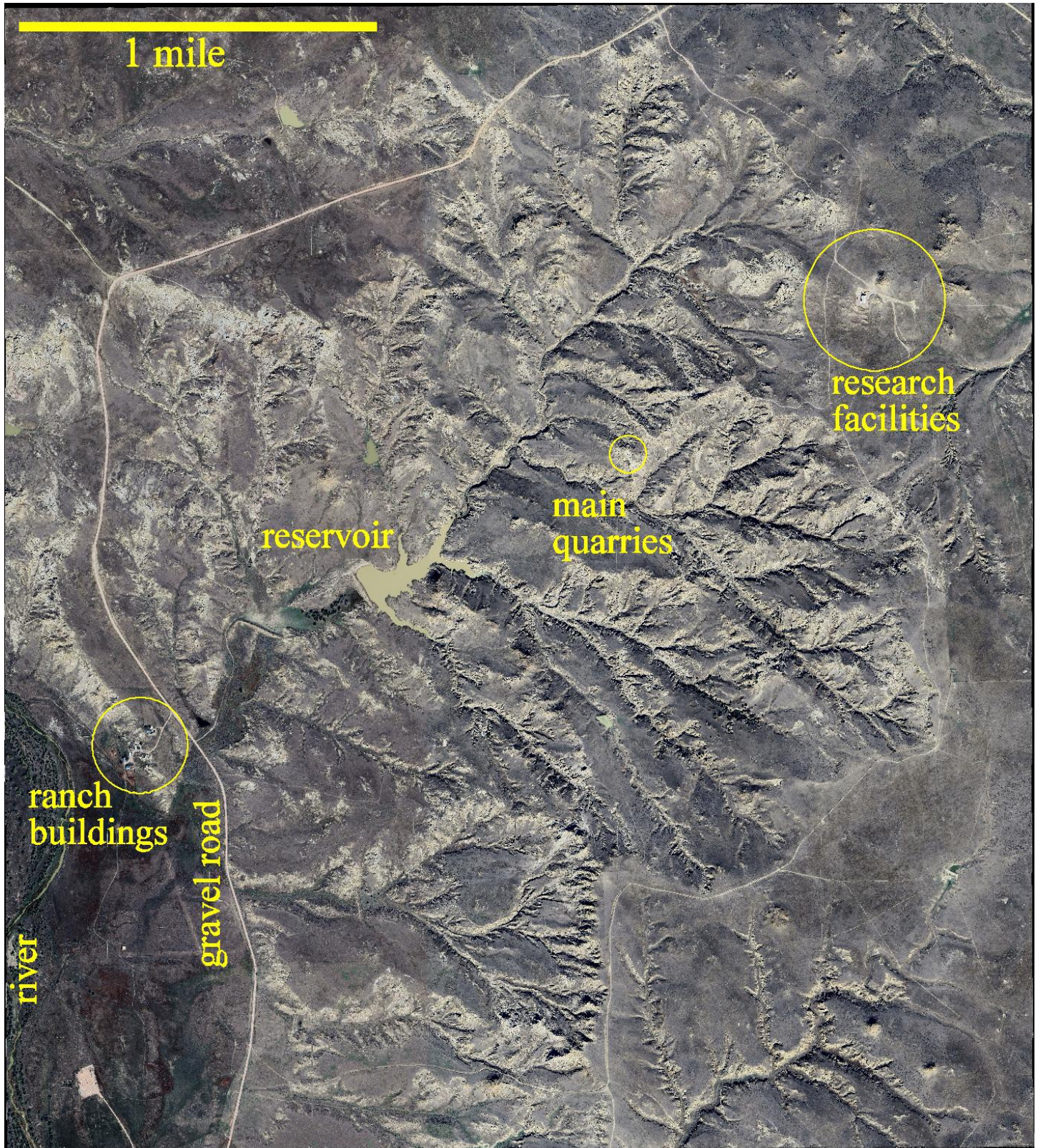


Hanson Ranch, Wyoming

During the Summer of 1995 a large group gathered on the Hanson Ranch in northeastern Wyoming to start investigations of the abundant deposits of animal and plant fossils buried within the Lance Formation. Initial fossils were mostly from hadrosaurs (duck-billed dinosaurs), triceratops, plants, and some turtle shell fragments.



Google Earth view of the Hanson Ranch area (about 8000 acres) with its badlands topography. Note the scale.

The ranch buildings are near the left center of that view and have the only dwellings within many miles. This ranch is 15 miles west of the main route 85 highway. This environment is a very lonely short-grass prairie.



This is a set of non-overlapping wide angle views from the top of a hill by the project facilities in the early morning. The shadow angles indicate that the views, left to right, are to the south, west, and north, respectively. At the left are private recreational trailers (white dots) at what for years was the project headquarters. (I sometimes camped there in the early years.) In the center are the new facilities surrounded by vehicles and small tents. At the right are more vehicles and tents and hilltop communication facilities.

Eventually responsibility was assumed by Southwest Adventist University (<https://swau.edu/>) of Keene, Texas, (south of Fort Worth) under Art Chadwick. They use precision GPS and photos to register precise 3D positions and orientations of bones being removed. Some bones are kept intact with a variety of superglue. Larger bones are also encased in plaster. Excavations are done in June, which provides so much material that the entire following year is needed back in the university laboratory to examine and prepare the samples for storage. The field work now proceeds out of a recently constructed building in the northeast part of the ranch.



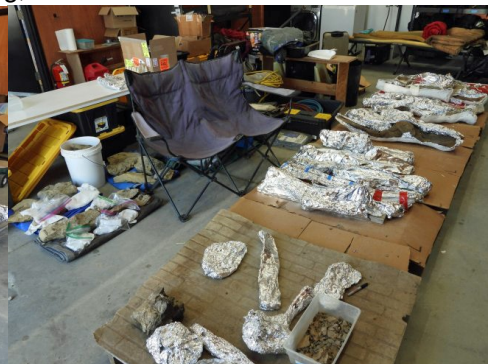
This new, well-designed research building, was dedicated in June 2023.



Dining hall and classroom, kitchen beyond to right. Left walls are garage doors which can be raised for open air.



Receiving room for fossil bones



View of right side and bones in foil

To the right are photos of the storm clouds of the first evening. Most workers use the tents. A rainbow is at the right.



In June of this 2025 year I joined the excavation team for much of a week. Our group of home school students and families (HomeSchool, Etc. of Arvada, Colorado) was assigned the wall at the right side of this North Main Quarry photo. My place was beyond the white buckets in the middle. The black canopies provide partial shade for digging. The blue canopy covers the picnic table and benches.



North Main Quarry



My place was in the middle of this view. First day result. That shale was easy.

My first bone (lower left), third day.



Removed. "Cervical Vert Process"

Foiled

Canned



GPS (yellow pole) at neighbor's bone.

Lunch time

I uncovered many charcoal fragments



< The brown line near the center is a tendon fossil. We were allowed to keep them because they were so numerous and too small to catalog.

Hadrosaur tendons that I uncovered>





Large bone discovery, under our paths

It was two bones.

Many GPS points along bone



Bones glued, ready for plaster



Applying plaster by hand

Having visited this Hanson Ranch several times, I enjoyed being back. Throughout the day one could hear about 7 Western Meadowlarks talking to each other from different locations. A walk away from the facilities and dig sites shows more than just short grass in this prairie. In June there are many flowers, so I will fill the rest of this page with their photos.



Dr. Ed Holroyd,
8 August 2025