



# Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#23—April 4, 2014

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## The Fossil Beds NM Brings Visitors to Teller Co.

### Tourism to Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument creates \$3.3 million in Economic Benefit Report shows visitor spending supports jobs in local economy

Florissant, Colorado – A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that 62,637 visitors to Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument in 2012 spent \$3.37 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 47 jobs in the local area.

“Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is proud to welcome visitors from across the country and around the world,” said Superintendent Michelle Wheatley. “We are delighted to share the story of this place and the experiences it provides and to use the park as a way to introduce our visitors to this part of the country and all that it offers. National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy – returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service. We appreciate the partnership and support from community members, local businesses, and neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities.”

The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Christopher Huber and Lynne Koontz for the National Park Service. The report shows \$14.7 billion of direct spending by 283 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 243,000 jobs nationally, with 201,000 jobs found in these gateway communities, and had a cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy of \$26.75 billion.

According to the report most visitor spending supports jobs in restaurants, grocery and convenience stores (39 percent), hotels, motels and B&Bs (27 percent), and other amusement and recreation (20 percent).

To download the report visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm>.

The report includes information for visitor spending at individual parks and by state.

To learn more about national parks in Colorado and how the National Park Service works with Colorado communities to help preserve local history, conserve the environment, and provide outdoor recreation, go to [www.nps.gov/COLORADO](http://www.nps.gov/COLORADO).

For additional information about Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument visit the park’s website at [www.nps.gov/flfo](http://www.nps.gov/flfo), follow us on Facebook/FlorissantNPS or call at (719) 748 – 3253, ext. 102.

### National park tourism in Colorado creates \$347.4 million in economic benefit

#### *New report shows visitor spending supports 4,991 jobs in Centennial State*

DENVER – A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that the 5,811,546 visitors to Colorado’s national parks in 2012 spent \$347.4 million and supported 4,991 jobs in the state.

“From Mesa Verde to Dinosaur National Monument, the national parks of Colorado attract millions of visitors a year from across the country and around the world,” said Sue Masica, director of NPS’s Intermountain Region, which includes Colorado and seven other states. “Whether these park visitors are out for an afternoon, on a school field trip or taking a long family vacation, they come for a great experience -- and they end up spending a little money along the way, too. This new report confirms that national park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service. This reality makes parks tourism an important factor in Colorado’s economy as well. It’s a result

we all can support.”

Colorado’s 12 national parks include: Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Great Sand Dunes, Mesa Verde and Rocky Mountain national parks; Colorado, Dinosaur, Florissant Fossil Beds, Hovenweep and Yucca House national monuments; Bent’s Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre national historic sites, and Curecanti National Recreation Area.

The peer-reviewed NPS visitor spending analysis was conducted for the Park Service by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas, Christopher Huber and Lynne Koontz. The national report shows \$14.7 billion of direct spending by 283 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 243,000 jobs nationally -- with 201,000 of those jobs in these park “gateway” communities -- and had a cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy of \$26.75 billion.

According to the report, most visitor spending supports jobs in restaurants, grocery and convenience stores (39 percent), hotels, motels and B&Bs (27 percent), and other amusement and recreation (20 percent).

To download the report, visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm>.

The report includes information for visitor spending by park and by state.

To learn more about Colorado’s national parks and how the National Park Service works with communities in the state to help preserve local history, conserve the environment, and provide outdoor recreation, go to [www.nps.gov/colorado](http://www.nps.gov/colorado).

## Monument Moves Museum Many Miles

Many of the Monument’s collections – including the herbarium, modern insects, and cultural objects – were moved to the collection facility at Rocky Mountain National Park on February 27-28. This move came about as a part of the National Park Service’s regional collections plan, and as the collection storage space in the Monument’s new facility is too small to be able to accommodate all of the collections on-site. The 1263 sheet herbarium collection includes pressed samples of all of the plants in the Monument and other areas where we have done research in California, Mexico, and China. Many of the identifications of these were made by Bill Weber, who is the authority on the flora of Colorado. All of the herbarium sheets were digitized at high resolution before the move, and



*Herbarium Bristlecone Pine*



*Collection Building at Rocky Mountain*

we plan to make the images available through a public website. The insect collection includes 630 insects that were collected by former volunteer F. Martin Brown during the 1970s and 1980s. An additional 205 cultural and historic objects were also moved, and these were added to the Florissant archaeology collections already housed at Rocky Mountain National Park.

