Ancient bison  
(*Bison antiquus*)

The ancient bison grazed in the valleys eating grasses, shrubs and woody plants. Ancient bison became extinct about 10,000 years ago.

The ancient bison is the ancestor of today’s bison.

Ancient bison traveled in herds or groups. What is the name of another animal that traveled in herds?
“Yesterday’s” camel
(Camelops hesternus)

The “Yesterday’s” camel is very closely related to today’s living llama. Camels originally lived in North America 50 million years ago before spreading to other parts of the world. “Yesterday’s” camel is now extinct.

Camels are herbivores and eat lots of grasses. Unlike camels that live today “Yesterday’s” camel may have liked to eat leafy forest plants.

Why do scientists with the Diamond Valley Lake project think “Yesterday’s” camel lived in herds or large groups?
Fossils of the dire wolf were found while digging the Diamond Valley Lake project. This extinct wolf was as big as the gray wolf that lives today.

The jaws and large teeth of the dire wolf were the most powerful of all the wolves. This would help them catch their food.

The dire wolf became extinct about 11,000 years ago. The word "dire" means "grim." Why do you think this wolf was named "dire" wolf?
Western horse  
(*Equus occidentalis*)

The Western horse lived in large herds or groups. They were as tall as today’s Arabian horse.

The Western horse became extinct at the end of the last Ice Age. Horses living in North America today were first brought here by Spanish explorers about 400 years ago.

During the Diamond Valley Lake project many fossils of the Western horse were found. These fossils included teeth. What can the fossil teeth tell us about the Western horse?
Long-horned bison
\((Bison \text{ latifrons})\)

The long-horned bison was the largest bison in North America. It could weigh up to 4,000 pounds.

The long-horned bison roamed the same valleys as the Ancient bison. The long-horned bison became extinct 20,000 years ago.

Look at the fossils found while digging the Diamond Valley Lake project. Why do you think this animal was called “long-horned” bison?
Fossils of the Columbian mammoth were found in the Diamond Valley Lake project. It was the largest land animal alive during the Ice Age.

Columbian mammoths could be 13ft. high at the shoulder. They could weigh as much as 10,000 lbs. Columbian mammoths did not have thick shaggy coats of fur.

When you visit the Western Center you get to see the real fossils from "Xena," a 12ft. tall Columbian mammoth.

What did the mammoths eat?
Pacific mastodon  
(*Mammut pacificus*)

Many fossils of Pacific mastodons were found when digging the Diamond Valley Lake. The mastodon is a distant relative of elephants and mammoths, but overall is a smaller animal. While the mastodon is not as tall as a mammoth it is longer from trunk to tail than a mammoth.

When you visit the Western Center you will get to view two examples of Pacific mastodons; “Max” and “Little Stevie.” What type of food did they eat?

How are the teeth of the mastodon different from the mammoth's?
The North American lion was bigger than the African lion that you might see in a zoo today. North American lions are extinct.

The North American lion was fast, reaching speeds of 30 miles per hour.

The North American lion needed large areas to hunt for their food. What kind of animals do you think the North American lion may have hunted?
One of the most famous extinct animals known is the sabertooth cat, *Smilodon fatalis*. Fossils of this animal were found during the digging for the Diamond Valley Lake project.

The sabertooth cat was not a tiger, but it is a member of the ancient cat family. This extinct animal is the official state fossil of California. It was about the size of the African lion that is alive today.

When you visit the Western Center you will see a *Smilodon* in one of our movies.

What do you think the sabertooth cat liked to eat?
Short-faced bear
(*Arctodus simus*)

The short-faced bear weighed over 2,000 pounds. They stood 5 feet tall at the shoulder. When standing on their back legs they were over 11 feet tall.

The short-faced bear mostly ate meat.

One fossil of a short-faced bear was found during the Diamond Valley Lake project. When you visit the Western Center try to find this fossil. What type of bone is the fossil?
Harlan's ground sloth (*Paramylodon harlani*)

The Harlan’s ground sloth would have stood over 6 feet high. It weighed about 3,500 pounds. The Harlan’s ground sloth had flat, peg-like teeth, and ate tubers, leaves and twigs.

Look at the Harlan’s ground sloth fossils at the Western Center and find the small fossils called “dermal ossicles”. How would the dermal ossicles protect the Harlan’s ground sloth from its predators?
The Shasta ground sloth is the smallest of the three ground sloths found while making Diamond Valley Lake. All three types of ground sloths are now extinct.

The Shasta ground sloth weighed about 300 pounds.

This sloth walked on the outside edges of its feet. Do you think that it was able to move quickly or slowly?
Jefferson’s ground sloth
(Megalonyx jeffersoni)

The Jefferson’s ground sloth is named after our 3rd president Thomas Jefferson. In 1797, Jefferson became one of the first scientists to study sloth fossils.

The Jefferson’s ground sloth was about the size of a bull. It ate leaves and twigs.

Megalonyx is a Greek word that means “great claw”. Why do you think Jefferson used that name for this sloth?
Gopher
(Thomomys sp.)

There were many small mammals living in the valleys during the Ice Ages. Gopher fossils make up half of all the small mammal fossils found while digging the Diamond Valley Lake.

Mammoths and saber-toothed cats are extinct, but the gopher still exists today. Why do you think some of the small animals survived the Ice Ages when larger animals did not?
Tree frog
(*Pseudacris sp.*)

Some of the smallest fossils found during the digging at Diamond Valley Lake were from Ice Age amphibians and reptiles. One of the amphibians is the tree frog.

When you visit the Western Center you can see a living descendant of the Ice Age tree frog.

Has the tree frog changed much in 50,000 years?
Snake (Crotalus sp.)

One big discovery during the digging of Diamond Valley Lake was a very small back-boned fossil. This fossil may be the first Ice Age sidewinder found in California. Sidewinders are a type of rattlesnake.

Take a look at the rattlesnake’s vertebra, or backbone. How big is it compared to a mammoth’s backbone?

Can you find the name of another type of snake found while digging Diamond Valley Lake?
Freshwater snails and Land snails
(Gyraulus, Pupilla, and Succinea sp.)

The snails that were found while digging the Diamond Valley Lake give us an important clue about the past. They can only live where it is very wet. Finding these small fossils tells us that the valleys had streams and ponds during the Ice Age. It was much cooler and wetter than today.

How are these small fossils found by paleontologists?