



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#16—June 1, 2013

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Open House



Visitor Center Grand Opening Weekend Open House Saturday June 15 and Sunday June 16

- Fee free Saturday and Sunday
- Behind the scene tours of the new building's technology
- Behind the scene tours of the paleontology center
- Junior Ranger Music Concert
- New fossil exhibits
- Meet the paleontologists featured in the exhibits
- Ranger Guided Programs

Installation of Exhibits in the New Visitor Center is Complete

On Tuesday May22, the new exhibits for the new visitor center at the Florissant Fossil Beds were completely installed. What an exciting time for everyone. Everything is ready for the wonderful "opening celebration" to be held. The exhibits are state of the art and are absolutely amazing. It is the first time that our exhibits tell the entire story of the fossils and the founding of the Monument. We hope that many of you will be able to join us on either Saturday, June 15th or Sunday, June 16th for the opening celebration fee free weekend. Below please find the schedule for those two days:



Save the Date

Saturday, June 15th

10:00 - 12:00, 1:00 – 3:00 Meet the Scientists

10:00 – 2:00 Tour the paleontology center

10:00 – 2:00 Behind the scenes tour of the building's technology

12:00 Junior Ranger Concert featuring Ranger Jeff Wolin

10:00 – 3:00 Light refreshments served by The Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds

And a full day of Ranger Hikes, Hornbek Homestead, Fossil Demonstration Lab and Demonstration Excavation Site

Sunday, June 16th

11:00 – 1:00 Tour the paleontology center

10:00 – 2:00 Behind the scenes tour of the building's technology

10:00 – 3:00 Light refreshments served by The Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds

And a full day of Ranger Hikes, Hornbek Homestead, Fossil Demonstration Lab and Demonstration Excavation Site

For more information please call (719) 748 – 3253

<http://www.nps.gov/flfo/planyourvisit/visitor-center-2013.htm>



Paleontology Open House, Saturday, June 15th

Many events will be happening during the grand opening June 14-16, but the big day to celebrate the new paleontology exhibits and lab will be on Saturday, June 15th. Over the decades, many paleontologists have studied the fossils of Florissant. The research of nine of these scientists is featured in new exhibit panels. Three of them are people who worked here from the 1870s through the 1950s, and six are scientists who are still active. *All* of these six plan to be here with the exhibits for a one-time event on Saturday June 15th between 10:00 and 3:00. These scientists will include Dr. Estella Leopold, Dr. Herb Meyer, Dr. Dena Smith, Dr. Jaelyn Eberle, Dr. Elisabeth Wheeler, and Jenell Thoene-Henning. There will be other visiting paleontologists here during this time, too.



Our new exhibits are 100% paleontology and feature current research, dioramas of the Eocene, and a large simulated rock wall depicting the stratigraphic column. We will also be giving "tours" of the new paleo lab and collection area to allow visitors a rare opportunity to look "behind the scenes" of our new facility. This will be the only time ever when all of these scientists will be here together with their exhibits. It will also give an opportunity for anyone who would like to have various books (sold in our bookstore) signed by the authors, Drs. Meyer, Leopold, and Smith. We hope you can join us and meet these people!

Biographies of the scientists who plan to be present:

Dr. Estella Leopold is Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington. She played an important role in establishing a grassroots effort to stop real estate development at Florissant in 1969, which helped assure that the area could be preserved as a national monument. Her research involves the fossil pollen at Florissant and its implications for understanding the climate here 34 million years ago. She was the recipient of the International Cosmos Prize in 2010, recognizing her work at Florissant. She is an author of the new book *Saved in Time – The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument*.

Dr. Herb Meyer has been the paleontologist at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument since 1994, and he is also adjunct faculty with the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Research Associate with the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. His research on fossil leaves has shed new evidence on the ancient elevation at Florissant during the late Eocene, which has implications for understanding the uplift of the southern Rocky Mountains. He is an author for several books, including *The Fossils of Florissant; Paleontology of the Upper Eocene Florissant Formation, Colorado; Saved in Time – The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument; and Geologic Guidebook to the Gold Belt Byway, Colorado*.

