

Pre-historic beast created by resident fascinated by Ice Age

By
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IVN Contributing Writer

Dan Beal has always been interested in the Pleistocene era (better known as the last Ice Age), which dates back to about 1,808,000 to 11,550 years.

Beal was mostly interested in the Megaloceros species but the breed that stuck out the most for Beal was the Giganteus ferrous, which is better known as the Irish Elk. Though the Irish Elk is not considered Irish or related to the elk species, the origins of how it got its current name is not well known.

The more Beal studied the prehistoric deer, the more he became interested in it. In January of this year, Beal decided to construct an exact replica of the Irish Elk. He began his journey by researching the prehistoric beast online, going to history museum's websites and learning as much about it as he could. Beal said the hardest part about his research was actually finding correct information on the deer's measurements. Almost every website he searched listed approximately how tall it could grow and the width of the antlers, but Beal was not able to find exact information.

While walking along a stretch of the river one afternoon he came across an old deer carcass. Knowing that the Irish Elk

was a member of the deer family, he took the carcass home, cleaned it and used the bones as an example for his sculpture. Beal also had several pictures from the history museum websites he visited during his research that he also used to help him create his sculpture.

His next step was to figure out what medium he would use to replicate the deer. Beal first tried chainsaw carving but some pieces had to be glued and bolted together, eventually the carving became too heavy and cracked. The next experiment was to create the animal from clay, using wire as the skeleton. While working on the clay sculpture he realized that the skeleton was the main focus of most of the research that Beal had found. So, once again starting over, Beal taught himself how to weld in order to make a sculpture created from metal.

With his research complete and the medium known, Beal set out to create an exact duplication of the pre-historic animal that sparked his curiosity. The process, though, was slow going, due to many factors. Beal is on a set income and had to purchase supplies and learn as he went. The process took ten months from start to finish. The finished product, however, replicates the skeleton of an Irish Elk, down to the last knuckle bone and shape of the teeth.

