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**PRESERVED JUVENILE MAMMOTH DISCOVERED IN SIBERIA SHOWS SIGNS  
OF INTERACTIONS WITH HUMANS**

*- Premieres Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 8PM ET/PT -  
- Expedition co-funded by BBC and Discovery Channel U.S. -*

"Yuka," a beautifully preserved frozen mammoth carcass discovered by a French mammoth hunter in Siberia, could be the first ever found to show signs of an interaction with humans in that part of the world. Discovered by Bernard Buigues, the carcass was located near the shores of the Arctic Ocean, close to the Laptev Sea in northern Yakutia, Siberia. The expedition, funded by BBC and Discovery Channel, can be seen in the all-new special WOOLLY MAMMOTH: SECRETS FROM THE ICE, premiering on Discovery Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 8PM ET/PT.

As rising temperatures melt the Arctic faster than ever before, mammoth bones, tusks and even whole carcasses are emerging from the ice. This phenomenon has sparked a new black market trade – mammoth remains. Mammoth tusks in good condition can fetch \$100,000 each, but these remains are invaluable to scientific research. Each bone can tell you the story of the animal, and well preserved bone marrow could provide enough DNA to clone this great Ice Age beast.

Buigues is part of the international scientific organization "Mammuthus," a scientific expedition and heritage conservation program aiming to preserve and study relics telling the history of the past 50,000 years, and which works closely with the indigenous people of Siberia to bring prehistoric finds previously locked in the permafrost to wider scientific attention.

Says Mammuthus' Bernard Buigues, "Yuka is the most amazing and exciting discovery I've come across in over 15 years of Arctic expeditions."

A preliminary assessment carried out by Buigues and leading mammoth expert Professor Dan Fisher of the University of Michigan suggests the mammoth was attacked by large predators, probably lions, twice during its short life. Having survived the first attack and displaying healed wounds, the second attack may have accounted for the mammoth's death. However, the carcass has not been fully consumed and unusual cut marks on its body have led to speculation that humans might have driven the predator off the carcass before removing some of the body parts themselves. This type of human/predator interaction is still seen in modern Africa and was recently filmed for another BBC/Discovery Channel co-production "Human Planet," in which the Dorobo tribe in Kenya steal lion kills.

Much of the mammoth's flesh is intact and in some cases is still "pink," and retains much of its blonde and red woolly coat, showing that mammoths were capable of having the same hair colors as humans.

The mammoth, which was thought to be approximately two and a half years old when it died, appears to have been cut open at some point. Buigues and his colleagues are trying to establish whether this was done in the deep past or far more recently. Many of the bones appear to have been carefully removed (some found nearby), and the trunk, which can often be damaged or eaten when lions kill an elephant, was untouched and virtually perfectly preserved.

The removal of the mammoth's body parts is unusual and suggests that certain parts of the animal were possibly considered prime targets for consumption and use, while the rest of the animal was left, possibly for use at a later date. The cut marks appear to be precise and uniform, and some of the remaining limb bones seem to be marked by intentional cuts. Further analysis of the specimen will occur throughout this year and far more detailed investigations will be required to fully rule out the possibility that the mammoth was interfered with in modern times. The geological age of the specimen is not yet known but it could be 10,000 years old or more.

Buigues continued, "We're touching human prehistory. The discovery of Yuka sets us on a path marked with the footsteps of our ancestors."

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