Dr. Dena Smith is Associate Professor of Geological Sciences and Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research on the fossil insects from Florissant helps us understand the coevolution of plants and insects, and the mechanisms that allow them to be preserved in the fossil record. She is an author of *Paleontology of the Upper Eocene Florissant Formation, Colorado*.

Dr. Jaelyn Eberle is Associate Professor of Geological Sciences and Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She has discovered the microscopic fossil mammals at Florissant, including rodents, rabbits, insectivores, and the oldest known mole from North America.

Dr. Elisabeth Wheeler is Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University. Her research involves the microscopic examination of fossil wood structure as a means for understanding paleoclimate and the composition of the Eocene forest at Florissant. She has discovered new species of fossil woods from Florissant

Jenell Thoene Henning completed her Master's thesis and a recent publication on the preservation of insects from the Florissant Formation. As a student employee at the Monument in 2009 and 2010, she helped oversee Florissant's largest excavation in several decades.

Fossil Collections Moving to New Paleontology Lab

Submitted by *Herb Meyer*

During the week of June 3rd, the Monument's fossil collections will be moving into our new collection facility as part of the Paleontology Lab in our new building. This facility will house the Monument's growing collection of more than 10,000 fossil plants and insects in delicate shale. The paleontology staff, including six interns, will be assisted by collections specialists from three other National Park units in making the move. Each and every fossil is being packed in layers of foam, and paleo intern Alison Dernbach and museum tech Conni O'Connor have been working carefully over the past two months to get everything ready. A new project by paleo intern Heather Falkner will be testing new methods for stabilizing our delicate fossil collection so that we can provide better conservation of the collection in the future.

The new collections area will be limited to paleontology because of the small size of our new space, and the herbarium and modern insect collections will be relocated to Rocky Mountain National Park. Our huge, growing collection of more than 50,000 archive documents will be actively processed this summer and through the coming year, and this collection will be housed temporarily in the basement of the old A-frame or elsewhere, awaiting more adequate storage in the future.

We are very excited about the upcoming move, and finally being able to have our fossil collections consolidated beside the rest of the monument's paleontology activities. Tours of the new collection facility will be given by the paleontology staff during our Paleontology Open House on Saturday June 15th between 10:00 and 3:00, and on Sunday between 11:00 and 1:00.



Meet the Paleontology Staff

Herb Meyer

I'm Herb Meyer, the Paleontologist at Florissant. I want to invite all of the members of the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds – and their friends – to join us for our Paleontology Open House on Saturday June 15th. We will be hosting the scientists who have done research at Florissant in the new exhibit area, and providing tours of our new Paleontology Research and Collections Lab between 10:00 and 3:00. Our new paleontology interns are anxious to meet you, and all of them want to introduce themselves here.



Conni O'Connor

Hello, I'm Conni O'Connor, Museum Technician at Florissant. I would love to show you some of the projects we've been working on in our new space! We've selected some of the best fossils from our collections and placed them in the new exhibits. We hope you can join us at the Paleontology Open House.

Alison Dernbach

I'm Alison Dernbach and I am a paleontology intern here at the park working on the fossil collections. I am assisting with packing up the fossils for the much anticipated move into the new paleontology lab and helping organize the fossils in their new home after the move. I have lived in Woodland Park almost my whole life so I am thrilled to be working in such a beautiful place so close to home!



Kelly Hattori

Salutations! I'm Kelly Hattori and I am from Raleigh, NC. I am returning to Florissant Fossil Beds for my second summer as the primary lead on the digitization project. My job is to photograph the entirety of the fossil collections of Florissant so that they can be made available to the public. I also assist with the Inventory and Monitoring project.

Selva Marroquin

Hola! I'm Selva Marroquin and I am originally from Hood River, Oregon. This is my first time at Florissant Fossil Beds, and I will be working mainly on the Inventory and Monitoring project



which helps maintain the fossil sites in the monument. I will also be helping Kelly with the digitization project and doing some work with the partner site in Sexi, Peru. This fall I will be a Senior at Tufts University outside of Boston majoring in Geological Sciences.