The monument’s entire collection of more than 10,000 fossils and other geologic objects was moved into our small collection room in the new Paleontology Lab last summer and will remain at the monument for research and exhibit. This new space is already near capacity with fossils and will fill rapidly as new excavations are made. The monument has ongoing funded projects to complete the relocation and reorganization of the paleontology collection and to develop a method to stabilize the delicate paper shale to prevent deterioration. The work on these projects will continue through the summer with assistance from Paleontology Interns.

## Wrapping Up a Year-Long Internship

by Alison Dernbach

Hello! My name is Alison Dernbach and I am wrapping up a GeoCorps internship at the Florissant Fossil Beds. In the 52 weeks here I have started and completed many projects with a focus on the collections. One giant project was moving the fossil collections at the beginning of last summer. After that move, I took on the task of organizing the entire collection and updating the new locations of specimens in our park database. The whole move and reorganization took many months to complete. Other projects throughout the year included organizing a collection of Kodachrome slides containing images of Florissant fossils from around the country and world, creating informative handouts for a Geological Society of America field trip, moving our herbarium and modern insect collection to Rocky Mountain National Park, creating a t-shirt design for the park through Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and keeping our collection database current and correct.

This internship has been incredibly educational and fun. I learned so much about museum collection management and had amazing opportunities to actively participate in many of the collection projects. The experience gave me confidence to pursue careers related to collection management if I decide to go that route. Even though I grew up in Woodland Park, this internship provided a great opportunity to learn more about the area I call home.



## COPLENS FROM COLORADO AND THEIR FOSSIL DISCOVERY IN WASHINGTON STATE: A STORY ABOUT MY ANCESTORS.

by Larry Coplen

The Florissant Fossil Beds owe their preservation to the Coplen family and, in particular, John D. and Charlotte Coplen Hill. With others, JD and Adam Hill, purchased the property in 1883. JD and his associates created a "museum association," an entity organized to sell fossils, which Charlotte did for many years, along with charging a fee for collecting. Charlotte sold the fossils she collected to museums around the country, including to Dr. Samuel Scudder at Harvard. Charlotte set a historic record for the greatest number of type specimens collected by an individual. However, JD and Charlotte were not the only Coplen family members to collect important fossil specimens. Could it be that JD want to exhibit his big fossil stump (which didn't budge, but a pile of petrified wood did) in the Chicago Exposition to "best" his cousins in a family rivalry?

Larry Coplen, a descendant from another branch of the Coplen family, tells of their family adventures in the fossil business in Washington.

"My great-great grandfather, Henry B. Coplen with his wife, Julia, and sons, James (my great grandfather), Benjamin, Lewis, George, Alonzo, and Isaac, lived in Colorado in the years around 1863 to 1865. They did some mining in areas in Colorado and lived in the small town of Colorado City. Also in Colorado was Henry's brother, William E. Coplen of Denver, and his sons John D., Silas H., James, and George, and daughters, Lucetta and Charlotte. Around 1865, Henry and his family moved west, eventually settling in Eastern Washington in the Spokane Valley. They homesteaded there and founded the small farming town of Latah, just south of Spokane. Benjamin Coplen (JD's and Charlotte's first cousin) was the town's first mayor."

"In June of 1876 (seven years before the Coplen's purchased the Florissant property) on their homestead at Latah, an unusually wet time of the time, Latah Creek was flowing large through their property. The Coplens saw an oozing area of peat bog and what appeared to be small springs bubbling out. Cattle used to get stuck in there. Out of curiosity, they got a long pole and started poking down into the bog. They felt the pole strike something hard. So they added a hook to the end of the pole and began probing again. They started retrieving extra large unfamiliar bones such as a pelvis, backbone, legs, ten-foot long curved ivory tusks, and a large skull. All were much larger than any farm animal. Over the days and weeks, they pulled out enough bones to nearly complete the skeletal remains of what was an ancient woolly mammoth. There were remains of other smaller ancient animals and some spear and arrow heads. Professionals from various universities were contacted and came to see, study, and take photos. Also, reporters from the newspapers came. The skeleton was transported by land and by river and shown at various fairs and exhibits around the Pacific Northwest. It eventually sold and changed ownership several times over the years. The woolly mammoth skeleton ended up in Chicago. One hundred years ago, it was finally purchased and assembled for exhibit at the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History where it remains on display."

