



Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

#24—April 2015

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The Great Backyard Bird Count 2015 at FLFO

Valentine's Day 2015 was an amazing day at the Florissant Fossil Beds. Over 800 visitors came to the Monument and participated in a variety of activities. From counting birds to doing a Hike for Health or coming for the evening star party, there was fun for everyone of all ages.

It was the second day of the International Great Backyard Bird Count which occurs every year on the second weekend in February.

The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds sponsored the 4th annual GBBC event at the Monument. Young Environmental Stewards (YES)

Club consisting of 4th and 5th graders from 10 schools and Catamount Institute along with their teachers and families, 7 volunteers from Audubon, and many regular visitors took part in the bird count. Approximately 175 people took part in the official count from 9 AM to 3 PM.



The official count of species for the Monument included, Clarks Nutcrackers, pygmy nuthatches, common ravens, dark eyed juncos, mountain chickadees, a hairy woodpecker, a mountain bluebird, black-capped chickadees and 3 special sights of 2 bald eagles, a golden eagle, many red crossbills and a red-tailed hawk. The final count for individual birds was 96 from the 10 YES Clubs. Over 5000 species of birds were counted this year by over 150,000 people from over 140 countries. The counts are still coming in but at least 15.5 million individual birds were counted.

Many thanks to the Aiken Chapter of Audubon and Catamount Institute who partnered with the Friends to offer a fun day for everyone.

Mark the Florissant Fossil Beds GBBC 2016 down in your date book for next year's count. Come join the fun.





Night Skies At FLFO

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument to Host Night Sky and Meteor-Watching Programs April 11 and 22.

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument will offer two Night Sky Programs, one of which is a special Meteor-Watching event for the Lyrids Meteor Shower. Both programs offer the opportunity to explore the stars under dark-sky conditions, far from city lights.

Night Sky Program: “The Spring Sky”

Saturday, April 11, 2015 – 8:00 - 10:00 PM

Meet the constellations of Spring! The Lion, the Crab, and the Many-Headed Serpent are high in the sky, pursued by the hero who fought them all, Hercules. Join us to learn your way around the spring sky, hear some of the mythology behind the constellations, and see some of the telescopic treasures hidden within them. Highlights in the telescopes include star clusters in Cancer and Hercules, distant galaxies in Leo and Ursa Major, and our closer neighbors Venus and Jupiter. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Special Meteor-Watching Night Sky Program: “Lyrids Meteor Shower”

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 – 8:00 - 10:00 PM

Do you like shooting stars? We do! Tonight is the peak of the Lyrids Meteor Shower, the best shower of the spring season. Join us to learn about the science behind these celestial fireworks, then head outside to watch them streak overhead. We’ll have plenty of targets for our telescopes, too – planets, star clusters, and more – but you might be too busy watching the whole sky for meteors! Meet at the Visitor Center.

For both programs:

Night Sky Programs begin with a short Ranger-led talk in the Visitor Center, followed by stargazing with telescopes, binoculars, and laser-guided tours of the stars and constellations. Please note that the outdoor viewing is weather-dependent, and takes place only if clear. Indoor presentations take place no matter the weather. Dress warmly; nights can be cool even in spring. Bring binoculars or a flashlight if you wish (red-filtered lights only please).

Admission for the program is the regular park entrance fee, which is \$3 per adult (16 years and older); children and federal pass holders are free. For additional information, please call (719) 748-3253 or visit our website at www.nps.gov/flfo

Follow us on Facebook/FlorissantNPS or visit the park’s website at www.nps.gov/flfo

Find Your Park!

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument Joins *Find Your National Park Movement Week* April 18-26, 2015

Florissant, CO – Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument joins parks, programs and partners across the country to encourage everyone to find their park and share their stories online at FindYourPark.com. Launched yesterday by the [National Park Service](#) and the [National Park Foundation](#), [Find Your Park](#) is a public awareness and education campaign celebrating the milestone centennial anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and setting the stage for its second century of service.

Find Your Park invites the public to see that a national park can be more than a place -- it can be a feeling, a state of mind, or a sense of American pride. Beyond vast landscapes, the campaign highlights historical, urban, and cultural parks, as well as the National Park Service programs that protect, preserve and share nature, culture, and history in communities nationwide.

“Find Your Park” is the theme for this year’s [National Park Week](#), April 18 – 26. Special activities taking place at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument during the week include:

***Fee Free Days - Saturday, April 18 and Sunday, April 19**

Saturday, April 18, 1:00PM – 3:00PM, Finding Fossils in the Fossil Discovery Lab

Join geologist Dr. Bob Carnein, for a fun, hands-on demonstration to see how paleontologists uncover tiny leaf and insect fossils at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

Sunday, April 19, 1:00PM – 3:00PM, Become a Junior Paleontologist

Participate in a hands-on, dirt-digging mini excavation to find fossil replicas of ancient three-toed horse and rhinoceros-like mammals. After the excavation visit the Fossil Discovery Lab, where you can observe fossils up close. All participants can earn their Junior Paleontologist Badge. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Wednesday, April 22, 8:00PM – 10:00PM, Night Sky Program: “Lyrids Meteor Shower”

Do you like shooting stars? We do! Wednesday is the peak of the Lyrids Meteor Shower, the best shower of the spring season. Join us to learn about the science behind these celestial fireworks, then head outside to watch them streak overhead. We’ll have plenty of targets for our telescopes, too – planets, star clusters, and more – but you might be too busy watching the whole sky for meteors! Meet at the Visitor Center.

