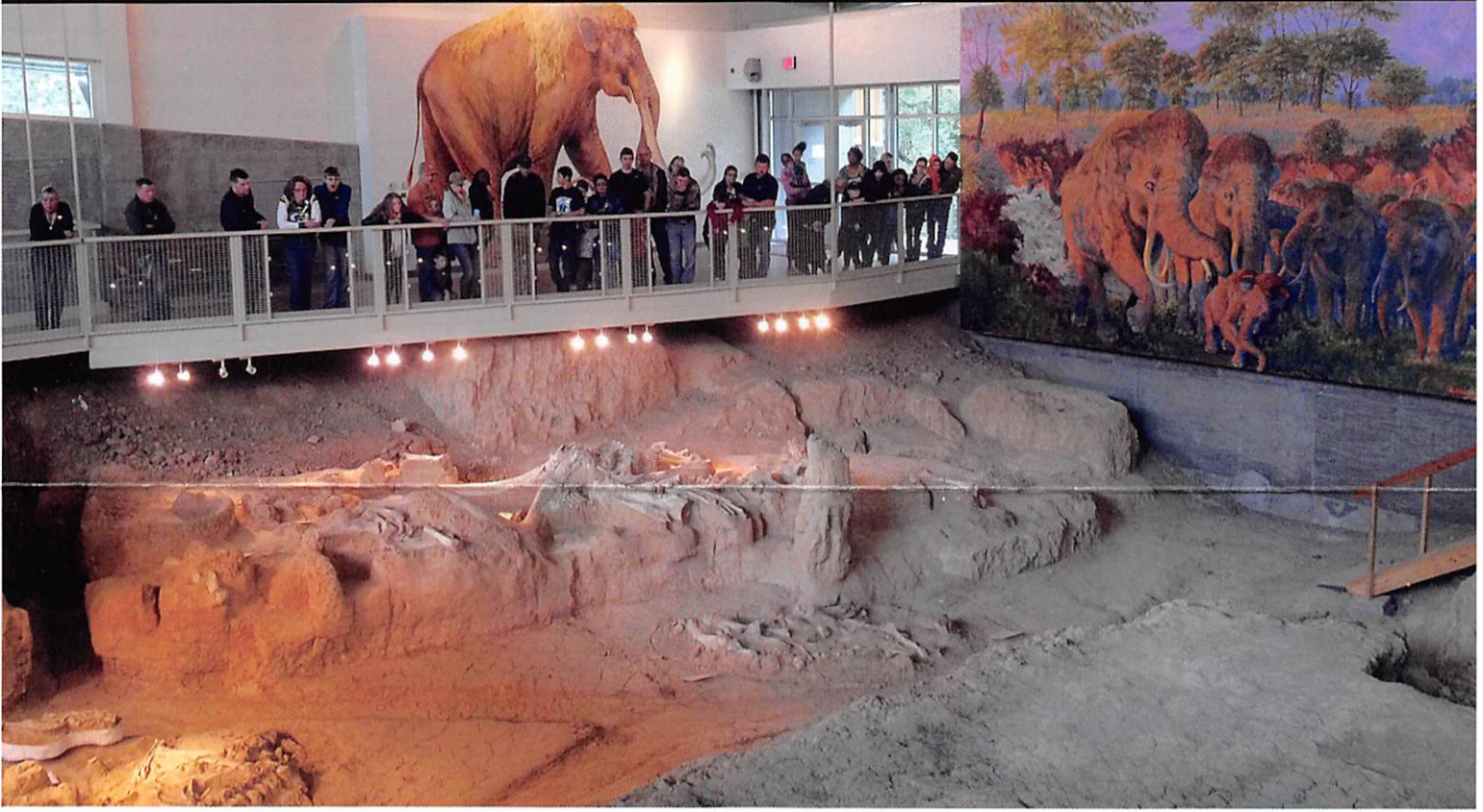


# Waco Mammoth National Monument



In 2015, President Barack Obama issued a Presidential Proclamation making the Waco Mammoth Site a new unit of the National Park System. Designated as the Waco Mammoth National Monument, this very special paleontological site represents the nation's only recorded discovery of a nursery herd of Columbian mammoths.

## Background

In 1978, two men discovered an unusual bone in a ravine near the Bosque River, within the northern outskirts of Waco, Texas. They took the find to Baylor University's Strecker Museum, where museum staff identified it as part of a Columbian mammoth femur. This now extinct species lived during the Pleistocene Epoch (more commonly known as the Ice Age) and inhabited North America from southern Canada to as far south as Costa Rica.