## Friends Day at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

### Saturday June 28, 2014 — Join!

Meet National Park Service Paleontologist Dr. Herb Meyer, his staff and this summer's interns for a behind the scene tour of the fossil lab and collection. This is a very unique tour exclusively offered to the "Friends of the Fossil Beds" members. Due to space limitations, the small group tours will begin at 9 am and last approximately an hour. A minimum of four to five tours will be held and will end at 2 pm. See how these fragile fossils are handled, documented and safely stored. Also learn about current paleontological research and activities performed by the staff and interns.

During the fossil lab tours concurrent nature hikes and guided tours will be offered to the Friends. Each tour will be approximately an hour and will coordinate with the do not miss fossil lab tours.

#### Florissant Fossil Beds Visitor Center Alternative Energy Tour

This National Park Service maintenance person Mike McClain will lead the tour and describe LEAD certification and the energy efficient construction techniques and materials used to meet those standards. Also described and viewed will be the thermal and photovoltaic systems which power, heat and cool the newly constructed visitor center.

#### Erosion Control, Trails and Blue Birds

This one and quarter mile hike on the Hornbek Wildlife Loop will be led by National Park Service Volunteer and Trails Coordinator John Schwabe. The hike is on gentle to moderately steep terrain and will describe what it takes to build and maintain a sustainable trail. Hand placed rock steps, causeways and water bars will be examined for effectiveness and durability. One added bonus, a great view of the park and blue bird nesting area in a nice aspen grove. Please bring binoculars, water bottle and sturdy hiking shoes.

A Friends table will be located in front of the visitor center for membership information and tour schedules. The Friends Day at the Florissant Fossil Beds is an important membership drive for The Friends organization. Non-members can participate in the exclusive tours by joining the Friends. Membership is \$15 for individual, \$25 for family membership. Join at the Park or by clicking [HERE](#). Bring a friend and make a Friend.

JUST A REMINDER , a picnic lunch will be served to Friends members between 12 and 1pm

For more information contact: John Schwabe 719-689-3174

## National Trails Day at Florissant Fossil Beds NM

The National Park Service, the Coalition of the Upper South Platte, and the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds will be sponsoring a volunteer, trail maintenance workday on Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 3pm in honor of National Trails Day.

After several years of budget cuts and last year's heavy fall rains, Florissant Fossil Beds trails need your help. Show your love for the park, its 15 miles of trails, and experience a beautiful and unique landscape. Come join National Park Service staff, volunteers and natural resource conservation professionals and perform some much needed trail work.

The project will be "hands on" with varying degrees of difficulty and distance from the Visitor Center. All skill levels are welcome and an appropriate task will be assigned to you. Children over 10 years old can participate with a parent or guardian. Youth groups that are interested in participating need to contact Ranger Jeff Wolin @719-748-3253 ext.202.

Volunteers will meet outside of the Florissant Fossil Beds Visitor Center at the volunteer sign up table at 9 am. All volunteers will be required to fill in an official signup sheet, and attend an orientation/safety briefing before receiving assignments. Work groups will be leaving the Visitor Center area at 9:40 am. Hardhats will be provided and some gloves and safety glasses are available. A light lunch will be provided in the field by the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds. Extra water will also be provided.

Please bring; work gloves, sunglasses or safety glasses, sunscreen, water containers, any applicable medicines (including epi-pens, insulin and inhalers), snacks and a sack lunch for those with dietary restrictions.

Please wear; sturdy work boots/shoes with ankle support, long pants, (a long sleeve shirt is recommended). Please leave pets at home.

RVSP by contacting; Jeff Wolin, Florissant Fossil Beds N. M. 719-748-3253 ext.202

Lisa Patton, Volunteer Coordinator CUSP 719-748-0033

John Schwabe, Project Coordinator "Friends" 719-689-3174





## National Park Week—Fee Free

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument along with America's 401 other national park units will celebrate National Park Week from April 19 – 27. Fees in all national park areas will be waived on Saturday, April 19 and Sunday, April 20.

