



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

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Every Fossil Needs a Friend

#30-January 2016

The Lighter Side of Christmas



The 27th Annual “The Lighter Side of Christmas” parade for Woodland Park was held on Saturday, December 4th, 2015. The day had been cold and snowy with several inches falling in early afternoon which added a holiday feeling to the event.

One of the 30 or more floats in the parade this year was an entry by the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds and the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Each year, the parade committee for Woodland Park chooses a non-profit organization to be the

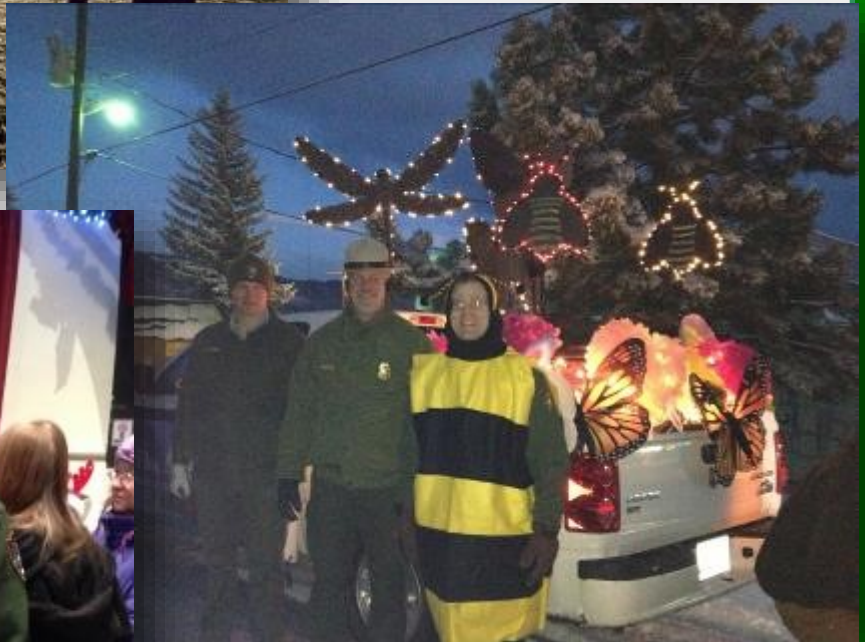
beneficiary of the proceeds from the parade which could be as much as \$10,000. With 2016 being the Centennial year for the National Park Service, the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds were chosen as the recipients for this year. The Monument and the Friends decided that it would be important for us to enter a float in 2015 to learn all about the event, the process and how to build a float.

The commitment to enter a float meant the attendance at many meetings with the Parade committee and much hard work and many hours to build the float. It was so much fun to walk in the parade beside our beautiful float which won one of the 4 awards given each year. The float was built on one of the Monument’s trucks and was covered with flowers, insects and lights with lovely “bee people” wearing blinking lights walking along side of the float. With the music of the “Flight of the Bumble Bee” playing, everyone had a great time carrying the banner of the Monument in the front and the Friends banner in the back. (See pictures)



--AND the award given to our float was for the “Most Unique” float which was given after the parade at the party at the Cultural Center. A BIG thank you to everyone who helped from beginning to end with the entire event. It was a huge undertaking.

Now the work for the 2016 float begins in earnest!! We need many worker bees!! We need people to help soliciting donations, attending meetings, planning our float and making it. Please consider helping with this big undertaking in some way. Not only is the entire process going to be fun, but it will bring in a lot of financial support for the Monument. If you would like more information and/or wish to help in some way, please call Linda Laverty at 520-5939. Thank you for considering to help.



New Paleo Intern Modernizes Fossil Website

My name is Katie McComas and I graduated last year from the University of Colorado Boulder with a Master's of Science in Museum and Field Studies. I specialize in paleontology collections management and fossil mammals, and I plan to build a career working with paleontology collections. I started my GeoCorps™ America internship in the Paleontology Division at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument at the end of September, and will be here into February.

My primary goal is to get the searchable online database of published Florissant fossils up and running on its new software platform, which is now hosted at the University of Colorado Boulder. The database acts as a data repository for Florissant fossils, which reside in museum collections across the United States and abroad, and documents the long history of scientific research conducted on Florissant fossils. It is a vital resource for researchers working on taxa that are known or were originally described from the Florissant Formation. My job is to ensure the accuracy of the data carried over from the previous NPS-hosted database and to gather new data from articles published since 2002 (when the previous database was put online). The new database software will allow us to edit and add to the data in real time, keeping it up to date with the latest research. It also enables us to send data out to centralized data hubs that will increase its discoverability, adding the long history of research at Florissant to a rapidly expanding online library of paleontological collections.

