

Bid to Clone Mammoth Begins

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A team of Russian and South Korean scientists are starting a project to clone an ancient mammoth sometime in the next 10 years, RIA-Novosti reported.

An agreement has been signed between Russia's Northeast Federal University and the South Korean Center for Biotechnical Research to study the genome of ancient animals.

One of the project's central tasks is cloning a mammoth, said Semyon Grigoryev of Yakutsk's Research Center of Applied Ecology of the North, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

The scientific team plans to look for genetic material from mammoth remains in the Far East, Grigoryev said. Remains that have been found in the past have had cells with damaged genes, making them unsuitable for use in the cloning project.

Remains of mammoths, which went extinct about 4,500 years ago according to Grigoryev, are periodically found in the permafrost of Russia's northern regions.

Once a suitable specimen has been recovered, the material will be taken to a laboratory in Seoul, South Korea, where scientists have experience cloning large animals.

The scientists plan to place the genetic material into an elephant egg, which will then be placed in the womb of a female elephant, Grigoryev explained. They hope the elephant will then give birth to a live mammoth calf.

Grigoryev estimates that the project could manage to produce a live mammoth within 10 to 20 years, with some kind of preliminary result of the research expected within just a few years.

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