In August 2009 Patrick Walker, an employee of the Morrison Lake Country Club, discovered the tooth of an Ice Age mammoth along the streambed of the club’s golf course. He informed club owners Dixie and Charley Riley and they in turn notified the Museum of Paleontology at the University of Michigan. The Rileys allowed paleontologist Dr. Daniel Fisher, archaeologist Dr. Scott Beld, paleontologist Dr. Adam Rountrey, and a crew to excavate the site. From April 24 to June 23, 2010, the crew worked, all the while explaining their findings to a curious public. School groups visited and people returned time and again to see the progress. The site has proven to be significant to both paleontology and Michigan archaeology.

The most important scientific findings at the site stem from its age—more than 14,000 years before present—and ‘forensic’ details gleaned from the bones themselves. Bones at this site were broken in a characteristically human fashion relating to tool-production and extraction of marrow for consumption. This marks the first time we have seen evidence of human-mammoth interaction in the eastern Great Lakes region, and it pushes the beginning of human history in this region to an earlier time than had previously been documented. Ongoing research will likely yield more surprises on interactions between Michigan’s human and large-mammal inhabitants near the close of our last Ice Age.