The theme for this year's National Park Week invites visitors to "Go Wild" for history, nature, culture, wildlife, and fun in America's national parks. Additional information, including a list of National Park Week events nationwide can be found online at [www.nationalparkweek.org](http://www.nationalparkweek.org). At Florissant Fossil Beds visitors are invited to "Go Wild for Trees and Animals" - both ancient and modern.

Consider starting your visit in the Monument's new, state-of-the-art visitor center where you can view the park film "Shadows of the Past", explore hands on exhibits, and visit the recently remodeled bookstore. Children can earn their Junior Ranger Badge or Patch through the free, Junior Ranger program. If hiking is more your style, enjoy one of the many secluded trails at the park. There are 14 miles of trails that wind through the peaceful, montane forests of the Florissant valley. The Monument also has two picnic areas where you can enjoy an outdoor lunch. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is open daily 9AM – 5:00PM.

Besides the fee-free weekend on April 19-20, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument will offer visitors the opportunity to participate in several ranger-led programs:

Sunday, April 20 - "Go Wild About Trees: Ancient and Modern"

10:00AM – 3:00PM. Join Ranger Whitney at the arts and crafts table where you will make tree cookie nametags. Meet in the Visitor Center.

10:00AM – 11:30PM. Join Ranger Shawn to learn about "Culturally Modified Trees" which are living artifacts that tell us about the Ute people and other native peoples that once lived within the area that is now Florissant Fossil Beds. Meet at the Visitor Center. 1.5 mile roundtrip.

1:00AM – 2:30PM. Join Ranger Denise for a walk in the petrified forest and learn about the volcano that turned giant redwood trees into stone. Meet at the Visitor Center. 1.5 mile roundtrip.

Saturday, April 26th, "Go Wild About Animals: Ancient and Modern"

11:00AM. Join Geologist Steve Veatch to learn about the only ice age mammal found at Florissant Fossil Beds – Milo the Mammoth. Meet at the Visitor Center. 45 minutes.

12:00PM. Join Volunteer Interpreter Allan Studer for a talk about living in or hiking in black bear and mountain lion habitat. Meet at the Yurt (tent) across from the Visitor Center. 45 minute. Program will be followed with an optional 1.5 mile hike on the Sawmill Trail.

1PM – 3PM. Join a park volunteer in the fossil demonstration lab. See some of the smallest fossil animals found at Florissant – insects! Meet at the Yurt (tent) across from the Visitor Center

To learn more about fee-free days in national parks around the country in 2014, go to <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm>.

For additional information visit the park's website at [www.nps.gov/flfo](http://www.nps.gov/flfo) or call at (719) 748 – 3253 ext. 202



## Great Backyard Bird Count

On Saturday, February 15, 2014, 12 members and friends of the Friends of the Fossil Beds, gathered at the Florissant Fossil Beds NM to participate in the international Great Backyard Bird Count. It is held every year in February for 4 days. Well over 100 countries participate each year. It is sponsored by Cornell Ornithology Lab and Audubon.

It was a chilly windy morning but all who participated at the Monument had a great time. The 2-1/2 hour count yielded 9 species and 33 individual birds including a golden eagle.

Please mark your calendars to join us next year for this Friends

**Annual event – Saturday, February 14, 2015.**

Partial list of birds:

Stellar Jay, Pygmy nuthatch, Golden eagle, Raven, Black-eyed Junco, White Breasted Nuthatch, Clark's Nutcracker, Black-Billed Magpie and mountain Chickadee.

## Friends' Summer Seminars, 2014 (Tentative)

The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds are very happy to announce the 2014 Summer Seminar Series. These seminars are planned and held in partnership with the Friends and the staff of the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument in Florissant, CO. Please note that these seminars are tentatively scheduled with the possibility of adding two more seminars and a date change on one or two. Our Teacher's flyer will be ready in about 2 weeks when the schedule will be finalized. We hope that you will pass this information on to friends and family. We look forward to seeing you this summer for fun and learning at the Monument and various sites throughout the area on field trips.