Saturday, April 25, 1:00PM – 3:00PM, Finding Fossils in the Fossil Discovery Lab

Join geologist Dr. Bob Carnein, for a fun, hands-on demonstration to see how paleontologists uncover tiny leaf and insect fossils at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

Park admission is free on April 18 and 19. Regular park entrance fee is \$3 per adult (16 years and older) children and federal pass holders are free. Visitor Center hours are 9:00AM to 5:00PM daily.

For additional information, please call (719) 748-3253 or visit our website at www.nps.gov/flfo or follow us on Facebook/FlorissantNPS.

Visit www.NationalParkWeek.org to learn more about how you can join parks, programs, and partners in celebrating National Park Week across the country.

Travels in Geology: Peru's petrified forest: The struggle to study and preserve one of the world's most remarkable fossil sites

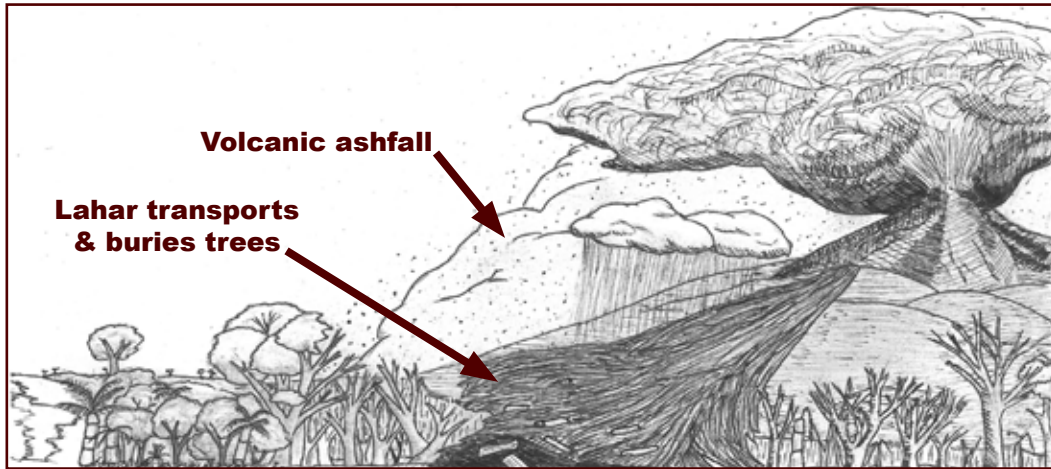
See the great article on our Sister Petrified Forest in Sexy, Peru written by Terri Cook at <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/travels-geology-perus-petrified-forest-struggle-study-and-preserve-one-worlds-most>



Sexi Through Time

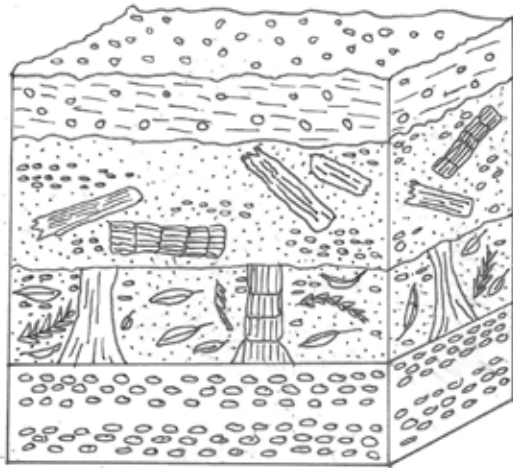
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Preservation of the Fossil Forest



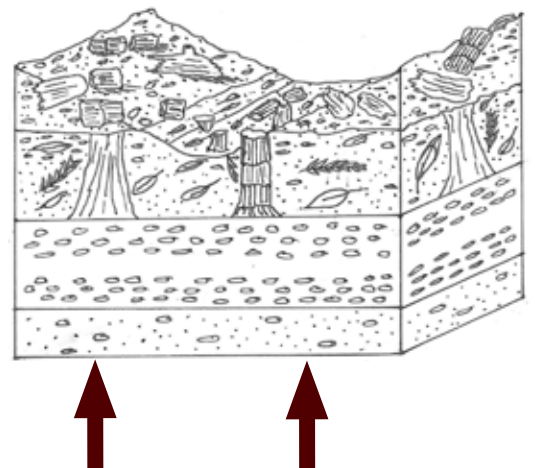
A volcanic eruption occurred near Sexi during the Eocene epoch 39 million years ago. As ash was erupted from the volcano and fell over the tropical forest, it stripped leaves from the trees below. Some ash formed small round rocks, or "lapilli," during a rainstorm. Soon after the ash and lapilli first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

