



PREFACE

Experiences and perspectives for the conservation of the paleontological heritage in Mexico – Part 2

Aguilar Arellano, Felisa J.^{a,*}

^a Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Centro INAH Coahuila and Presidencia del Consejo de Paleontología. Moneda 16, Col. Centro, Ciudad de México, 06060, México.

* felisa_aguilar@inah.gob.mx

1. Introduction

From the middle of the 20th century the paleontological heritage is at risk. Anthropogenic activities linked to economic development such as construction, industrialization, vandalism, the continuous collection of fossils by professionals and amateurs and commercial purposes are accelerating this heritage's destruction and disappearance (Lipps, 2009; Aguilar Arellano, 2020). Different strategies for the protection and conservation of paleontological remains and their localities have been developed to solve these problems. The association of scientific research and education, recreation and tourism are part of the search for solutions to these problems. Another essential aspect to consider is the existence of laws and the institutions responsible for them, including the paleontological heritage. However, the scientific community remains concerned about an irreparable loss of this evidence for future generations if we consider that there is still much to discover, describe, and make known.

The culture of the protection and conservation of fossils is necessary. To promote it, we consider making known the history that triggered the need for its preservation and the strategies that were carried out within the framework of the needs of the time. This second part of the special issue: "Experiences and perspectives for the conservation of paleontological heritage in Mexico," has three contributions that will give an overview of the background.

The fossil record of Mexico results from studies carried out by different researchers assigned to educational and research institutions, distributed throughout the national country. The first contribution of this special issue will recognize women's role in developing paleontology in the country (Women in Mexican paleontology: a pioneer's legacy). The second contribution made a synthesis in terms

of the conventions and laws generated for the protection and conservation of fossils in Mexico and Latin America (How is the paleontological heritage of Mexico and other Latin American countries protected?). Finally, the third showed how and why the INAH created the Council of Paleontology (The Council of Paleontology of INAH: Background and perspectives).

The Council of Paleontology of INAH (ConPal) confirms its commitment to producing articles that show the research results, the discussion and exchange of experiences, and proposals to generate the regulations that allow the research, protection, conservation, and dissemination of paleontological heritage in Mexico (Aguilar Arellano, 2019).

Besides, the ConPal recognizes the inclusion of other social, cultural, and political actors related to paleontological heritage. The dialogues generated will allow us to understand the current normative and legal framework and clarify the doubts that its application produces since the preservation of paleontological heritage in Mexico will be the result of generating an acute public awareness and the establishment of reliable collaboration networks.

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