SCHEDULE:

**Thursday, June 12**, "Making and Using Journals," - Toni Ratzlaff

**Saturday, June 14**, "Settlers, Scientists and Saving the Fossils," - Herb Meyer

**Wednesday, June 18**, "Nature Drawing," - Toni Ratzlaff

**Tuesday, June 24**, "From Planets to Quasars: Our Place in the Universe," - Shane Burns

**Thursday, June 26**, "Archaeology in South Park," - Sue Bender (Date?)

**Friday, July 11**, "Flammulated Owls," - Brian Linkhart

**Friday, July 11** and Saturday, July 12, "Fens, Forests and Flowers." - Doug Coleman

**Saturday, July 19**, "Follow a Fossil," - Herb Meyer

**Sunday, July 20**, "From Pikes Peak to South Park: Mid Tertiary Volcanoes and the Shape of the Land," - Bud Wobus

**Thursday, July 24**, "School in the Woods," Jonathan Woods and Carol Stansfield.

*NOTE: There is a possibility of one more seminar being added.*

## Pikes Peak Historical Society Chautauqua Series—2014

Sun 11 May, 2:00 p.m. “My Life as a Miner/Prospector”

Rich Fretterd, Host

Florissant Library

Mon 26 May, 10:00 a.m. Memorial Day Service at Florissant Pioneer Cemetery

Sun 15 June, 2:00 p.m. “Divide Depot Museum”

David Martinek Host Florissant Library

Sat 26 July, 10:00-4:00 Heritage Day at Florissant Schoolhouse Museum, Florissant Pioneer Cemetery and

Florissant Grange

7:00-11:00 FVFD Pancake Breakfast

Florissant Volunteer Fire Department

Sat Aug 2, 7:00 p.m. Tabeguache Utes Dance at FFBNM

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

Sat 13 Sept, 12 p.m. PPHS Volunteer Brunch

Florissant Library

Sat 11 Oct, 2:00 p.m. PPHS Annual Auction

Florissant Library

Tues 11 Nov, 10:00 a.m. Veteran’s Day Service at Florissant Pioneer Cemetery

Sun 16 Nov, 2:00 p.m. “Attie Thompson”

Portrayed by Donna Knudtson

Florissant Library

Sat 13 Dec, 12:00 p.m. PPHS Christmas Party at Twin Creek Ranch

*Programs presented as a public service of the Pikes Peak Historical Society*



## 2014 Midland Days—Tunnel in Time



### Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition

P.O. Box 368 × Woodland Park, Colorado 80866  
719-686-7605

[www.TheCoalitionCO.org](http://www.TheCoalitionCO.org)

“A wild looking-glass trip through time” is planned for rail-fans in the upcoming 2014 Midland Days Symposium. The Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition (T.H.E. Coalition) and the Divide Chamber of Commerce jointly announce their sponsorship of the fifth annual symposium on the “Midland” railroads - to be held at the historic John Wesley Ranch south of Divide on Saturday, May 10, 2014, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, presented by Midland Days at Divide, Inc.

The theme of the 2014 Midland Days symposium will be “Tunnels in Time” – a retrospective look at the 18 tunnels cut along the Colorado Midland Railway and Midland Terminal Railroad routes. Plenty of historical photos will be shared, as well as information about the tunnels, their locations and impact on the railroad. In addition, other presentations will focus on special aspects of railroad operation or history. Limited tours through the Midland Depot at Divide may be scheduled after the symposium ends if enough attendees are interested.

Seating will be extremely limited. Advanced reservations, at \$55.00 per person, are strongly encouraged. Reservations should be made on or before May 4, 2014 by calling David Martinek at 719-213-9335 or emailing him at MidlandDays@yahoo.com. Walk-in attendees are welcome on event day for \$65.00 per person, but seating cannot be guaranteed (i.e., standing room only).

A social time will begin at 9:00 am to start the symposium followed by introductions and announcements. The agenda for the day will include presentations (including numerous historical photographs), interviews and conversations between local author and historian, Mel McFarland, and local historians Tom VanWormer, Art Crawford and other guests. David Martinek, T.H.E. Coalition Chair, and co-founder of Midland Days at Divide, Inc., will moderate the discussions and present, as well. A special “guest” presenter or two is also planned. Refreshments throughout the day and lunch will be served.

