



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#8—September, 2012

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Our 25th Anniversary Celebration

What a wonderful day we all had on August 18, 2012! From the great tours of the new visitor center by Superintendent Keith Payne and Facilities Director Troy Fuhrman to the special interpretations offered at both the Scudder Pit and the Hornbek Homestead, the Monument was buzzing with lots of events and activities. Our welcome table based in the yurt was visited all day long with so many of our members enjoying the fee free day and refreshments in honor of the Friends 25th Anniversary. The concert provided by lead interpreter Jeff Wolin at 3 PM in the amphitheater was well attended by many Friends' members, and visiting families. The children had a wonderful time singing the songs and acting out various characters in the songs. A thank you goes out to everyone who made the day events so much fun.

At 5 PM at The Nature Place in Florissant, banquet attendees began arriving for the social hour and silent auction before the banquet. Over 80 people attended the banquet and heard stories from the first 3 Presidents about our "humble" beginnings 25 years ago. Everyone at the banquet

was recognized for their role in the development of the Friends and the support to the Monument including guests, members, staff, interns, Board members and of-

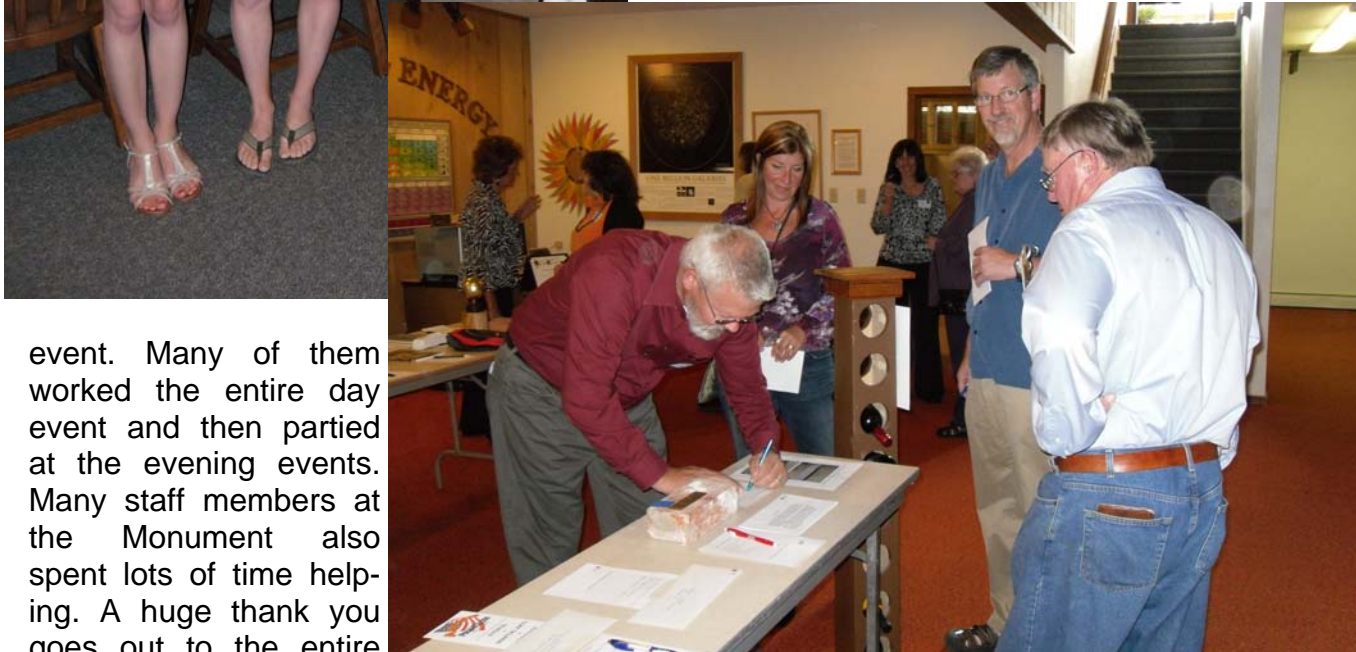




ficers. A letter of congratulations from Senator Mark Udall (included in this newsletter) was read as well as good wishes from Estella Leopold.

The pictures tell the story of the lovely evening including the social, silent auction and the banquet. A very special dessert was served to celebrate the "Roaring Mouse." Board member Linda Laverty made 200 chocolate mice to be served with the cheesecake which was enjoyed by all.

