Jurassic Links

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“terrible lizard” tyrannosaurus rex and herds of triceratops, known among paleontologists as “the cows of the Cretaceous period.”

The first triceratops remains were discovered near Denver during the 1880s. Another was found on the site of Denver’s Coors Field. But the golf course find could be the best yet. It has been difficult for experts to find much of the dinosaur’s scattered remains over the years.

A tyrannosaurus rex tooth was unearthed three years ago during construction of a housing development across from the golf course site. Museum staffers sought Walenczak’s permission to investigate the Westmoor location.

Some dinosaur bones were discovered on the ground’s surface. But it took six hours of jackhammer work to free the bunker specimen. A 65-million-year-old turtle shell was also discovered.

“Our crews had excavated a pile of boulders for the grading we were doing for the fairways,” Walenczak says. “They had set those boulders aside because we had planned to use them to line some ponds or to use them as landscape features.”

Within the rock piles was a treasure trove of ancient history. “It’s a wealth of historic knowledge for us, and if we can preserve that, we should do so,” he says. The Heritage at Westmoor GC name salutes its historic past, but there are no plans to adopt a Jurassic Park motif. But Walenczak does note that “we’re thinking of incorporating a dinosaur theme in our logo.”

—James E. Guyette