

Casey Greer - Blog 3

With each passing day we spend here in Kenya, I am surprised and inspired by all of the incredible experiences I am having. I absolutely love it here. Which is not to say that this hasn't been a challenge because I have most definitely been challenged both physically and mentally. This past week we spent out in Buluk, prospecting and excavating fossils and it was without a doubt the most intense, educational, and eye-opening (literally and figuratively) experiences I have ever endured. Every morning we would wake up with the sunrise and embark on long, scenic hikes overlooking the vast landscape. We would get to our destination and spend hours at a time scanning the sediment where a majority of the time, you come up empty handed. The longer we were out there and the more we got familiar with finding bone fragments and distinguishing bones from rocks, the more determined and persistent I became. Truthfully, it was hard not to get discouraged when you would go out to the field and look so hard in the crazy heat and maybe find only a few fragments that were not collectable. It wasn't until the very last day, in the last few minutes before we started heading back to camp where I came upon an extinct species of rhinoceros and gomphithere tooth and the excitement and feeling of accomplishment was overwhelming! In that moment I felt not only that all my hard work had paid off, but that I had contributed to something so much bigger than myself.

Standing in Buluk, among the remains of organisms that lived millions of years in the past alongside our human ancestors is surreal. It is so humbling and inspirational to be surrounded by such rich history and further still to be helping to uncover it. Being a part of such an invaluable team has been truly inspirational. I have learned that the fossil records in Turkana Basin holds the key to understanding where we come from, how we go to where we are now, and why we evolved the way that we did. Those answers can guide us to the underlying question of what is man's place in nature.