

OKLAHOMA ROCKS! STATE PARKS

LAKE MURRAY

STATE PARK

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Lake Murray State Park is located in south central Oklahoma. If scientists want to identify and classify the flora and fauna currently inhabiting this region, they can take a variety of biological surveys. But what if we wanted to know more about what this region was like a long time ago? How do we figure out which plants and animals inhabited this region millions of years ago? Imagine trying to learn about the past just by using rocks and fossils, like a paleontologist or a geologist. Fossil evidence provides us with a unique window to the past, allowing us to learn about ancient environments, and the organisms that inhabited them. For example, the fossils we find around Lake Murray State Park, in Ardmore, can tell us a lot about what Oklahoma was like millions of years ago. Below are common fossils that can be found in the vicinity of Lake Murray State Park, and nearby towns.

>> ACTIVITY

The fossils pictured below can be found in the vicinity of Lake Murray State Park, and surrounding towns. **What do these fossils tell us about Oklahoma's past? What sort of environment do you think you think these organisms lived in?** Many of the fossils you can find in and around Lake Murray State Park are Pennsylvanian in age, which means they are roughly 300 million years old. **Based on our evidence, what was this region like 300 million years ago?**

Look for fossils around your school or home. Are you finding fossils of organisms that lived on land, or in water?



Brachiopods



Gastropods



Pelecypods



Horn Coral



Bryozoans

(Photos are from: *The Geology of the Ardmore Basin in the Lake Murray State Park Area, Oklahoma An Introduction and Field Trip Guide*. Neil H. Suneson, 1996)

For more information about Oklahoma Geology, and links to past editions of Oklahoma Rocks! visit the Oklahoma Geological Survey website: <http://ogs.ou.edu/level2-earthscied.php>



NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION
THE OKLAHOMAN



*Program details will be communicated through email.