



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#13, January 11, 2013

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Moving Day!

On Tuesday, December 18, 2012, the Florissant Fossil Beds NM staff, volunteers and Friends members helped to move everything from the temporary VC to the new building. New Friends' President, Eric Bailey and his wife Ellen were chefs for the delicious lunch and fun was had by all.

These pictures tell the story of the day's work. Most importantly, the new VC is open for business. It is an amazing building well worth the long wait. Plan a trip to the Monument to see the new building and find out how it works with solar energy!!!





New Visitor Center Opens at Florissant Fossil Beds NM

by Celinda Kaelin

On December 18, 2012, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument visitor center officially moved into the beautiful new Visitor's Center. The building is cutting-edge technology, and is LEEDS certified construction (environmentally friendly).

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. 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. Congratulations to Superintendent Keith Payne and his staff for an outstanding job! The Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is open 9am to 5pm all week.

Great Backyard Bird Count

COME JOIN US

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2013

The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds are sponsoring the 2nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count from 9 AM to 12 Noon at the Florissant Fossil Beds NM. We will gather in the Yurt starting at 8:45 where a warm fire and great refreshments will welcome everyone.

This yearly event which is held for 4 days is now an International count. Last year over 14,000,000 birds were counted from every corner of the US, Canada and Mexico. Last year at the Monument, we identified 21 species with 162 individual sightings. We look forward to increasing our numbers greatly this year as we are planning on many more people.

If you are planning on joining us, please call Sally McCracken at 687-9204 to register. Please remember to bring your own binoculars, bird ID books and water. To enjoy the outing, wear warm clothing as it could be a very cold day.

The new Visitor Center is now open. Joining us for the bird count would give you an excellent opportunity to see the new, incredible building.



Birds counted:	6,508,295
Species observed:	613
Checklists submitted:	51,927
Most numerous:	
Snow Goose	835,369
Most frequently reported (number of checklists):	
Northern Cardinal	29,461
Most checklists:	
State: New York	2,983
Locality: Gautier, Mississippi	433
Most species counted:	
State: Texas	276
Locality: Corpus Christi, Texas	
Most birds counted	
State: Pennsylvania	
Locality: Squaw Creek NWR, Missouri	



Saved in Time

Estella Leopold will be signing the book she and Herb Meyer wrote, *Save in Time*, at the LoDo Tattered Cover bookstore, 1628 16th Street, Denver, on Feb. 16th. Call the Tattered Cover for further details at (303)322-7727.

Saved in Time Presentation by Herb Meyer

PIKES PEAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contact: Celinda Kaelin, 719-748-3562

“SAVED IN TIME: The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument”

July 30, 1969, Florissant, Colorado. Women and children stand in front of the bulldozers, determined to save the 34 million year old fossils. One child (Holly Buchan) remembers “...standing and staring at them. They were big and fierce like dinosaurs. I heard my mom (behind me) saying something like ‘Just stand still. Don’t move, Honey! They won’t hurt you.’ I felt like I was all alone there to face down/stop the bulldozers from breaking all the fossils.” On Sunday, April 14, 2013, you are invited to join Dr. Herb Meyer as he talks about his new book “*Saved in Time: The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument*”.



The exciting excerpt (quoted above) is from the just released book by Estella Leopold and Herbert Meyer, detailing the story of these unsung heroes of the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. It also exposes the villains as the story unfolds with all of its many twists, turns and insults. Herb Meyer also recounts the exciting fossil discoveries by early paleontologists, homesteaders, and land-

owners, along with some of the stories behind the national monument. One review states that the “book reads like a mystery thriller.”

Herb Meyer, the book’s coauthor, is the paleontologist for Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. He is also Adjunct Curator, University of Colorado at Boulder, and Research Associate, Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Dr. Meyer is also the author of the highly acclaimed book “*The Fossils of Florissant*” (Smithsonian Institution, 2003).

Dr. Meyer’s talk will be held at the Florissant Public Library, Sunday, April 14, at 2:00 p.m. This program is presented as a public service by the Pikes Peak Historical Society together with the Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds. Admission is free but seating is limited. Refreshments will be served, and a book signing will follow. For more information, call 719-748-3562.



In the summer of 1969, a federal district court in Denver, Colorado heard arguments in one of the nation’s first explicitly environmental cases, in which the Defenders of Florissant, Inc. opposed real estate interests intent on developing lands containing an extraordinary set of ancient fossils. This book, the first account of the fight to preserve the Florissant fossil beds, tells a story of environmental activism that remains little known more than forty years after the coalition’s victory.