Behind the scenes for several weeks, all Board members worked tirelessly to make exhibits, collect items for the silent auction and plan the entire



event. Many of them worked the entire day event and then partied at the evening events. Many staff members at the Monument also spent lots of time helping. A huge thank you goes out to the entire Board, their spouses and the staff for all of the help to make the day a huge success.

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier today I was happy and grateful to visit Florissant Fossil Beds NM together with my wife Mary, and our children Gracie and Jack.

We could not have had a better day (unless we actually got to live there!) and loved our time in the park beginning with a great demonstration from Amanda Miller (kids LOVED it!) and ended with a sing-along with the multi-talented Jeff Wolin.

In between we loved meeting many of you, spending time with Superintendent Payne and touring our visitor center to-be. I must tell you that having envisioned what the new VC could look like for so many years, it felt

Friends Annual Meeting—Sunday, September 23, 2012

like a bit of an apparition seeing it rising above the meadow in the distance when I was driving south from town... I can't wait to return later this fall to see the final product. You all have worked hard for many years to see this dream realized and you deserve to be proud!

Much of what we are able to accomplish in our park is also a direct result of our exceptional Friends Group -- and sharing a small part of their 25th Anniversary Celebration today was a special treat. Thank you to Sally and the entire Friends of Florissant Board!!

I'm proud of the work each of you is doing to make our park great. Thank you.

*With respect,
-John*

*John Wessels, Regional Director
Intermountain Region, National Park Service*



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2012

Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds
PO Box 851
Florissant, CO 80816-0851

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds. I wish I could personally join you tonight. Thank you to Sally and the the board members for their tireless effort to ensure the Fossil Beds remain one of our natural treasures. The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds work with the park to support, protect, and create one of the best natural "classrooms" in the nation. The Florissant Fossil Beds protect millions of years of Colorado's natural history. Through education programs and tireless research they guarantee Coloradans and travelers from all across the globe will be able to enjoy the natural history we all cherish.

I share in the belief that we do not inherit the land from our parents; we borrow it from our children. Through your Wee Wasps, Junior Ranger, Junior Paleontologist and Mile High Youth programs you are securing our nations resources by educating our youth. Some of the best times I've spent in Colorado have been in the backcountry with my family. I'd like to see more kids exploring nature than browsing the Internet. Our parks can connect kids not just to our natural resources, but also to past events that have shaped our state and country's culture and history.

Our campaigns to get kids to our parks aim to get them excited about being active and healthy outdoors, while inspiring the next generation of American stewards to enjoy and protect our nation's natural treasures. Through your nationally recognized work on Post to Parks you have demonstrated, once again, the therapeutic nature of connecting with our roots. As chair of the Senate's National Parks Subcommittee, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and an avid outdoorsman, I appreciate the need to respect and protect the land while also ensuring that the public can enjoy the resources and recreational opportunities it provides.

I wish you continued success and look forward to hearing more of your achievements in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Udall
U.S. Senator

Upcoming Dates—Friends and Partners

The Board of the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, Inc. cordially invites all members and friends to the **Annual Membership Meeting**. We look forward to reviewing the events of the year with you. We hope to see many of you on the 23rd for fun, food and friendship.

AGENDA

Potluck and Conversation
 Call to order/Welcome/ President's Remarks
 Approval of 2011 Annual Meeting Minutes
 Treasurer's Report
 Superintendent's Report
 By-laws Committee Report (change, vote elections)
 Visitor Service Award
 Announcements
 Adjournment

**Please bring a potluck dish for 6. Drinks and dessert will be provided.

Pikes Peak Historical Society: Live Auction on Saturday, October 13, 2012. at the Florissant Library. Viewing of items at 12 Noon and the auction starts at 2 PM.

Colorado Outdoor Education Center: "Stalking Education in the Wild" at the Nature Place, Friday, October 12 - Sunday, October 14, 2012. Call 748-3341 or go to www.stalkingeducation.org for more information. A great fun weekend with workshops on geology, natural history and the history of Colorado.

Friends: Cancellation: The Trail Maintenance workday scheduled for September 8th at the Monument has been postponed. There will be other opportunities in our partnership with CUSP to offer this activity later. CUSP has been very active with the immediate need for the Waldo Canyon burn area rehabilitation as quickly as possible. That is a major priority for them as I am sure that you can all understand.

