



# Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds eNewsletter

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Every Fossil Needs a Friend

#31-January 2016

## New Virtual Exhibits to Showcase Paleontology Program

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument's Paleontology Division is working in collaboration with Mike Kelly at Northern Arizona University on a CESU project for "Leveraging Indoor and Outdoor Exhibits Using Digital Methods." The project develops an innovative capacity to link the paleontology lab to the exhibits area through live and recorded videos and interactive kiosk and wayside exhibits. New kiosk software along with a framework for mobile applications will enable visitors to see fossil preparation in action, become virtually involved in monitoring paleo sites and excavating fossils in the field, "meet" the monument's paleontologist, and better visualize the monument's history and geology. The project implements Section 508 compliance to serve a broader audience and helps fulfill NPS's "Go Digital" Call-to-Action. Many of the activities are being produced by paleontology interns who are sponsored by the Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) program in collaboration with the Geological Society of America. These interns are involved in developing content for kiosk topics and operating equipment for video and audio recording. They are the "stars" of the video productions and demonstrate the activities of the paleontology program for visitors to appreciate. As the CESU PI, Kelly provides the technical expertise to develop connectivity between the theater and lab, and provides guidelines for the scope and style of the content. The project demonstrates how a small park can do big things on a limited budget by leveraging resources and involving science-oriented interns.



## Great Backyard Bird Count is Coming!

Florissant, CO: The Friends of Florissant Fossil Beds along with Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument will host the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Great Backyard Bird Count on **Saturday, February 13, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.**

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a great way for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature and make a difference for birds. Counting birds is a fun, free, family friendly way to discover and help the birds in your community and take part in a nationwide science project.

This is the sixth year the event has been held at the Monument. If you are interested in participating in the bird count, meet at the visitor center at 9:00 AM. There will also be other activities, such as crafts for kids, taking place from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM in the Fossil Discovery Lab (Yurt) near the visitor center.

The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds in partnerships with the Aiken Chapter of the National Audubon Society, and the Wild Bird Center in Colorado Springs.

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

*See attached PDFs at the end of this newsletter.*



# How many birds will you find?

**19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count**  
**Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument**  
**February 13, 2016**



**Join in!** Fun for all ages! Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

**birdcount.org**

## **Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument**

February 13, Starts 9:00 AM

Meet at the Visitor Center

Contact Info: Sally 719-687-9204 or 510-5518



**Hey fourth graders!** Visit [everykidinapark.gov](http://everykidinapark.gov) today to get a voucher for you & your family to visit all National Parks for **free** thru August 2016! Bring your voucher to Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument during the bird count to receive your very own 4th grade pass!

White-breasted Nuthatch  
Photo: Nick Saunders/GBBC



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# Gold Belt Byway Beat



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Winter 2016

## New Jr Ranger Activity Book Available

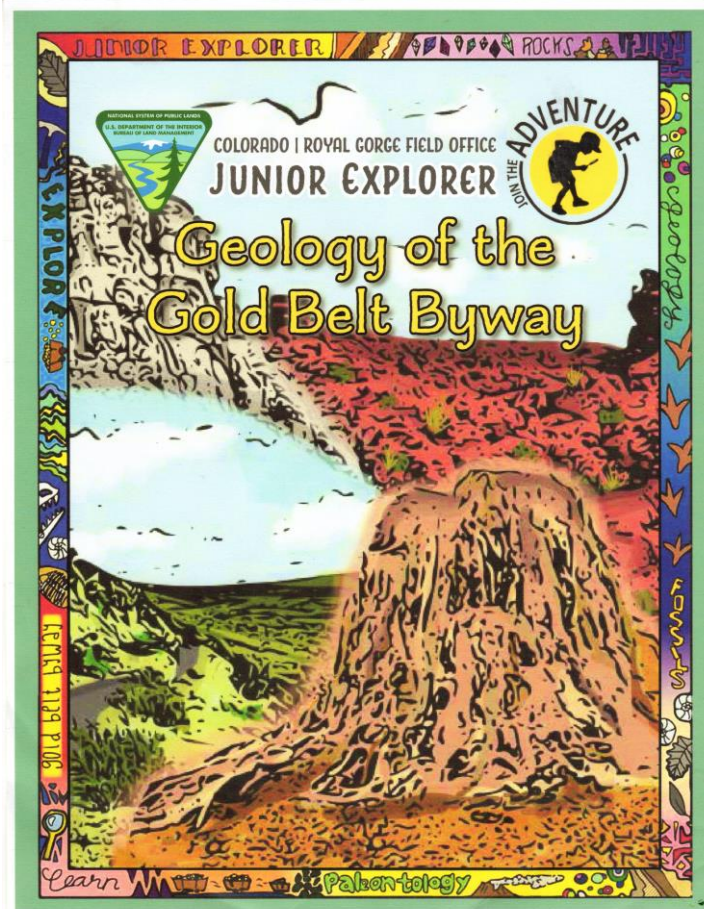
We are thrilled to announce that a great new book for the youngsters to enjoy along our byway has been completed and printed.

