

For Teachers



Get an inside look at excavation at the Tar Pits with a virtual field trip presented by NOVA!

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A Wealth of Natural Resources

Dear Teachers,

Welcome back to the classroom! We hope your break was restorative and you are ready to spring into spring. In order to help you take full advantage of the outdoors this season, we wanted to highlight some of our favorite resources that will get your students outside—both here at the Tar Pits and also on your school campuses.

For basics on managing your classroom outside of your four walls and tips on scientific observation in the great outdoors, check out this helpful [one-pager](#).

Back in December we partnered with NOVA Education for a virtual field trip at the Tar Pits. To get the inside scoop on what's happening at our current excavation site, Project 23, check out the [webcast](#) with excavator Laura and educator Kelsey, and keep reading for more NOVA resources!

Last but certainly not least, two of our fabulous teacher colleagues showed us how they use the outdoor classroom at our Teacher Talk workshop last June. If you haven't seen their [presentation](#) or perused their [list of resources](#), check them out for even more inspiration.

We'll see you soon outside at the Tar Pits!

Molly Porter

Manager, School and Teacher Programs

Spring has Arrived!

Your field trip requests have been pouring in and we can't wait to see you and your students at the Tar Pits in the coming months. As we dive into our busiest season, there are a few things to note about our free add-on reservations:

- Until May 31, the popular **Observation Pit** exhibit is available for schools every weekday. In it, students of all grades can interact with educators and get up close to a real, partially excavated fossil deposit.
- **Ice Age Encounters (Fridays only)** is sticking around for the spring season for grades 2-6. In this live performance, students can meet a life-sized saber-toothed cat and learn all about our current excavation, Project 23.
- Through the end of May, our brand new documentary film **Titans of the Ice Age 2D (Monday - Thursday)** will require a free reservation. This film will give your students global context for all the amazing research happening at the Tar Pits.

Want to do it all? We ask that schools limit advanced reservations to one add-on per grade level per field trip. This lets us provide memorable experiences for the most students possible. If you're already booked for one of these opportunities and want to add another, check in with us on your visit day. If we have availability, we will absolutely get you in!

Kelsey Ziff

Coordinator, School Programs



Can You Dig It: NOVA's Virtual Field Trip!

Last December, we had the amazing opportunity to team up with PBS and NOVA for their first ever virtual field trip. In this 30 minute long session broadcast over Google Hangouts, over 2,000 students from all over the country got an inside look at Box 14 in Project 23. They asked Tar Pits educators and excavators questions about current research -- *can we get viable DNA from our fossils?* -- and our collections -- *what's the rarest fossil we find here?* Luckily for you, California schools are always free at the Tar Pits, so you can bring your students any time to ask us their Ice Age questions in person and see active paleontology right in the heart of L.A. Or, [click here](#) to view the whole broadcast.

In Case You Were Wondering...

What is the rarest fossil from the Tar Pits? While we have many unique fossils all with incredible stories, we focused on the humble raccoon! While these animals are common in L.A. today, Ice Age raccoons are extremely rare at Rancho La Brea.

Can we get DNA from our fossils? Not *yet*, but we are working on it! Viable DNA would give us all kinds of new information about our fossils, like which bones come from a single individual. Not to mention the whole cloning thing...(kidding!)

Resources from NOVA!

Our virtual field trip to the Tar Pits is part of a larger suite of opportunities and resources connected to NOVA's new *Making North America* series. In addition to the video linked above, you can find all kinds of media related to this series on [PBS's website](#). These videos, interactive maps, and lesson plans help give context to the research we do right here at the Tar Pits, and are excellent supplements to your field trip!



Upcoming Opportunities

Survey Your Schoolyard!

Saturday, April 16 | 9 am - 1 pm

Come to NHM and celebrate National Citizen Science Day with us! Be one of the first teachers to try out our DIY Schoolyard Bioblitz kits and learn how to survey all the wildlife on your school campus. From squirrels to bugs to birds, there's a lot of species for your students to find! Register at <http://www.nhm.org/site/for-teachers/professional-development>.

**Hosted by the Natural History Museum.*

Collections and Crosscutting Concepts

Saturday, April 30 | 9 am - 12 pm

In this workshop, we'll explore the rich fossil collections of Rancho La Brea as a case study for data analysis and the nature and practice of science. Go behind the scenes in our collections and excavation sites to discover how we study the Ice Age and how our methods have changed over 100 years of digging. Then, work with fellow educators and Tar Pits staff to tie everything you've learned into NGSS Crosscutting Concepts that you can take back to the classroom!

Register at <http://www.tarpits.org/for-teachers/professional-development>.

Our Favorite Resources...

Visit our [Past Workshop Resources](#) page to download free resources to use in your classroom! Some highlights are...

- Excavator Karin Rice's talk on earth science and the process of paleontology at the Tar Pits.
- All 3 Power Point presentations submitted by teachers during our "Teacher Talk" workshop that show how Museum inspiration translates back at school.
- All of the handouts from "Using the Outdoor Classroom" that will give you tips on outdoor teaching.
- Carnivore data resources and a mountain lion focused lesson plan from "L.A.'s Carnivores: Past and Present."

Don't forget to visit our [Professional Development](#) page to learn about upcoming free teacher workshops at the Museum!

Schedule your Field Trip!

Go to www.tarpits.org/for-teachers and click on the *Field Trips* link for step-by-step instructions on how to plan your day and submit a field trip request!