



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#14—March, 2012

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Superintendent Keith Payne Retires

The Friends would like to announce the retirement of Keith Payne, the Superintendent of Florissant Fossil Beds NM as of February 28, 2013. His support to the Friends over the last 6 years has been extraordinary and we will miss him. We wish him well in all of his future endeavors. The next e-newsletter will contain a full background on all that Keith has done over the years for the Florissant Fossil Beds, in particular his dedication to getting the new visitor center.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

On Saturday, February 16, 2013, the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds held their 2nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count event in conjunction with the International Count held for four days every year in February. Over 120 people, including 11 Board members of the Friends, children and parents from 7 YES Clubs (Young Environmental Stewards - Catamount Institute), other Friends members and the Monument staff took part in the GBBC.

The Friends provided refreshments for everyone in the Yurt warmed by the fire in the pellet stove. Hot chocolate and cookies were appreciated by all.



From 9 AM - 12 Noon, the group divided in half, spent part of the morning doing the bird count and the other half of the morning at the new Visitor Center where they learned about the way the solar powered building works. Ranger Mike gave them a tour of the building. An outside scavenger hunt and the film about the Monument finished off the days activities.

The bird count was done in small groups led by adult bird enthusiasts. The numbers were low because of high winds, but a good time was had by all. 8 different species of birds were counted and 68 individual birds were counted including a beautiful red-tailed hawk. Everyone submitted their counts to the GBBC website to be included in the international count.

The GBBC is a count done every year in the middle of February for 4 days. The first 15 years, the event was just done in the US, Canada and Mexico. Starting this year, the event will be international. The count helps scientists to study, weather patterns, climate change and the health of bird populations. Last years total count of birds was 17,000,000. As the newsletter goes to press, the count is almost 30,000,000 individual birds. Check lists for the 4 days will be accepted until March 1, 2013.

If you are interested in knowing more about this event, go to birdsource.org and click on GBBC. Do come and join us next year for this fun event.



Pebble Pups Take National Awards

In a ceremony at the Florissant Fossil Beds NM on Saturday, January 19th, Steven Veatch paid tribute to his youth paleontologists; Pebble Pups Ciena Higginbotham, 15 and Jack Shimon, 8, who took first and third place respectively, in their age categories in a national art contest.

The contest was sponsored by the National Park Service and the American Geological Institute to celebrate the third annual National Fossil Day on October 17, 2012 throughout the country.

The ceremony was held in the new Visitor Center at the Florissant Fossil Beds NM and was well attended by family and friends as well as representatives from the Lake George Gem and Mineral Club, members of the Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies, staff of the Fossil Beds and members of the Friends of the Fossil Beds who provided refreshments in the yurt after the presentation of awards.

The Friends extend congratulations to both Jack and Ciena and to Friends' member Steven Veatch who received an award plaque for his work with the Pebble Pups from the Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies.



Marvin Brown

It is with great sadness that the Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds inform you of the death of Marvin Brown, a founding member of the Friends of Florissant. Marv was born November 21, 1933.

Marv was the husband of Pat Brown, also a founding member of the Friends. Pat and Marv were married 53 years. They have 2 sons,

Jerry and Daniel and 6 grandchildren: Morgan, Micah, Kirstie, Karlie, Derek and Travis. Marv worked for Quest as an installer and a manager. His interests were skiing, hunting, dogs and family. He was a life member of the NA Hunting Club, the Elks Lodge #316 (Cripple Creek) and was a member of the Masonic Lodge for 50 years.

Marv, Pat and Jerry were members of the Friends from its beginnings 25 years ago. Marv served on many committees. Jerry was chairperson for the March for Parks events. Pat served on the Board for many years as secretary. Marv will be missed by everyone in the Friends and at the Monument.

Visitor Center = Sustainable Technology

The new Visitor Center represents a great leap forward in sustainable technology.

See Ranger Jeff singing about it by clicking [HERE](#).