I am also working to identify additional mammalian fossils from the Florissant Formation in collaboration with my former advisor, Dr. Jaelyn Eberle at the University of Colorado Boulder. Dr. Eberle and Karen Lloyd (another previous student of Dr. Eberle's who has published research on the mammals of Florissant) visited Florissant in early October to prospect for fossil mammals, which involves surface collecting from sediment that has decomposed in the recent rains, and using sieves to sort sediment by size in order to find the tiny teeth. Coarse sediment is checked for fossils on site, but we bring medium and fine-grained sediment back to the lab to sort under the microscope. The most abundant and useful mammalian fossils are teeth, which can be diagnostic to the level of family, genus, and even species. I am currently sorting through my fourth gallon-sized bag of sediment, and have managed to find five molars and a very small jaw fragment that I will be working to identify in the coming weeks. Because so few fossil mammals have been found at Florissant, there is great potential for new discoveries even when they are very tiny!

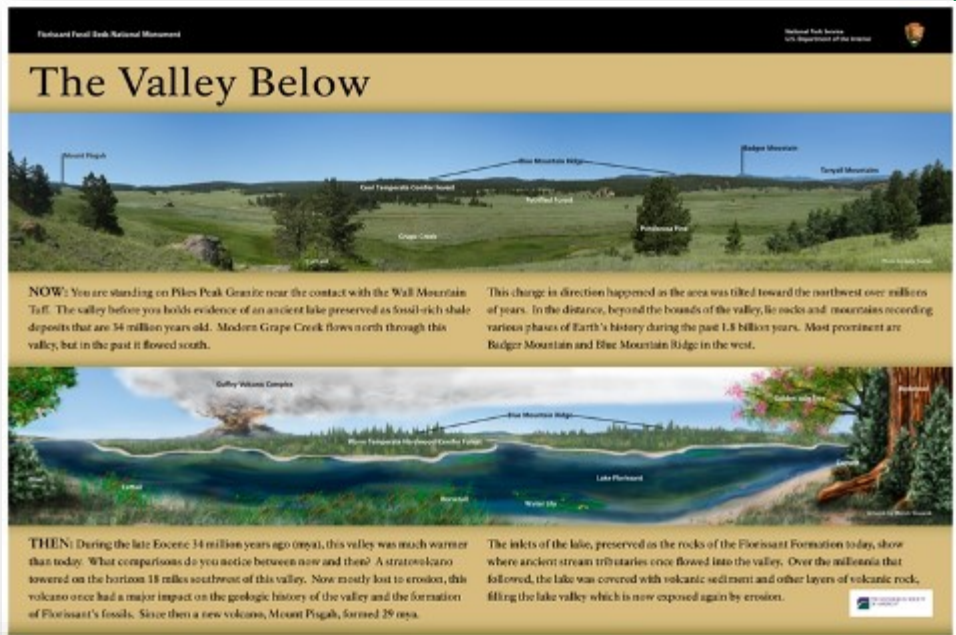


Florissant Fossil Beds Opens New Geologic Trail

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is proud to unveil a new set of trailside exhibit panels (“waysides”) about the monument’s geology. The exhibits were developed by the monument’s Paleontology Division as part of a new “Geologic Trail” which opened in October. The new exhibits help fulfill the purpose of the monument’s enabling legislation: “To preserve and interpret for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the excellently preserved insect and leaf fossils and related geologic sites and objects.” Florissant Fossil Beds is well known for its fossil plants, insects, and stumps, which are all heavily emphasized in tours and exhibits. However, until recently the latter half of the legislation has been relatively unaddressed. The new outdoor exhibits are now fulfilling this need by providing information about the broader story of the geology of Florissant Fossil Beds. In addition, our new map “Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument Geologic Guide” – a large geologic map of the monument including many photos – will be coming soon!

Consisting of five outdoor exhibits, the new trail follows a half mile stretch of the Hornbek Wildlife Loop, concluding on a new trail spur overlooking the magnificent Florissant valley. Four of these trailside exhibits are completely new and were created by two Paleontology GeoCorps interns this summer: Emily Thorpe who is responsible for “The Roots of Pikes Peak” and Mariah Slovacek who constructed “The Present Exposes the Past”, “On Top of a Forest on the Bottom of a Lake”, and “The Valley Below.” The exhibit content was made from scratch using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop with input from several researchers and members of the monument staff. The fifth wayside, “Remnants of Nature’s Powerful Forces”, was made several years ago but is just now making its debut after never having made it to its original exhibition at the Barksdale Picnic area and ending up inside of a barn instead.

The new exhibits were installed on October 15 with their debut on Saturday October 17 coinciding with the annual Friends of Florissant meeting at the monument. The Friends of Florissant were treated to a presentation of the new waysides led by park paleontologist Dr. Herb Meyer.



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Pictured above: Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds (Left) at the junction of the new Geologic Trail with Dr. Herb Meyer (right) presenting and GSA GeoCorps Guest Scientist Mariah Slovacek. Photo by Katie McComas.

Winter Ecology Workshop—Saturday January 23

Have you ever wondered how the animals of our area survive our harsh Colorado winter? Have you ever wondered who or what is making the tracks in the snow near your house? Perhaps it is time to embrace winter and explore the wondrous world of winter ecology.

