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Chasing rainbows

Grover Krantz, an associate professor of physical anthropology at Washington State University, says casts of footprints taken last June near Walla Walla have left him more convinced than ever of the existence of Sasquatch.

The footprints were taken after a U.S. Forest Service official reported coming face to face with the creature who left the tracks. The prints were 14 inches long, 7 inches wide and 2 inches deep. The Forest Service called them a probable hoax, but Krantz disagrees.

"Of course, having the evidence and getting it accepted are two different things," he said.

How true.

Sasquatches are the "legendary" ape-like creatures that some people claim populate the forests of the Pacific Northwest. Most people don't admit to believing it.

Krantz says he has talked to 34 people who claim to have had contact with a Sasquatch. About half of the 34 were frauds, he suspects. This is the second set of footprints he believes are legitimate.

Widespread skepticism seems inevitable, unless a Sasquatch is captured, and caged for scientists to verify and the rest of us to see. The reason that hasn't happened yet, Krantz said, is because the Sasquatch is a very rare animal — he estimates that 200 or so exist — and its habits are nocturnal. It also looks like the kind of thing someone would make up as a joke.

Such pursuits are harmless, really, but as a scientist, Krantz risks public ridicule and the contempt of his peers by taking up a cause that most consider nonsense.

Still, if he ever really does find a sasquatch ...

The world always has had — and probably always will — a handful of adventurers unable to resist the temptation to chase rainbows. Just enough of them find a pot of gold, that while the rest of us scoff, nevertheless ...