



M.Sc. STUDENT POSTING

The biology of mass extinctions: reconstructing insect life in the Paleocene

We are seeking a highly motivated and well-qualified graduate student to conduct research on the insect fauna captured in Paleocene age amber deposits from southern Saskatchewan, particularly within the Big Muddy Badlands. Amber from this time interval offers a chance to examine how forests and their insect inhabitants responded to the end-Cretaceous extinction event, and to fill a longstanding gap in the fossil record of insects. Our research will make use of palaeoentomology, stable isotopes, and FTIR spectroscopy to gather information on ancient ecosystems. Due to the breadth of this project, there is potential to accommodate individual student interests, but the appropriate candidate will have an excellent academic record, an understanding of biological systematics, and be willing to conduct both field and lab work.

Experience with microscopy, photography, and stable isotope analyses (of C and H) are assets, but are not required. This project is a collaboration between the University of Regina and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum; the student will be co-supervised by Dr. Ryan McKellar (www.royalsaskmuseum.ca/research-and-collections/palaeontology/invertebrate-palaeontology) and Dr. Christopher Somers (www.somersbiology.ca). Graduate students must meet the entrance requirements set out by the University of Regina Biology Department and Faculty of Graduate Studies. Ideally, we wish to start this project in the summer of 2015. Applications will be assessed at the end of July and August, and the position will remain open until filled.

To apply, please send a cover letter, CV, and unofficial copies of academic transcripts to :

ryan.mckellar@gov.sk.ca

chris.somers@uregina.ca