



This project is a collaboration which includes Don Lofgren, the late Malcolm McKenna (curator emeritus of American Museum of Natural History and 1948 graduate of Webb), and others. They have recovered tiny teeth and jaws that represent early types of mammals from the Goler Formation, a Paleocene-aged (60 million year old) rock unit exposed near Ridgecrest, California. The Goler Formation is very important because it is the only Paleocene-aged rock unit on the West Coast of North America that has yielded a diverse assemblage of fossil mammals and other vertebrates. Thus, the project is critical to discerning the paleontological history of California in the early post-dinosaur period.



Malcolm McKenna recovered the first mammal jaw from the Goler Formation in 1952, but few fossils were found in the next 40 years. To improve this situation, screen-washing techniques were employed and these efforts were very successful as over 200 new specimens were found in the past 10 years (thanks in part to a grant from the National Geographic Society). These newly discovered specimens are being studied by Lofgren, Webb students, and others. In addition to mammals, many turtle, crocodile, and lizard specimens have been recovered as well. Some mammal teeth have been identified as those of extinct primates and marsupials, the

oldest records of these types of mammals from California. The Goler fossils tell us much about the fauna and climate of coastal California 60 million years ago and thus, this project has great scientific importance and will be a major focus of museum research for many years.

### **Selected Publications**

McKenna, M. C., and D. L. Lofgren. 2003. *Mimotricentes tedfordi*, a new arctocyonid from the Late Paleocene of California. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History 279:632-643. [[View pdf](#)]

McKenna, M. C., J. G. Honey, and D. L. Lofgren. 2008. *Goleroconus alfi*, a new small periptychid (Mammalia, Eparctocyona) from the late Paleocene of California. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Science Series 41:29-42. [[View pdf](#)]

Lofgren, D. L., J. G. Honey, M. C. McKenna, R. L. Zondervan, and E. E. Smith. 2008. Paleocene primates from the Goler Formation of the Mojave Desert in California. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Science Series 41:11-28. [[View pdf](#)]