

Digging up our past—it's more than just dinosaurs!

Archeologists, geologists, and paleontologists read clues in ancient soils and rocks. If researchers looking for ancient Champlain Sea whales find clay with tiny shells, they know bones may be nearby.

Tools of the trade

In 2001, archeologists from the University of Quebec in Montreal excavated a beluga whale in St. Felix de Valois, a village northeast of Montreal. Using brushes, chisels, and trowels, they gently uncovered and quickly preserved the bones. Without preservation, the bones would dry and crack from exposure to air.



Piecing together the puzzle

Photographs of “Felix the beluga’s” excavation made reconstructing the skeleton in the lab more accurate. Felix’s intact skeleton shows that it was quickly buried after it died, protecting it from destruction. Felix is considered the most complete Champlain Sea beluga skeleton ever discovered.

Can you dig it?

- **Carefully** use a brush and scraper to slowly uncover buried beluga bones from the clay.
 - **Compare** the bones you find to the complete skeleton above.
- ?
- Where are the bones buried? **Look** for clues!
What bones can you find?
Do any of the bones look like your bones?

try this