

Brontothere - *Megacerops* sp.



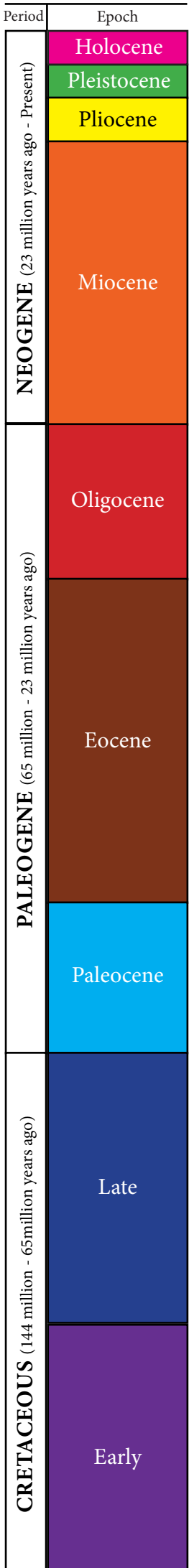
Name means: 'large-horned face'

Notable specimen from Saskatchewan; brontothere skeleton (on display at the RSM (Regina), T. rex Discovery Centre (Eastend), and Royal Tyrrell Museum (Drumheller).

Size:

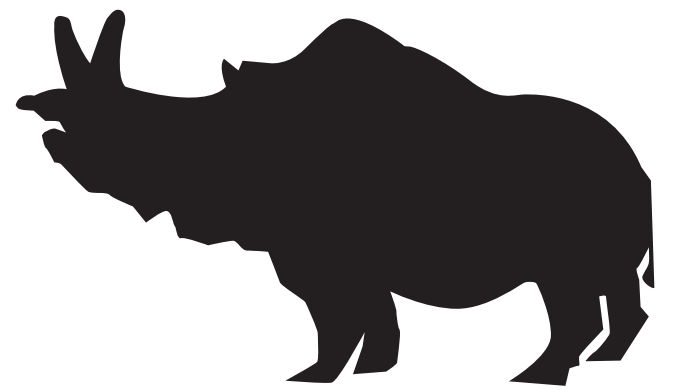
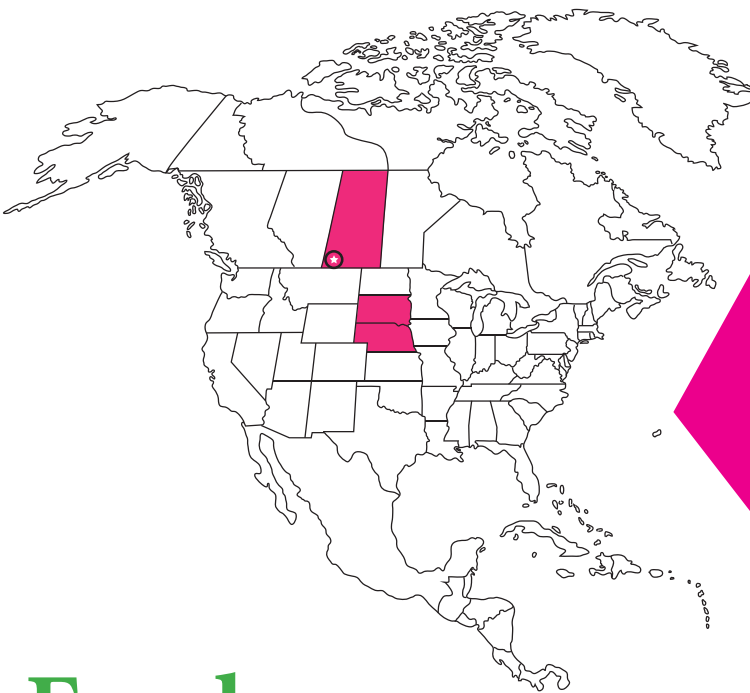
Adults were about 4 m in length and about 2 m in height at the shoulders. Built like a rhinoceros, they weighted about 3 tonnes. Their most distinguishing feature was the pronounced horns on their nose. These were likely used as a display feature, but also as a protective buttress fending off predators. They had four toes on their front feet and three on their hind feet.

Geologic Timeline



Age

The genus *Megacerops* (family Brontotheriidae) lived about 38-33 million years ago (near the end of the Eocene Epoch.) In Saskatchewan, *Megacerops* is found in the geological unit called the Cypress Hills Formation.



4 m

Geographic range:

Northern Plains of North America.

In Saskatchewan: *Megacerops* has been found mostly around the eastern flanks of the Cypress Hills. This particular specimen was found west of Eastend, Saskatchewan in 1971.

Food Preference:

Brontotheres, including *Megacerops*, were herbivores. At the time they were living in Saskatchewan, we know that the climate was changing, from supporting a lush, leaved forest to the beginnings of open grasslands. The wear on the teeth of *Megacerops* attests to the volume of plant consumption and their adaptation to more abrasive plants like grasses.

Habitat:

When *Megacerops* roamed Saskatchewan, lush, soft leaved forests dominated the area. The climate was warmer and less seasonal than today. Separating the woodlands would have been fast flowing streams and rivers. Based on the numbers of individuals found at any one locality it is pretty certain that for most of their lives brontotheres lived in herds.

Relations

Megacerops belonged to a family of mammals called Brontotheriidae (brontotheres). This family of mammals went extinct at start of Oligocene Epoch. *Megacerops* belongs to the larger group called Perissodactyla which includes not only brontotheres, but horses and rhinoceroses.