

Purse State Park – Nanjemoy, Md.
By Dave Lines



"At our rock club meeting on Tuesday evening November 28th, the NW wind had been blowing for 2 days. I told everyone that during the winter, we would be announcing "short notice" local Fossil field trips if it looked like it was going to be a very low or blow out tide.

Well, I was pleasantly surprised at 8:00 o'clock the next morning when I checked the NOAA website [tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/waterlevels] which shows "Water Levels" in real time. I looked at 2 stations --- Solomons, MD and Washington, D.C. – and both showed water levels already below "predicted levels".

That was the first time in months that the water levels had been so low. It had been Full Moon on Monday and that, combined with the higher barometric pressure and NW wind which had continued all Tuesday night, resulted in a very low tide.

Even though the winds had died down and were beginning to shift to the south, I figured that the water level on the Potomac would remain low enough for the next several hours to find some fossils. Since the predicted low in the Purse area was around 12:30 pm, I grabbed my hip boots, bucket, a heavy coat, hat, and warm gloves and immediately drove to Purse State Park (now part of Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area).

I arrived at the empty parking area around 9:15 am, put on my boots and headed down the walking path through the woods to the beach. Wow -- it was perfect --- the water was already way out. At 9:30 am, I snapped a picture with my cell phone (Aren't they great?) and started searching the beach. Because I had to be in St. Mary's County by 2 pm, I spent just two (2) hours total looking. The pictures tell the rest of the story."

