

FREE AND OPEN ACCESS VALIDATION FORM

Some academic paleontologists in the modern era fear that scientifically significant fossil specimens, held in private hands, may become inaccessible to researchers. Some argue that private individuals or private museums might require a fee for researchers in order to study these specimens. Many believe that specimens held in private hands can not be adequately tracked and might become “lost to science” either by disappearing through sale, trade, loan or inheritance, or by the private title holders refusing access. It is due to these fears that many mainstream paleontological journals now refuse to publish on any privately held specimens. Whether these fears are real or imaginary is a moot debate. The result of this publication ban has resulted in nearly every privately held specimen to become “lost to science”, since no data or very little data on them CAN BE PUBLISHED on in the mainstream scientific journals until the specimen is sold or donated to a public institution. Since many important specimens are held in private hands and some will no doubt remain private indefinitely, a great deal of information that could be researched is not being researched sufficiently. This stalemate however, has mutually beneficial solutions. The following pledge is part of that solution and meets one of the requirements for publication in the JPS (“B”) and one of the ten options (#1) to verify privately held specimens.

If you or your private museum is the title holder to any scientifically significant fossils, signing this document may help to alleviate those fears and address those concerns. Consider this, in a sense, a petition or a declaration to all willing to listen, that your fossils are open for study by any and all qualified researchers without fee or direct monetary reward. It is hoped that by signing this document and pledging open access, that not only will your reputation, credibility and business increase, but so will the view of commercial paleontology in general. Thank you for your consideration and your contributions to the field of paleontology.

I _____ (please print name) the _____ (title) of _____ (company name or museum name), solemnly pledge to provide all qualified researchers free and open access to all (check here) or the following attached list of (or check here) scientifically significant specimens and their contextual data, under my temporary care as title holder of these specimens. Access will not be denied to anyone conducting serious, scientific research and nor will there be any monetary charge for providing this access. Qualified researchers may contact me at the phone number and e-mail provided to determine a mutually agreeable time to meet and view the specimen(s) and conduct their research. I understand that I still retain my rights to limit the topics and types of research that may be conducted in order to protect intellectual property rights. I recognize however that once a particular topic/subject (such as “scientific description” or “Pathologies”, or “Behavior”) is published on in the JPS, that it is then available for debate by any and all researchers wishing to do so. I also understand and expect those researchers to properly reference me (or our organization) with any research that may be conducted. I understand that the conclusions of those independent researchers may be significantly different than my own and will not attempt in any way to silence, or unduly influence that research or deny future access for that reason alone. I understand that should I deny access to a valid researcher without just cause, that the JPC may conduct a review to determine a potential solution or further action. That action may result in the removal of any registered specimens that we have submitted to the JPS website or other actions by the AAPS to my membership or potential membership should that review board determine that I was not upholding this pledge in good faith. .

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
PRINT NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
ORGANIZATION/COMPANY NAME: _____
E-MAIL: _____ BEST TIME TO CONTACT: _____

Specimens included in this pledge as of the date of signature above (please use accession number and brief description. If they have already been registered with the AAPS Certified Fossil Specimen Registry please use both the accession number of the institution if any, and the given AAPS accession number):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Signature of Museum director, curator, manager, or title holder: _____