According to the tradition established in 2010 at the first symposium, all those purchasing advanced reservations will also receive a limited-edition railroad print (ink on parchment), courtesy of Mel McFarland. Additional copies of the print, and prints from past symposiums, as well as a number of other railroad-oriented premium items will also be available for purchase. All attendance revenue, premium sales and contributions are tax deductible in support of Midland Days at Divide, Inc. and the Midland Depot at Divide Preservation Project.

The John Wesley Ranch, operated by the First United Methodist Church in Colorado Springs, has graciously opened their historic lodge facilities to host the symposium again – for the fifth year in a row. The ranch is located south of Divide at 21285 Highway 67 just before the entrance to Mueller State Park, and just a few yards from the old Midland Terminal railroad grade. Ample parking is available.



*Preservation Through Collaboration*



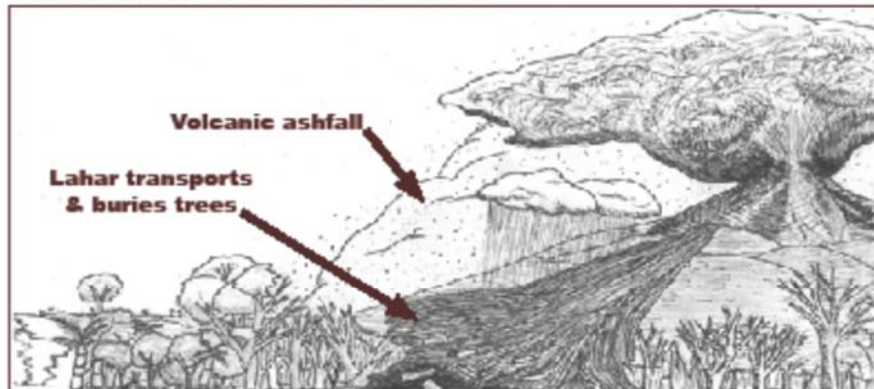




## Sexi Through Time

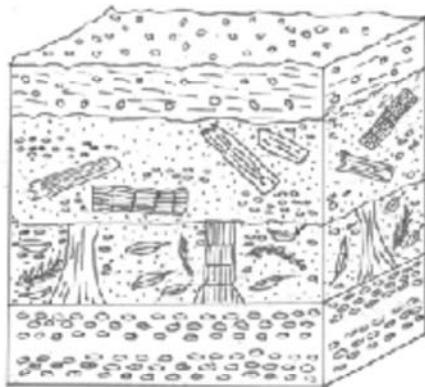
### Home

#### Preservation of the Fossil Forest



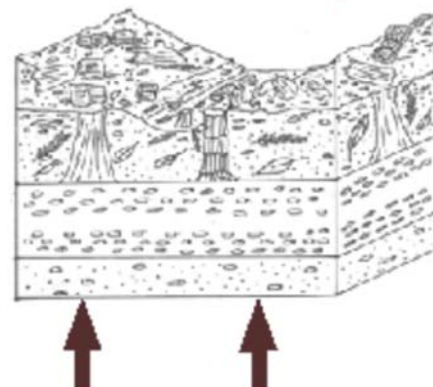
A volcanic eruption occurred near Sexi during the Eocene epoch 39 million years ago. As ash was erupted from the volcano and fell over the tropical forest, it stripped leaves from the trees below. Some ash formed small round rocks, or "lapilli," during a rainstorm. Soon after the ash and lapilli first reached the forest floor, a slurry of volcanic debris, a "lahar," moved downslope and buried the forest.

#### Burial & Fossilization



The fossil forest at Sexi first became known to science during the 1990s. Once scientists examined the fossil woods and leaves, it became apparent that the ancient low-lying tropical forest buried by the volcano was very different from the evergreen trees and shrubs that cover the hills near Sexi today.

#### Erosion & Uplift



#### Sexi Today

Wood and leaves remained encased in the layers of volcanic rocks for millions of years, slowly fossilizing over time. Movement of Earth's plates later uplifted the buried forest to its present elevation as the Andes Mountains formed. Rain and wind eroded the rocks encasing the forest, exposing the fossil woods and leaves at the Earth's surface.