“Reads like a mystery thriller wherein a handful of committed environmentalists forestall the destruction of America’s premier fossils beds.” — Jack Loeffler, author of *Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey*

SAVED IN TIME
The Fight to Establish
Florissant Fossil Beds
National Monument, Colorado

Estella B. Leopold &
Herbert W. Meyer

978-0-8263-5236-1
\$24.95 paper

The University of
New Mexico Press
800.249.7737
unupress.com



Pebble Pups—Happy Fossil Day!

The Pikes Peak Pebble Pups were well represented in **an art contest** to celebrate the third National Fossil Day. The National Park Service and the American Geological Institute partnered to host the third annual National Fossil Day on **October 17, 2012** during Earth Science Week. National Fossil Day is a celebration organized to promote public awareness and stewardship of fossils, as well as to foster a greater appreciation of their scientific and educational value.

Here are the winners of the contest: **Ciena Higginbotham** *First Place* 14-18 year old category Pikes Peak Pebble Pups (Lake George Gem and Mineral Club) and **Jack Shimon** *Third Place* 5-8 year old category Pikes Peak Pebble Pups (Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society). It is unusual to have two winners in a national contest from the same informal educational group.

Pebble Pups and Earth Science Scholars (teens) were invited via the Pikes Peak Pebble Pup website to participate in the contest sponsored by the National Park Service. Several Pikes Peak Pebble Pups and Earth Science Scholars responded.

The national winners were posted on the following National Park Service Website:

http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/art_contest_2012_results.cfm

The Pikes Peak Pebble Pups and Earth Science Scholars explore the wonders of rock, mineral, and fossil collecting in the Pikes Peak region. This program participates with the Future Rockhounds of America under the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. The purpose is to train Pebble Pups and Junior Members (teens) to become skilled rockhounds and enjoy science. The Pebble Pups and teen members of the Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society and the Lake George Gem and Mineral Club use this blog site to display their research, writing, art, and yes, even Earth science poetry: <http://pebblepups.blogspot.com/>

Many of the pebble pups have been published in international magazines, newspapers, and electronic media. A large number of the Pebble Pups and Earth Science Scholars have received science writing awards. Several members have participated in science fairs and the regional Science Olympiad at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Similar groups have launched some of the careers of notable geologists and paleontologists.

The Pebble Pup leader is Steven Veatch, a volunteer interpretive ranger at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Veatch is strongly supported by John Rakowski, Dr. Bob Carnein, Julie Shimon, Roger Pittman, Allison Schlesinger, Sharon Holte, Betty Merchant, and all of the parents.

A celebration and reception has been planned at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument to recognize these young paleo artists on **January 19th, 2013. Festivities will begin at 9:30 am.** The Pebble Pups and their friends and families will honor the two winners, tour the new visitor center, and then do some fun paleo activities in the yurt. The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds will be providing refreshments. There will be lots of excitement and more fun than we can stand. The local press and broadcast media have been invited to this event at the fossil beds. For more information please call **Steven Veatch at 719-748-5010.**



Ciena Higginbotham



Jack Shimon

Sexi Peru—Diversity of Fossil Leaves



Significance of the Leaves

The fossil leaves found in The Petrified Forest Piedra Chamana were preserved by falling volcanic ash prior to the burial of the forest by a volcanic debris flow. The impressions of 20 to 25 types of leaves have been excavated from the ashfall layer, which preserved details of their shapes, sizes, and veins. Identification and analysis of fossil leaves provide a more complete reconstruction of the Eocene forest than what the woods alone portray.

Monocots & Dicots

Monocots and dicots can be differentiated by preserved characters of the fossil leaves. In monocots, major veins run parallel to the length of the leaf. Dicot venation typically appears as a network. Many more dicot leaf specimens have been found than monocots.

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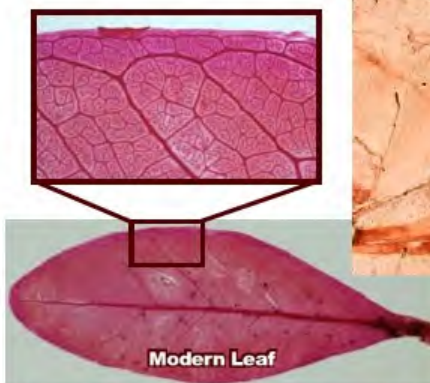


Fossil leaves were excavated from the ashfall layer.



Fossil Leaf Identification

Fossil leaves are identified by comparing their sizes, shapes and veins to modern leaves. Note the similarities between the modern and fossil leaves shown here.



The fossil leaves and wood were used to reconstruct the ancient environment and climate of Sexi.

