**Vertebrate Paleontology Visitor Guidelines**

**General**

**Please fill out placeholder slips when removing specimens from drawers or shelves**. This will help you keep track of where specimens belong and will ensure they are returned to their proper storage location.

**Notify staff immediately if something breaks;** accidents happen. VP Staff will assess the situation, stabilize the specimen as necessary before study continues, and will see to specimen repair.

**No preparation is allowed** without prior consent of the curator in charge of the collection and/or VP Lab staff.

**Let staff know as soon as possible if you intend on borrowing specimens.** Loans must be approved by the curator in charge of the collection and department registrar. Compiling the paperwork and packing the specimen(s) cannot always be completed the same day as the request is made.

**Please ask for assistance when moving large fossils.** Carts are also available upon request to help move specimens from their storage location to your desk.

When browsing the collections in cases, **pull out the drawer under the one you are reviewing.** Our storage drawers are old, and pulling out the drawer underneath ~1/3 of the way will provide additional stability to the drawer above it. This is especially helpful when working with heavier specimens.

**Requests to sample our specimens for further analysis (e.g. radiocarbon, isotopic, etc.) require a one page proposal** that includes a description of your study, why the analysis is important, and what methods/materials you plan on using. All proposals and specimen selections are subject to the approval of collections and curatorial staff. Whenever possible, please submit these requests prior to your visit.

**Working with Specimens in Plaster Jackets**

**Handles are designed for removing the lid, NOT for lifting the jacket.** Use the flange around the outside of the jacket to lift and move the specimen.

**Do NOT remove a specimen from a jacket without prior consent from VP staff**. Jackets are often made for specimens that cannot support their own weight. If you need to examine surfaces that are not visible when the fossil is in the jacket, let staff know and we will try to accommodate your request.

**Please ask for help to lift or flip specimens.** Most fossils can be stored and viewed on either side of the jacket. Some are labeled “This Side Up” and should be returned to the collections in that orientation. Other jackets may not be flipped at all.

**When replacing bolts, tighten them snugly, but not to their maximum extent.** Tightening too far can crush delicate specimens.

**Gloves are available on request for handling jackets**. Jackets are constructed using sheets of fiberglass in plaster and although edges are smoothed as much as possible, you may get fiberglass in your skin which can cause temporary minor discomfort.