



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#11—November 17, 2012

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Sneak Peak

What a treat is in store for everyone when the new Visitor Center is completed and open. You have all been able to watch the construction on the webcam. Last week we were able to get inside to take pictures to give you a sneak peek as to what the inside looks like.

The visitor center desk is made of beetle kill wood and is certainly one of a kind and beautiful. The stone walls are made of



stone from Colorado and grace the entrance to the building as well as the area going into the exhibits. The room that contains the control center for everything (building will be controlled by computers) is a maze of wires, control panels and pipes. There are 3 bathrooms: men, women and family. For those of us who cleaned, closed at times or defended the bathrooms in the old VC, these are wonderful. The floors are concrete as part of the solar design and are painted with a slight hint of yellow.

No picture can really do justice to the building, It is a "must see" for everyone. We will keep you updated as to when the building will be officially opened to the public.

Click [HERE](#) to see the live web cam at the Park of the building.



The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds wish each and every one of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Superintendent Keith Payne lighting up in delight at the new stone wall!



Oral History Project Inspires Frank Interviews

By Herb Meyer and Conni O'Connor

In 2011, Nichelle Frank, a graduate student at Colorado State University, conducted an oral history research project funded by a grant between the monument and the university. This project provided important information about the history of Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Nichelle transcribed old audio recordings from the past 40 years and provided historical context for these early interviews. More importantly, she interviewed new subjects to gather additional information about the history of the monument's establishment in 1969.



The new interviews included some very prominent people such as lawyer Victor Yannacone, who was the leading legal advocate for Florissant and a central figure in the development of environmental law, and former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm. Another interview was with Estella Leopold, who is a renowned palynologist and the original advocate for founding the monument. Toni Clare, who is the owner of Florissant Fossil Quarry, provided information about the local history. From all of these individuals, Nichelle elicited some fascinating new stories about the issues involved in establishing the monument.

Nichelle's final report and the accompanying oral history interviews have become a critical resource for the monument. This report is publicly available on a website at publiclands.colostate.edu/docs/flfooralhistoryfinalreport2011.pdf. On October 4, 2012, she was awarded the 2012 Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (RM-CESU) Student Award, recognizing the excellence of her work on this project (see photo).

Passing of William E. (Bill) Barksdale

Martha Barksdale called this morning to let us know that Bill passed away suddenly on Saturday night (11/10). Barksdale Picnic Area was named for Bill and his family, who lived there prior to Toby Well's family. Bill recently visited the monument and showed rangers an aspen tree he had carved his initials WEB into decades ago, at what is now the picnic area. She said in lieu of flowers, she wanted to ask people to send a donation to Florissant Fossil Beds Nat. Mon.

I suggest that the donations be addressed to The Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds, PO Box 185, Florissant, CO 80816-0185.

For those wishing to send sympathy cards, the family's address is:

Martha Barksdale & Family
1814 Francis Place
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

No funeral or service is planned. The family is planning an open house midday on Saturday, Nov. 24 at the above address.

Special Thanks to Ranger Shawn for making Bill and family feel so welcome and special on their visit that the family thought of us first as a place to remember and honor Bill.

Rick Wilson
Chief Ranger
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

Upcoming Dates of Interest

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT, from February 15-18 will be an international event this year for the first time. The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds will be holding its count on Saturday, February 16, 2013 from 9 - 12 noon at the Florissant Fossil Beds. The event will be based in the Yurt where the fire will be going and hot drinks and snacks will be available. If you wish more information on the International just click on [The Great Backyard Bird Count](#) or go to the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#).

Last year there were 104,151 checklists submitted from the U.S., Mexico and Canada. 17.9 million birds were counted which represented 623 species. Join us for fun to help with this very important count. Please call Sally McCracken at 687-9204 if you are going to join us.

WIPS ([Western Interior Paleontological Society](#)) is holding the 2013 Founders Symposium at the Colorado School of Mines on March 16-17, 2013. The focus this year is "Ice Worlds and Their Fossils." Everyone knows about "The Ice Age"; usually a reference to Earth's most recent global cold snap that abated 12,000 years ago. Fewer people know that the last 2 million years may have hosted 50 or more glacial advances and retreats and glacial climates are far from a recent phenomenon in Earth's history. Go to www.westernpaleo.org for info about this fascinating topic and the Symposium. The Friends and the Monument will have an exhibit there. Join us for the fun in Golden.

SOUTH PARK SYMPOSIUM - Will be held in Fairplay June 21 and 22, 2013. It is always a very informative and interesting symposium which is usually held in the schools. More info will be available as we get closer to the date.

