Fossil trove shows life's fast recovery after big extinction

BY MALCOLM RITTER The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A remarkable trove of fossils from Colorado has revealed details of how mammals grew larger and plants evolved after the cataclysm that killed off the dinosaurs.

The thousands of specimens let scientists trace that history over a span of 1 million years, a mere eveblink in Earth's lifespan.

Sixty-six million years ago, a large meteorite smashed into what is now the Yucatan Peninsula of southeastern Mexico. It unleashed broiling waves of heat and filled the sky with aerosols that blotted out the sun for months, killing off plants and the and other fossils within animals that depended on were revealed. them.

died out.

expand from being small America. creatures into the wide today — including us.

into "the origin of the modern world," said Tyler Lyson, an author of a paper reporting the fossil finds Thursday in the journal Science.

The fossils were recovered from an area of steep bluffs covering about 10 square miles (17 square kilometers) near Colorado Springs, starting three years ago.

Lyson, of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, found little in that area when he followed the standard practice of scanning for bits of bone. But began looking instead for rocks that can form around bone. When the rocks were broken open, skulls spot a fantastic record."

Lyson said it's not clear siastic. More than three-quar- how wide a geographic But life came back, and that he thinks they show the asteroid impact, said land mammals began to what happened over North P. David Polly of Indiana Field Museum in Chicago ural History in New York. weight of raccoons, almost

array of forms we see about this everywhere on fossil specimens and the help scientists understand vide "the best record on rapid recovery, or at least



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ancient Carsioptychus mammal taken from the PBS NOVA special, "Rise of the Mammals."

So the new find taps least now we have at one tion are exceptional" for ery when combined with

University in Blooming- said the study's detailed The new work, he said in as big as before the mete-"We just know so little ton. "The sheer number of focus on a single area can an email, appears to pro- orite crash. "That's a pretty the globe," he said. "At quality of their preserva- the complexity of recov- Earth to date."

Scientists have previ-Stephanie Smith of the American Museum of Nat- mals had grown to the

The study reports on Lyson said.

hundreds of mammal fossils representing 16 species and more than 6.000 plant fossils. Researchers also analyzed thousands of pollen grains to see what plants were alive at various times. Analysis of leaves indicated several warming periods during the period.

Here's the recovery story the fossils tell:

The area had been a forest before the meteorite hit, home to dinosaurs like T. rex and mammals no bigger than about 17 pounds (8 kilograms).

Soon after the disaster. the environment was blanketed with ferns and the biggest mammal around was about as heavy as a rat. The world was in a warming period, as documented

By about 100,000 years land, said Jin Meng of the by palm trees and mamone aspect of recovery,"

In some parts of US, meth most common in drug overdose deaths

BY MIKE STOBBE

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Fentanyl deaths in the U.S. overall, country, it's a different stoa new government report shows.

Nationwide, most deaths still involve opioid drugs like fentanyl and heroin. But in 2017, the stimulant meth was the drug most frequently involved in deaths nary figures suggest that in four regions that include 19 states west of the Missis-

sippi. geographic breakdown of multiple drugs. deaths by drug. It's based two-thirds of them involving opioids.

Fentanyl was involved in 39% of the deaths that year, followed by heroin, 23%, and cocaine, 21%. Those drugs top the list in the eastern part of the country.

Methamphetamine was in the four western regions, ing meth to the top. it was No. 1, at 21% to 38%.

Previous CDC reports charted meth's Landen. have increasing toll, noting that it rose from eighth to fourth in just four years.

The new report found dramatic differences in the 10 regions. For example, In New England, fentanyl had the highest adjusted overdose death rate and meth much in place to prevent was a distant 10th on the list. In the region that includes the mountain states and the going to be caught off guard Dakotas, meth was No. 1 and with methamphetamine fentanyl was sixth.

U.S. is made in Mexico and smuggled across the border — U.S. production has actuis driving drug overdose ally been declining in recent years, according to the U.S. but in nearly half of the Drug Enforcement Agency. Its availability has held at ry. Meth is the bigger killer, high levels in recent years in areas of the Southwest, and has increased in some areas of the Midwest, the agency's field offices report.

> Final 2018 data has not yet been released, but prelimioverdose deaths involving meth increased.

The CDC report is based The report released Fri- on a search of overdose day by the Centers for Dis- death certificates for the ease Control and Preven- name of drugs. In many tion is the agency's first cases, a person was taking

Since the report is the on 2017 figures when there first of its kind, how meth were more than 70,000 factored into overdose overdose deaths in the U.S., deaths regionally in the past isn't known.

New Mexico has seen a shift. For years, black tar heroin was the biggest problem, then prescription painkillers, said Dr. Michael Landen of the state's health department. State meth No. 4 nationwide, cited in deaths went from 150 in 13% of overdose deaths. But 2017 to 194 last year, vault-

> "It's really been the first time we've seen that," said

> He attributed the surge in meth to its wide availability and low cost, and said he worried it could get worse. While there are programs to deal with fentanyl and heroin overdoses, there's not meth deaths, he said.

"I think we're potentially deaths, and we have to get Most of the meth in the our act together," he said.

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Feasibility Study Available Balance of Plant and Groundwater Operable Units Niagara Falls Storage Site **Information Session November 13**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District is pleased to announce the release of the feasibility study for the Balance of Plant and Groundwater Operable Units of the Niagara Falls Storage Site, which is located in Lewiston, New York. A poster/ information session to discuss the report is being conducted on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at the Town of Lewiston Senior Center located at 4361 Lower River Road, Youngstown, New York. The meeting will begin with a poster session at 6:30 p.m. The presentation will begin at 7 p.m.

The feasibility study was prepared under the authority of the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) for which the Corps of Engineers is the lead federal agency. The Corps of Engineers conducts FUSRAP projects in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan. The feasibility study identifies and evaluates potential remedial alternatives to eliminate unacceptable risks to human health and the environment due to the presence of FUSRAP-related contamination.

The feasibility study is available on the web at: https://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/Missions/HTRW/FUSRAP/Niagara-Falls-**Storage-Site/** in the reports section. The report is also available electronically in the administrative record file for the site, which is located in the Town of Lewiston Public Library, 305 South Eighth Street, Lewiston, New York, the Youngstown Free Library, 240 Lockport Street, Youngstown, New York, and the Ransomville Free Library, 3733 Ransomville Road, Ransomville, New York. The administrative record file is also available for review by appointment at the Buffalo District Office Library located at 1776 Niagara Street in Buffalo. New York. For further information please e-mail fusrap@usace.army.mil, or call (800) 833-6390 (Option 4)

that changed when he This image provided by HHMI Tangled Bank Studios shows a rendering of the this time period, he said. results from elsewhere. Experts not connected The fossils' story certo the study were enthu- tainly represents what ously found little evidence in previous studies. happened in central North about what happened in It's "an unparalleled America and perhaps the aftermath of the mete- after the meteorite impact, ters of species on Earth region the fossils' story of documentary of how life more broadly, he wrote in orite crash, especially on the forest was dominated recovery applies to, but on land recovered" after an email.