

What's The Fuss About

Fossils?



TAKE TO THE NATURE CENTRE TO
BE STAMPED WHEN EACH LEVEL
IS COMPLETED

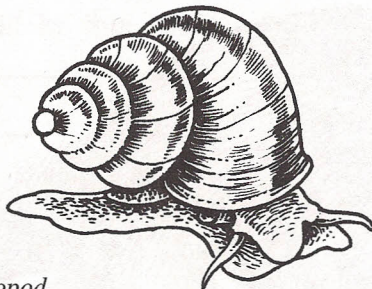
Whenever I'm flying out over the lake I always see park visitors staring at rocks. I used to think it was a sign of very bored campers but then I realized what all the fuss was about. All over the rocky shore are fossils of animals that lived here five hundred million years ago! Take a walk down the rocky beach and soon you will find yourself turning over every pebble and discovering fossils!

The Ordovician Era

Presqu'ile's fossils were living creatures even before the dinosaurs! During this time called the **Ordovician Era**, Presqu'ile was covered in a large shallow sea. When the animals in it died, their shells were buried in sand and silt. Over time, pressure squeezed the sand and silt until it turned into the limestone rock we see today. The buried animals also turned to rock forming the fossils you can find on the beach.

Level

- 1** Find one of each of the fossils listed and then meet a similar creature in real life!
To remember what your fossil looks like draw it or do a rubbing. To make a rubbing place the page over the fossil and rub with a crayon or the side of a pencil lead. Check out the fossil display in the Nature Centre for more information!



Gastropod

Gastropods

Gastropod fossils look just like the snail shells that settle at the bottom of Presqu'ile's marsh. Only the shell is strong enough to be fossilized. That is why soft-bodied animals like worms are rarely found as fossils.

Level **2** Snail Observations

Examine the mud at the bottom of the marsh or look under logs and introduce yourself to a snail. Watch how it moves. If you pick it up gently it may hide inside its shell. Watch carefully. How does it fold into its shell? Which end goes first? Why? Let the snail crawl on your skin. How does it feel? **Record your observations on page 38** then return the snail to its home.

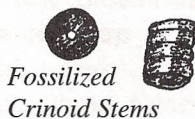
- 1** Your Gastropod drawing or rubbing.

Crinoids

Crinoids are still alive today. Their other name is "Sea-lily" because they look like a plant. Crinoids aren't actually plants they are animals related to starfish. The fossil "cheerios" that you find in Presqu'ile's rocks are a cross-section of the Crinoid stem. (They look just like a dandelion stem cut in half!) You can't find live Crinoids at Presqu'ile today because they are only found in salt water.



Crinoid (whole animal)

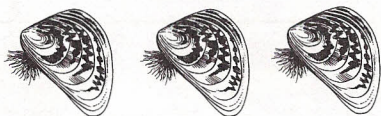


Fossilized Crinoid Stems

1 Your Crinoid drawing or rubbing.

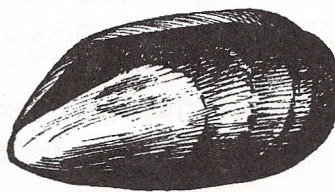
Brachiopods

Mussels and clams are still around today, doing the same thing as Brachiopods did back in the Ordovician Era. That is sticking themselves to rocks or moving through the mud and **filter feeding**. You can observe Brachiopods at the Nature Centre. Look for the fish tank with a Zebra Mussel sign on it.

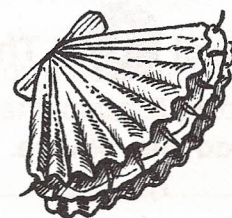


Inside you will find a rock covered in hundreds of these tiny, striped mussels. Watch closely as they stick out their siphons and pump water over their gills which are hidden inside their shell. The gills act as a filter, catching tiny animals called **plankton** which the mussel eats. Zebra Mussels can be found in deep water areas at Presqu'ile and are a favourite food of diving ducks like Scaup and Long-tailed Duck.

Brachiopods



Mussel



Clam

1 Your Brachiopod drawing or rubbing.

Level

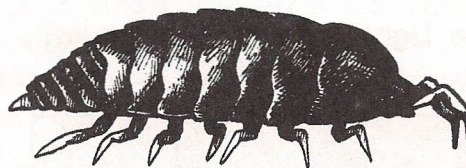
Trilobites

3 For millions of years Trilobites have been extinct. Extinct means that there are none living in the world today. From observing Trilobites fossils we know that they swam in a shallow sea and varied in size from under 1 cm to 25 cm or 10 inches. You can get an idea of what they looked like by turning over a log and looking for Wood Lice. **Look around for a wood louse. Examine it closely. Count the number of segments on the diagram. Go to the Nature Centre to count the number on a Trilobite.**

On Woodlouse: _____

On Trilobite: _____

Actual Size



Woodlice (a similar-looking living relative of the Trilobite)

1 Your Trilobite drawing or rubbing.