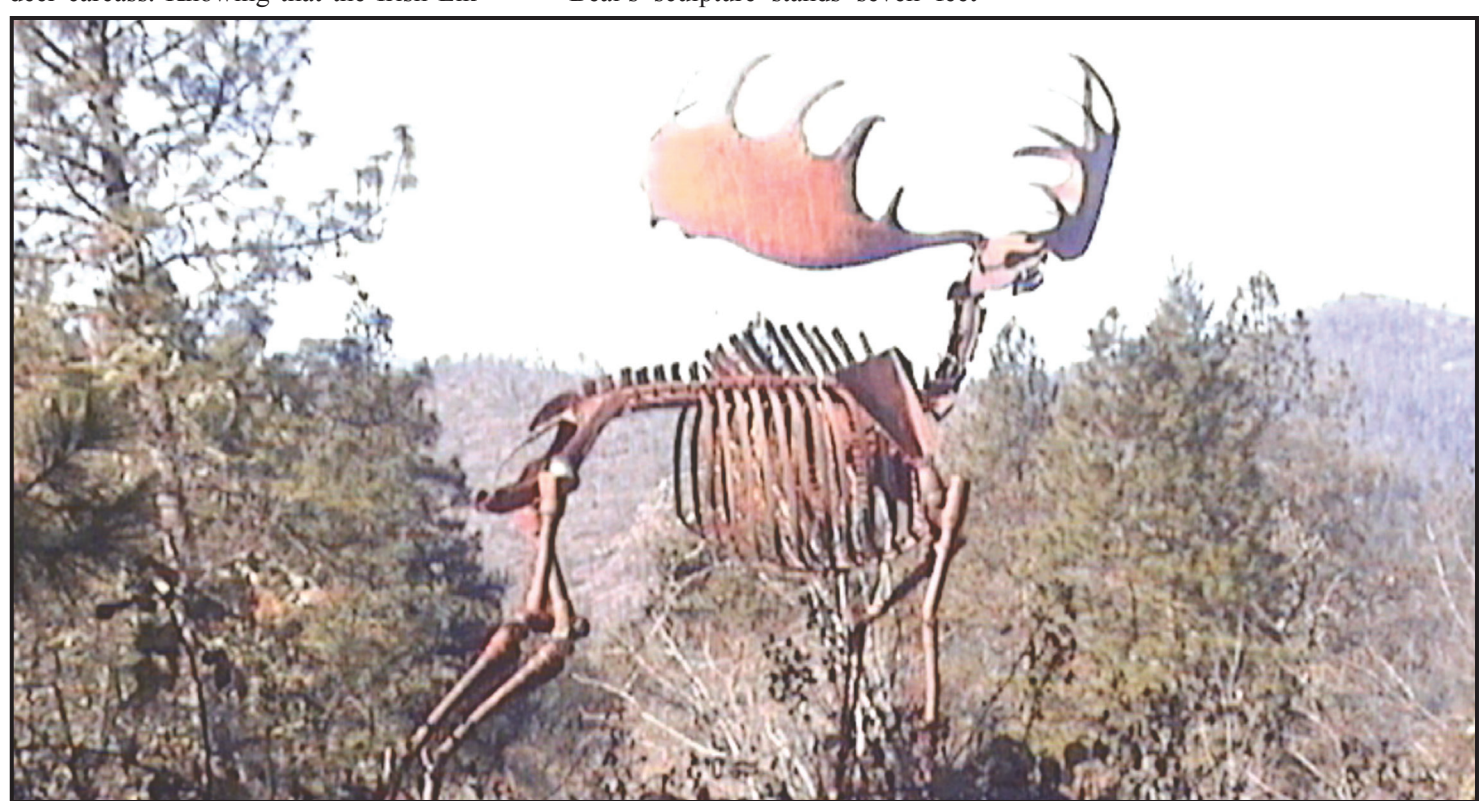
Beal's sculpture stands seven feet

tall at the shoulders and the antlers are ten feet across. Not much is known about the Irish Elk, but when the huge Giganteus ferrous roamed the Earth, it stood seven feet tall at the shoulders and the antlers could span up to 13 feet, with one antler reaching 12 feet from tip to tip. The Irish Elk could weigh as much as 1,500 pounds. Much of the remains found in museums of the large deer have been mostly found all across Eurasia, from Ireland to parts of Asia even Africa, leading scientists to believe the European Elk or moose are close descendants of it.

Beal is a retired aerospace engineer, which helped him work out all the complexities of creating such a huge beast and undertaking such an enormous task.

"It partly helped me in putting the skeleton together, it was very complex," said Beal of his momentous mission.

When asked if he would create more sculptures of animals, he replied that he would like to build more animals from the same time period but focus on pre-historic animals that roamed locally, another reason why he chose the Irish Elk. Beal is now working on how to make his sculpture accessible to the public along with future sculptures. The Irish Elk sculpture is located in Kerby across from Holton Creek Road.



Kerby resident, Dan Beal's Irish Elk



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	Friday, Jan 10 Chance of Rain High -- 50 Low -- 41
	Saturday, Jan 11 Rain High -- 47 Low -- 34
	Sunday, Jan 12 Chance of Rain High -- 48 Low -- 30
	Monday, Jan 13 Clear High -- 52 Low -- 32
	Tuesday, Jan 14 Clear High -- 55 Low -- 32
	Wednesday, Jan 15 Partly Cloudy High -- 53 Low -- 32

Following are the high & low temperatures, and rainfall recorded at The End of the Road in O'Brien by Cheryl & Harry Johnson:

Dec	High	Low
27	36.9	28.0
28	41.4	29.5
29	40.8	25.9
30	43.7	25.3
31	46.8	28.0
1	43.7	24.8
2	43.9	25.5

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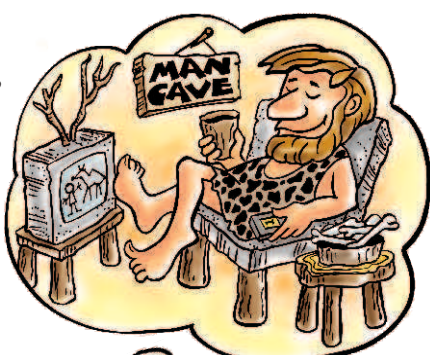
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