This book was a collaboration between the Gold Belt Tour Byway Association, Bureau of Land Management and Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

The book highlights the many Geological and Pathelotogocial features that can be enjoyed. The books was researched and developed by some great interns BLM and FFBNM had on staff this past summer. Thanks to CDOT for helping with the printing.

The book is free and we hope it encourages young folks to get outside and enjoy the wonders that abound. Books will be available at several location, including BLM offices in Canon City, Florissant Fossil Beds NM, Royal Gorge Bridge and Park, and Cripple Creek Heritage Center have been confirmed as we look for locations in Florence and Victor.

Kids that complete the pledge at the back of the book can receive a Jr. Ranger Badge.



## GOLD BELT MEETING SCHEDULE

March 7<sup>th</sup>, City Hall in Florence

May 9<sup>th</sup> Florissant exact site TBD

September 12<sup>th</sup>, Canon City, Fremont

County Administration Building

November 14<sup>th</sup>, Cripple Creek, site TBD

All meetings are open to the public

Contact [GBTourByway@hughes.net](mailto:GBTourByway@hughes.net)

For more information

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[www.facebook.com/goldbelttour](http://www.facebook.com/goldbelttour)

Visit the website for more info and maps..

[www.goldbeltbyway.com](http://www.goldbeltbyway.com)

*"Think about all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy.....Anne Frank.*

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## PHANTOM CANYON ROAD REOPENED

Phantom Canyon Road in Fremont County which was closed last May following severe flooding has been reopened. Crews with the Fremont County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) spent six weeks doing extensive excavation work to repair the many washouts. FCDOT Director Tony Adamic said his crews hauled an estimated 18,000 cubic yards of rock and materials to repair the washouts. Adamic said there were 18 different sites in the canyon which needed repairs.

Fremont County Commission Chairman Ed Norden praised the work done by the crews saying that the repairs have greatly improved travel for motorists over the lower end of Phantom Canyon where most of the flooding damage occurred. Adamic said while the road was shut down for those six weeks it afforded crews to make other needed repairs to edges of the creek bank that had been eroding for several years.

Norden urged motorists to drive up Phantom Canyon and get a first-hand look. He said repairs to the washouts have actually left the road wider in several spots which should hold up better during future high water events. Final costs of the project are still being tabulated but Adamic said because the Bureau of Land Management allowed the county to excavate the road and fill material from within the canyon it should have reduced transportation costs for the repairs by about \$200,000.

Thank you Fremont County for Article and picture



## Land Conservation along the Byway

The Palmer Land Trust, in partnership with the National Scenic Byways Program, has protected a portion of the Wilson Creek Ranch along Shelf Road in Teller County with plans to protect the remaining acreage in 2016. The 2,212-acre Ranch lies along Shelf Road on a prominent leg of the Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway, one of the state's premier scenic byways. With Shelf Road and Four Mile Creek bisecting the property on its western edge, the property holds important scenic views for travelers and recreationists in the area. In fact, a whopping 40% of the property is visible from the byway along a four-mile stretch of the road.

The landowners, John and Kristin Gunn had summered in Teller County for nearly 23 years before finding their own personal piece of paradise. John, who has been a fisherman nearly his entire life, and Kristin, who loves to hike, enjoyed the cooler summer temperatures and the natural beauty of the area. "In my mind, it was a piece of real estate that needed to be protected," explained John. Now the property will be conserved forever. Land that includes scenic open spaces, agricultural opportunities and relatively natural habitat providing homes for mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain lions, bears, turkeys and brown trout. The protected land, together with neighboring Bureau of Land Management Land, forms a nearly 8-mile protected corridor in one of the most scenic and rugged canyons in Colorado.



### Garden Park School:

**Gold Belt Byway received another State Historical Grant for another phase of restoration at the Garden Park School. This grant is to restore the windows and front door. Work should start on this phase, early spring, which will nearly complete the Exterior Restoration of the School. It is very exciting to see it standing strong again.**