Heather Falkner

Howdy! I'm Heather Falkner and I am from Tampa, Florida. I am currently working on my master's degree from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City, South Dakota. My thesis topic is the stabilization of the fossils at the Florissant Fossil Beds, which will be my main project this summer.



Lindsey Yann

Greetings! I'm Lindsey Yann and I am originally from Boones Mill, Virginia. I am currently working on my dissertation at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. This is my first summer at Florissant Fossil Beds and I am working on science education and outreach. I will be in charge of bridging the gap between paleontology research and the daily visitors.



Taylor Hayes

Hello Everyone! I am Taylor Hayes; I am the new intern working with the Archives for the summer. I am from Denver, and I go to the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am studying Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as an undergrad during the school year. During the previous summer, I worked as an Intern at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park and thoroughly enjoyed it; I am really excited about working with Florissant family over the course of this summer.

Friends of the Fossil Beds Board Members Meet with Woodland Park Business Community

Eric Bailey and Jeff Proper discuss upcoming Fossil Beds events with Dave Martinek of Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty. Photo courtesy of Sheena Harper Photography

Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds Board members Eric Bailey, Sally Maerten, and Jeff and Robyn Proper attended the Woodland Park Chamber of Commerce “Business Night Out” hosted by Above the Treeline Construction on 21 May. Board members set up displays of Friends and Florissant Fossil Bed National Monument informational materials and engaged community business representatives in questions and answer discussions about the Monument and the Friends organizations. Board Vice President Jeff Proper had the opportunity to address the 50 + people who attended, and told them about the upcoming Summer Seminars schedule, the Visitor Center Celebration weekend and the Wine Tasting Fund Raiser scheduled for Sept 20th.



Board members were joined by the Fossil Beds new superintendant Michelle Wheatley and Rick Wilson.

The Board needs your Help – Really!!

With the effects of federal budget sequestration becoming reality, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument has asked the Friend’s organization for significantly increased financial support this year. Rather than digging deeper into our own pockets, the Board has decided to sponsor fund raising events to generate additional donations as well as raise the public’s awareness of the National Monument and the Friend’s organization.

We are planning a major fundraising event on September 20th that will feature wine, beer and food tasting, both live and silent auctions as well as entertainment. We need your help. In addition to coordinating the venue, food & beverages, and entertainment, we need individuals to step up to the plate and help with publicity, soliciting auction items, logistics and other yet-to-be thought-of aspects. Please contact Eric Bailey (719-315-9868 or (719)87-3938) or Jeff Proper (443 254 4786) and volunteer your services!

Estella Leopold to Receive Paleontological Society Medal

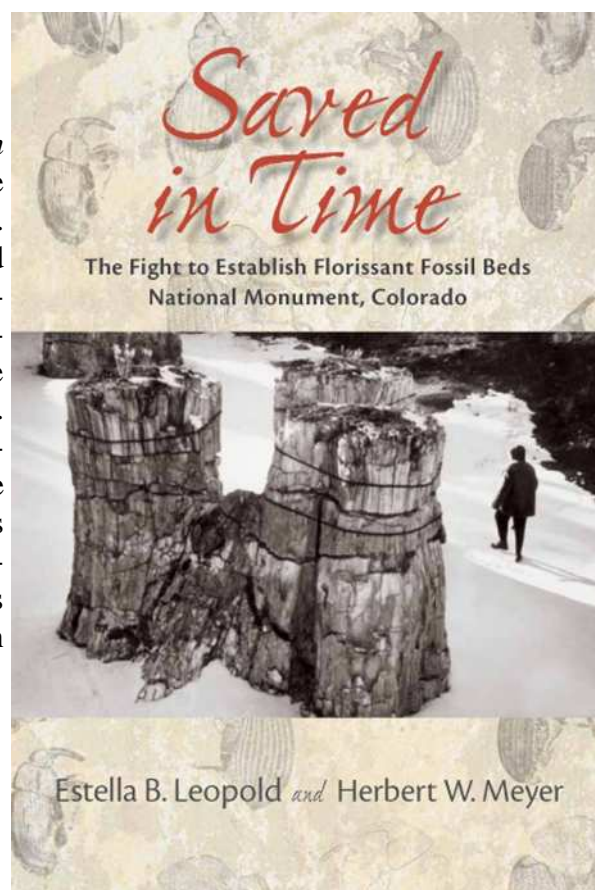
Dr. Estella Leopold has been selected to be the 2013 recipient of the Paleontological Society Medal. The Medal is the highest award in paleontology, and it is awarded to a person whose eminence is based on advancement of knowledge in paleontology. Dr. Leopold's lifetime research has advanced the study of paly-nology, and her work on fossil pollen has included Florissant. This, in combination with her efforts to help establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument so that scientific research and education can continue to advance knowledge here, make her an appropriate selection for this prestigious award. The Paleontological Society announced the award on May 23rd, and it will be presented at the Society's annual meeting during the Geological Society of America conference in October, which will be held in Denver.



