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Calgary researchers find meteorite bits near Lloydminster

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A University of Calgary student got the thrill of a lifetime when she found bits of meteorite from a fireball that lit up the sky over Alberta and Saskatchewan last week.

Edmonton Journal: Saturday, November 29, 2008

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LLOYDMINSTER, Sask — A University of Calgary student got the thrill of a lifetime when she found bits of meteorite from a fireball that lit up the sky over Alberta and Saskatchewan

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last week. Master's student Ellen Milley was travelling with meteorite expert Alan Hildebrand south of Lloydminster on Thursday afternoon when she noticed some dark bits on a small frozen pond.

The first dark bit they investigated brought disappointment, as it turned out to be a leaf. But the next one proved to be a cosmic treasure — a 250-gram piece of black space rock.

"It's incredibly exciting," said Milley, who found the meteorite fragment around 3:45 p.m. in a picturesque valley known as Buzzard Coulee.

"It's a very unique opportunity, because not many meteorites are found in Canada."

The property, about two kilometres from the Battle River valley, belongs to rancher Ian Mitchell. He didn't see the fireball in the sky on Nov. 20, but planned to go hunting for space rocks after news came down that the meteor may have exploded into thousands of pieces in the region.

Now that he knows he has meteorites, he isn't sure what to do with them. They belong to the owners of the land on which they fall. So far, about a dozen small pieces have been located, all on frozen ponds because that's where they are most visible.

Scientists hope to find much larger pieces, and Mitchell said he might sell those if people are willing to pay. Smaller fragments will probably be donated to universities and research groups, he said.

Hildebrand hopes to have people searching in the area. The race is on to find as many pieces as possible before the snow comes, he said.

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