



North Carolina Fossil Festival  
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## 2026 North Carolina Fossil Festival *Presented by the Aurora Fossil Museum* FACT SHEET

Thousands of people (over 12,000 in 2025) participate annually in the Award-winning North Carolina Fossil Festival in Aurora, NC. Participation reflects that fossil hunting has become a popular activity for thousands of individuals and families across the region and nation, and the Aurora Fossil Museum has become a mecca for hunters. The museum provides free fossil hunting and STEM education opportunities for people locally, regionally, and online. Annually, over 38,000 people visit the Aurora Fossil Museum to *Dig the Past* with us.

The North Carolina Fossil Festival celebrates the state's natural history and furthers the museum's goal of educating the public regarding natural history in an enjoyable and engaging way. The 2026 North Carolina Fossil Festival will occur on **May 23 & 24, 2026**, and will include wide-ranging, accessible, and fun-filled activities for individuals, families, and children, including:

- Search for ancient shark teeth and fossils in piles delivered by the local phosphate mine.
- Live music on the North Carolina Fossil Festival stage.
- Over 60 vendors, including food, fossils, minerals, crafts, business, and community organizations.
- STEAM Zone, featuring science-based activities by nonprofit organizations representing museums and science centers across North Carolina
- Paleo Zone, featuring fossils displays by members of the North Carolina Fossil Club, the Smithsonian, and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences.
- Dino Zone, featuring life-size puppets and exhibits.
- Brew Zone, featuring special edition craft brews created by area breweries.
- Kid Zone, featuring fun and free activities throughout both days.
- LOGIC Teen Science Café.
- Mining & Engineering Zone, featuring mining equipment static displays.
- 5K Fossil Run and Jurassic Classic Bike Ride.
- Veterans & First Responders Appreciation to honor those who serve.
- Silent auction featuring fossils and natural history items.

*The North Carolina Fossil Festival proceeds and sponsorships benefit the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Aurora Fossil Museum Foundation, Inc. (Tax ID: 56-2181393), which allows for public educational and scientific outreach regarding the unique fossil record "right under our feet."*