Friends: The **Friends Annual Meeting** will be held on Sunday, September 23, 2012 at 12 Noon. It is a pot luck event. Please note the announcement above.

Friends: Mark your calendars for the second year of the **Great Backyard Bird Count** on Saturday, February 15th at the Monument. More info to be available in a future newsletter.

Wapiti Walk—Florissant Fossil Beds NM—Listen for the bugling bull Elk (Wapiti) on an autumn evening at the Fossil Beds. See announcement on the next page for details.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Florissant Fossil Beds
National Monument

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Florissant, CO 80816

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Florissant Fossil Beds News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Jeff Wolin
Phone number: 719- 748- 3253
Date: September 4, 2012

Florissant Fossil Beds to present Wapiti Walks

Take part in a Rocky Mountain tradition: listening for the bugling of the bull Elk (Wapiti) on an autumn evening. Join us at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument to learn about, listen for and look for wild Wapiti. Programs on September 14th, 15th, 16th will be from 5:30 PM until 8:00 PM. Programs on September 21st, 23rd, and September 28th, 29th and 30th will be from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM. These programs will include a brief presentation about these magnificent animals, followed by an off trail hike of up to 2 miles during which we will look and listen for the elk in the wild. This program will **not** be suitable for young children. Normal entrance fees to Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument will apply (\$3 per adult, 16 and older). Annual passes to the Fossil Beds are available for \$15 (good for the cardholder and 3 other adults).

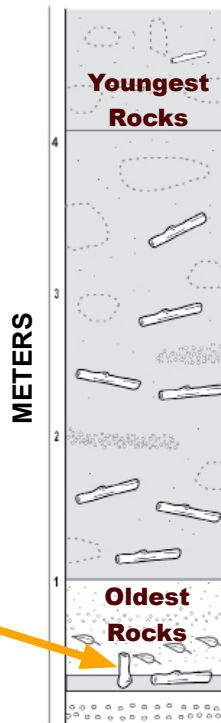
Large numbers of people tend to make the elk wary and elusive, so **the number of participants will be limited. Advance registration is required.** In the past these programs have filled up quickly, so call early for reservations. Parents of small children are reminded that Elk only bugle in a quiet setting. Tables and grills are available near the visitor center for a picnic before the program. To reach Florissant Fossil Beds, travel west from Colorado Springs on US Highway 24 to the town of Florissant, then 2 miles south on Teller County #1. For more information or reservations call 719-748-3253 and ask for Jeff (ext. 161).

Geologic Time

[Home](#)

Timing of Events

The trees of The Petrified Forest Piedra Chamana lived 39 million years ago. In geology, this time corresponds to the Eocene epoch of the Cenozoic era. The Cenozoic encompasses all time since the Mesozoic (also known as the “Age of the Dinosaurs”), which ended approximately 65 million years ago. The fossils at Sexi date to a time tens of millions of years before the first humans existed on Earth!



ERA	PERIOD	EPOCH	AGE Millions of Years	
Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene	Present	
		Pleistocene	0.0117	
	Tertiary	Neogene	Pliocene	2.588
			Miocene	5.332
		Paleogene	Oligocene	23.03
			Eocene *	39.4 Age of Fossil Forest
			Paleocene	55.8
				65.5

This stratigraphic column (right) depicts the vertical sequence of rock layers near Sexi, which are part of the Huambos Formation. Because the oldest rocks were deposited first, they are positioned at the bottom of the column. In the adjacent photograph, Dr. William McIntosh examines a tree fossilized in growth (“in situ”) position.

Subdivisions of the Cenozoic era. The rocks at Sexi are 39 million years old, dating them to the Eocene epoch¹.

Stratigraphy

Geologists study prehistoric events by examining features (e.g. rocks and fossils) of the geologic record. The rock layers, or stratigraphy, are illustrated as a stratigraphic column that reveals the sequence of events contributing to the fossilization of the ancient forest.



The Age Puzzle

Analysis of argon isotopes in plagioclase, a mineral that formed in the rocks during a volcanic eruption, produced the middle Eocene age of 39.4 million years.

[Read more about the volcanic rock layers at Sexi.](#)

¹ U.S. Geological Survey Geologic Names Committee, 2010, Divisions of geologic time—major chronostratigraphic and geochronologic units: U.S. Geological Survey Fact Sheet 2010-3059, 2 p.