

Colorado Scientific Society

Lecture Announcement

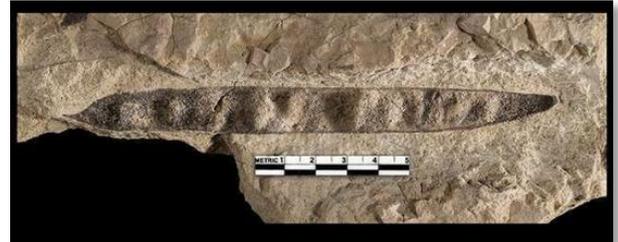
Thursday, January 15, 2026, Calvary Church Golden

The evolution and recovery of plant life across the Cretaceous–Paleogene mass extinction

Dr. Gussie Maccracken, Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Lecture Highlights:

The extinction that occurred at the end of the Cretaceous period is best known as the end of the nonavian dinosaurs. In theory, this paved the way for the expansion of mammals as well as other taxa, including plants. However, there are very few direct records of loss and recovery of biotic diversity across this event. Dr. Maccracken will describe a new record from the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary in Colorado that includes unusually complete plant and vertebrate fossils that contribute to our understanding of this event in detail, including the rapid evolution of plant life which allowed recovery and expansion of mammalian diversity and body size within the first million years.



Speaker Background:

Dr. Gussie Maccracken is the DMNS Assistant Curator of Paleobotany, studying fossil plants and their ecological interactions in deep time focusing on reconstructing ancient landscapes across the Cretaceous–Paleogene mass extinction event. She has done fieldwork throughout the Western Interior of North America, including Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Coahuila, Mexico.



Education

Postdoctoral Fellow; NSF-DMNS Research Fellow in Biology
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
PhD: University of Maryland, College Park, 2020
BA: Colorado College, 2011

Keywords

Paleobotany, K-Pg extinction event, vascular plant evolution, herbivorous insects