Join volunteer interpretive ranger Steven Veatch and explore the interrelationships of plants and animals in the winter environment. This program will investigate physical and biological processes and their interactions in snow-covered environments. This two hour program will begin with an indoor presentation of about 20 minutes followed by explorations in the field. Come prepared for winter by dressing in layers, bringing plenty of snacks and water, and being prepared to be outside and do some hiking (less than a mile) in winter conditions. This program will be family friendly with lots of hands on fun activities but most appropriate for 10 years and up.

Admission for the program is the regular park entrance fee, which is \$5 per adult (16 years and older); children and federal pass holders are free. Families with one or more fourth graders will be able to receive a free federal lands pass good for one year. For additional information, please call (719) 748-3253 or visit our website: www.nps.gov/flfo or on Facebook at /FlorissantNPS

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 409 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

Hikes for Your Health Program—Starting January 24

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument to Host “Hikes for Your Health Program” Starting January 24

Is getting more exercising one of your New Year's Resolutions? Do you enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking or snowshoeing or would like to try? Do you enjoy visiting national parks? Have you ever considered a national park area as a place to get healthy? On Sunday, January 24, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument will begin a “Hikes for Your Health” series.

Hikes for Your Health will run every Wednesday and Sunday from January 24 to Wednesday, March 16, 2016.

These ranger-led hikes will vary in length from 2 – 5 miles. Depending on conditions, the hikes may either be on foot or by snowshoe. Participants must provide their own snow shoes and safety gear such as layered clothing, appropriate footwear, water, food. It is recommended to check with your physician before beginning any fitness program. Participants must be 10 years or older. The fee for the program is \$5.00 per adult (16 years or older) or free with one of the many federal land passes.

The first hike will begin at the visitor center at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument at 10:00 AM on Sunday, January 24 and will go on the Sawmill Trail (2.3 miles).

For additional information, please call (719) 748-3253 or visit our website: www.nps.gov/flfo or on Facebook at /FlorissantNPS

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Upcoming Fee Free Days at the Park

January 18-Martin Luther King Jr. Day

April 16-24-National Park Week

August 25-28 National Park Service Birthday Weekend

September 24-National Public Lands Day

November 11-Veterans day

The Great Backyard Bird Count—2016

The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds Inc. invite you to join us at the Florissant Fossil Beds NM for our 4th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count event on Saturday, February 13, 2016. The event will begin at 9 AM in the yurt with instructions on how to do the count, refreshments (to keep you warm) and a special drawing of birding items at 11:45. There will be some special indoor activities for young children during the counting time.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a fun and easy Citizen Scientist event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds worldwide to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing and how to protect them and their environments. In 2015, 140,000 participants submitted their observations online creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded. Come help to be one of those recording bird populations and behaviors in 2016.

Be sure to wear appropriate clothing for the weather so that you will be able to go outside for the count. To be a “legal” count, you must participate for at least 15 minutes and it could be 2 hours at the Monument.



The GBBC event will continue after lunch at 1 PM – 3PM with many fun bird related activities for children and families including a scavenger hunt, making bird feeders and matching bird beaks to their food.

Come join us for a fun filled day. Don’t forget that if you have a fourth grader or have friends with a fourth grader that they can get a one year pass for all 409 NPS areas at the Monument. This pass is the 4th graders and it will allow those with the fourth grader to also get in free.

If you wish more information on the GBBC event, please call Sally McCracken at 719-687-9204 or 719-510-5518 ©. See you on n February 13th!!!



How many birds will you find?

19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 12-15, 2016



Join in! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

birdcount.org

Florissant Fossile Beds NM
February 13, Starts 9am
In the Yurt
Contact Info: Sally 687-9204
or 510-5518

White-breasted Nuthatch
Photo: Nick Saunders/GBBC



Sponsored
in part by:



Pikes Peak Historical Society 2016 Calendar of Events

Chautauquas are a public service of the Pikes Peak Historical Society. There is no charge for admission and refreshments are served.
Chautauquas are normally held at the Florissant Library unless otherwise noted.

<p style="text-align: center;">Wildlife Management in Teller County Tim Kroenig, Colo. Dept. of Parks & Wildlife, speaker Sunday, February 21, 2pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PPHS Annual Meeting Saturday, March 19, 12:00pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Geocaching, A Modern Day Treasure Hunt Kathy & Rudy Perry, speakers Sunday, April 17, 2pm Florissant Library</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Isabella Bird Christine Ford, speakers Sunday, May 15, 2pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Vendetta of Felipe Espinosa Adam James Jones, speakers Sunday, June 19, 2pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Heritage Day * Information Pending *</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Tabeguache Ute Dance * Information pending *</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PPHS Annual Volunteer Brunch Saturday, September 18, 12:00pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PPHS Annual Auction Saturday, October 15, 2:00pm Lake George Charter School Gym</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Veteran's Day Ceremony Friday, November 11 Florissant Pioneer Cemetery</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ute Legends Celinda Kaelin, speaker Sunday, November 20, 2:00pm Florissant Library</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PPHS Christmas Party Saturday, December 17, 12:00pm Florissant Library</p>