Strecker Museum staff quickly organized a team to investigate the site. For the next 20 years, staff, students, and volunteers spent countless hours excavating the Waco Mammoth Site. Their efforts uncovered a nursery herd of Columbian mammoths that appear to have drowned together in a single natural event between 65,000 and 72,000 years ago. The excavation effort also

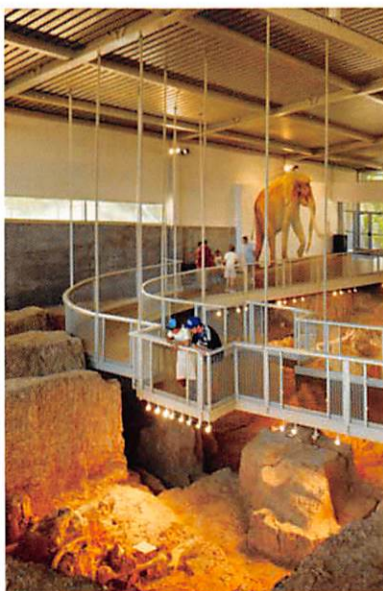
discovered the remains of additional mammoths and other Ice Age animals, including a Western camel, saber-toothed cat, dwarf antelope, American alligator, and giant tortoise.

While most of the excavated bones are now housed at Baylor University's Mayborn Museum Complex, exposed bones remain *in situ* (still in their original position within the bone bed), which have been protected in recent years by a climate-controlled "dig shelter," allowing for both public viewing and further scientific study.

Since 2009, the site has been open to the public through the generous efforts of the City of Waco, Baylor University, and the Waco Mammoth Foundation. The National Park Service is honored to join this productive partnership and officially recognize the Waco Mammoth Site as a national treasure.



Volunteer Ralph Vinson  
PHOTO: DOMINICK J. CIRINCIONE



Dig shelter interior



Columbian mammoth tusks *in situ*

## What is a Columbian Mammoth?

- Mammoths originated in the Old World and entered North America 1.8 million years ago. The Columbian mammoth (*Mammuthus columbi*) is descended from these early immigrants and lived during the Pleistocene Epoch before becoming extinct about 10,000 years ago.
- The Columbian mammoth was one of the largest mammals to have lived during the Pleistocene Epoch. Other Ice Age animals that lived during this time included giant ground sloths, short-faced bears, saber-tooth cats and giant beavers.
- The Columbian mammoth is a distant relative of the woolly mammoth, but woolly mammoths lived farther north in much colder regions.
- Columbian mammoths grew to more than 14 feet in height at the shoulder and weighed up to 10 tons (20,000 pounds). They stood two to four feet taller and weighed up to 8,000 pounds more than woolly mammoths.
- Columbian mammoths share many similar characteristics with our modern day elephants of Asia and Africa. Some of these features include having 4 teeth in their mouths at a given time, one above and below on each side of the skull and jaw. Mammoths had six sets of teeth during their lifetimes, which could span up to 75 years. The mammoth's tusks are modified incisor teeth and grew as long as 16 feet, weighing up to 200 pounds each. And Columbian mammoths walked on their tiptoes, an internal sponge-like pad behind the bones of their feet cushioned their immense weight.
- Mammoths probably spent up to 20 hours a day eating between 300 to 700 pounds of grass and other plants. As a result, mammoths produced around 400 pounds of dung daily.

## Partnership Park

This new unit of the National Park System is managed in partnership with the National Park Service, the City of Waco, and Baylor University. The national monument features a climate-controlled dig shelter with a suspended walkway that provides an overhead view of several paleontological specimens including female mammoths, a bull mammoth, and a camel. Other areas currently open to guests include a visitor contact station, gift shop, and picnic area.



The "Big Dig" class

## Planning Your Visit

**Address:**  
Waco Mammoth  
National Monument  
6220 Steinbeck Bend Road  
Waco Texas 76708

**Website:**  
[www.nps.gov/WACO](http://www.nps.gov/WACO)

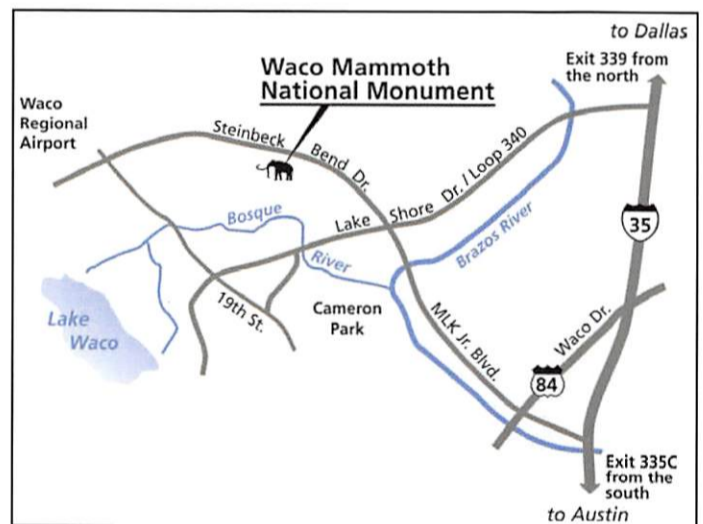
**Phone:** (254) 750-7946

**Operating Hours:**  
The park is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

### Guided Tour Fees:

Adults: \$5  
Seniors (age 62+): \$4  
Military and Educators (with ID): \$4  
Students (ages 13-18 or with college ID): \$4  
Children (ages 4-12): \$3, (under age 4): Free

**Please note: National Park passes do not apply to guided tour fees.** Please support the City of Waco's assistance in our preservation mission as access to the *in situ* fossil bed is by guided tour only while planning for future management of this new unit is developed.



Dig shelter exterior