Dr. Leopold is planning to be at Florissant along with the other scientists featured in our new exhibits on Saturday, June 15th between 10:00 and 3:00. She is a member and long-time supporter of The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds. She and the monument's paleontologist Herb Meyer are the authors of the new book *Saved In Time: The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Colorado*.

Florissant Book Makes Best Sellers List

The new book *Saved in Time: The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument* has made the best sellers list as reported by *The Denver Post*. The book is authored by renowned conservationist and paleontologist Estella Leopold and Park Service paleontologist Herb Meyer, and it tells the story of Florissant's fossils and how they were saved from real estate developers in 1969 to create a national monument. Partial support for the writing of the book was provided by The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds. The book, published by University of New Mexico Press, is now available in the RMNA bookstore at the Monument. Both authors will be available for book signings on Saturday June 15th during the Paleontology Open House between 10:00 and 3:00.



Monument to Host Visitors from Peru

For the past 13 years, the monument's paleontologist, Herb Meyer, has been involved in the research and conservation of an Eocene petrified forest in Peru, El Bosque Petrificado Piedra Chamana (The Petrified Forest Piedra Chamana). The site has been featured in many of The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds' previous newsletters and on the website (<http://peru.fossilbeds.org/>). The Friends have also joined in a partnership with a non-profit group in Peru, The Association for the Preservation and Defense of the Fossils of the District of Sexi, to help provide support for the site's conservation and the economic development of the small village of Sexi. Dr. Meyer has visited the site with his colleague, Dr. Deborah Woodcock, on four occasions. The outcome of these visits has resulted in scientific research on the fossil woods and leaves, a comprehensive site inventory and conservation report, a study of the geology, and close interaction with the local village to help them develop the site for tourism as a means to benefit the economy of their village.

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, in collaboration with the Friends, has extended an invitation to host two or three Peruvian visitors who are involved with the site. They are planning to be here during the week of July 15th. This visit will help benefit the ongoing partnership between the National Park Service, The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, and the Association for the Preservation and Defense of the Fossils of the District of Sexi. We plan to show them the various activities of the Monument's paleontology program and take them to other places such as the Garden Park dinosaur site and the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

Florissant is similar to Sexi in many respects. Both sites are similar in age (Eocene), and they are very important places as scientific resources. This visit will enable the Peruvian representatives to see Florissant and gain an appreciation for the way in which we conduct scientific research and conservation while also providing protection for the fossils and accommodating tourism. During their visit, our guests will be able to meet our staff and observe the various functions of managing a fossil site as a part of the National Park System. We hope that their visit here will provide new ideas as they move forward to provide similar activities at Sexi.

The Friends have received donations to help support the work at Sexi, and some of those funds will be used to help with this visit. If you are interested in contributing, you can specify a donation to the Friends for "Sexi, Peru."



Park State Bank Exhibit

Starting on Thursday, May 16, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, Inc. have an exhibit in the Park State Bank in Woodland Park, CO. On 24 white foam Boards, the public can learn about the Paleo history, the Post to Parks programs and about each of the 4 divisions, Interpretation, Natural Resource Management, Paleontology and Maintenance.

The exhibit will be there until around June 16th. On Friday, June 7, 2013, there will be a reception for the public from 3:00pm—4:45pm with representatives from the Park Service and the Friends to answer questions and talk about the exhibit. We hope that we will see some of you there.

