



A Conversation with Rhonda Lucas Donald

Author of
Dino Treasures, Dino Tracks
and *Deep in the Desert*

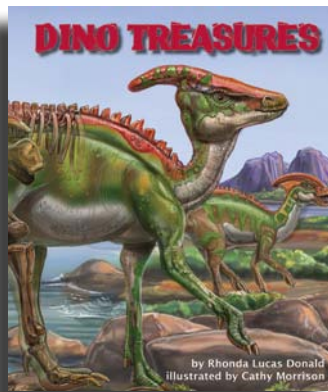
When did you become interested in writing?

I enjoyed writing even as a child. Getting a good response to my writing from friends and family helped! by college I knew I wanted to write for children, and I've been able to combine that with my interest in science.

All of your books are set to tune, has music always been important to you?

Yes, I've always enjoyed singing. I can remember singing along with nursery rhymes on my little record player as a kid. Record players, by the way, were the iPods of the past! I still sing in a local chorus. And I love singing with children when I do school and library programs. Combining pictures with writing

and song gives young readers three ways to learn.

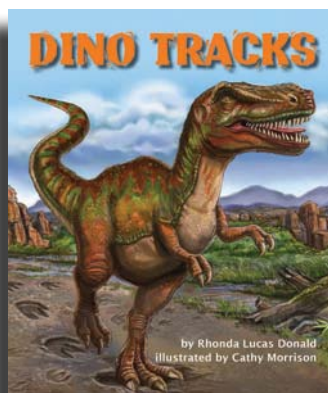


What is the most frequently asked question you encounter as a writer, and how do you respond?

I'm often asked about how to get published. This is something we writers are always working on, and groups such as the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators are an invaluable resources, as are other writers.

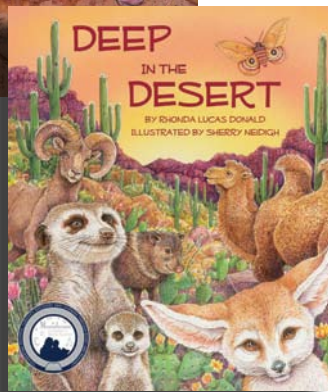
What sparks your creativity?

I find nature to be inspirational. There's nothing more exciting to me than seeing a wild animal especially one I haven't seen before. And, I like to try and understand complicated scientific concepts such as gravity and



space-time. Wrapping my head around complex ideas and being able to explain them to children keeps me learning and questioning.

*Was there a particular event or person that first sparked your interest in dinosaurs and in particular paleontology? (If not) How did you decide to begin to write *Dino Tracks and Dino Treasures*?*



How did you get the idea to write “Deep in the Desert?”

I love writing about different habitats and the plants and animals living in them. Living nowhere near the desert, I find these arid ecosystems exotic and fascinating.

What is next?

I have a new book coming out about ocean animals. And I have several other ideas percolating. We'll see what happens!

I have been fascinated with dinosaurs since I could first read. I remember seeing the pictures in books and trying to get my head around the size of the dinos. So it started early. When I was in high school, we were on a field trip in the mountains of Virginia. We stopped by the side of the road to look at the rock layers visible where the road had been cut through. That's when it first dawned on me just how old the Earth is. Each of the hundreds of layers represented many thousands of years. You could really see how they formed. I've also done some amateur fossil hunting and found several in stream beds. That's like finding treasure.

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