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The autumnal equinox in Colorado occurs on
September 22, 2026, at 6:05 p.m. MST.

This is the time of the year when our daylight hours continue to shorten, our sunlight becomes less direct, and our transition into the fall season begins and will continue through the remainder of September until the 1st day of winter that greets us on December 21, 2026, at 1:50 p.m. MST.

The fall season is Mother Nature's invitation to explore and the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is a wonderful place to begin your fall explorations.

Please visit

15807 Teller County Road 1
Florissant, Colorado 80816

09:00 a.m --> 4:30 p.m.

719-748-3253

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Editor's note: This issue carries a quiet grief for our community, for the paleontology community, and for anyone who ever walked the trails of Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Harv Burman, a beloved summer seasonal ranger at the Monument for many years, recently passed away. Season after season, Harv returned to the Florissant Fossil Beds, bringing warmth, patience, and an unwavering enthusiasm for discovery to visitors of all ages.



The Vim Wright Legacy Fund (VCLF)

First announced in Fall 2025, it is time to reintroduce this new legacy fund dedicated to funding internships to help Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument's (FFBNM) operational needs. Additionally, it will help develop skills in those interested in pursuing careers in ecological and paleontological studies. Our parks are always in need of additional resources, and internships are a win-win way to help their perennial needs.

Along with Dr. Estella Leopold and Dr. Beatrice Willard, Vim Wright is one of three citizen activist women credited with keeping developers at bay while seeking Federal funding to protect and preserve the unique fossilized riches of Florissant. Thus was born Florissant Fossil Beds, National Monument. For a first-hand account of what it took, a good read is *Saved in Time: The Fight to Establish Florissant Fossil Beds*, by Estella B. Leopold and Herbert W. Meyer.

Your financial contribution and support to help grow this fund is appreciated, which, in turn, helps the Florissant Monument prosper. Think of each intern as an FFBNM ambassador and as being a potential future leader within their field of endeavor. To repeat, this fund and its purpose, is a win for the Monument and a win in growing an eager intern's career.

[Your Donation is Truly Appreciated.](#)

The Friends' of the Florissant Fossil Beds Annual Meeting

Reported by Sally McCracken

On Saturday, August 22, 2026, The Friends of the Fossil Beds held their Annual Meeting starting at about 1 p.m. in the Monument's amphitheater. The event began with everyone having lunch with drinks and dessert provided by the Friends. We had hoped to have our bag lunches and meeting in the picnic area by the yurt, but a heavy rain drove us to the upper area of the stump shelter. About 30 people attended the meeting, which began around 1:15 p.m. with the introduction of our new Superintendent, Marin Kararaker, who gave us a short presentation on the Monument's achievements.

Her presentation was followed by a report from our treasurer, Patty Glatfelter, on our expenditures for the year, our work with Colorado Gives, and the grant from the National Park Foundation which is helping us to provide housing in the future for interns. ([Link to Article](#))

John Wright, Vim Wright's son, spoke about the establishment of the Vim Wright Legacy Foundation through Colorado Gives with a very generous donation from John. ([Link to Article](#))

Elections were held for Board members for either a one-year or a two-year term.

The Visitor Service Award was given to the 4 volunteers who are the Trail Crew for the Monument. ([Link to Article](#))

Colton Broady, architect and owner of Seventh Generation Construction Company, gave an overview of the design for adding to the A-frame and making three slabs for hooking up trailers that can be used for housing in the future for interns.

The meeting ended and everyone joined Colton over at the A-frame for a tour of the A-frame and what the addition will include. It is a very exciting time to see something we have hoped for finally coming true. Housing is one of the biggest problems for the Monument in getting affordable housing for interns. ([Link to Images](#))



The Visitor Service Award 2026

Reported by Sally McCracken

On Saturday, August 22, at the Annual meeting of the Friends of the Fossil Beds, the Visitor Service Award went to the 4 members of the Trail Crew. The Visitor Service Award has been given every year since 1991 at the Friends' annual meeting. It is a peer nomination award. Each July, all employees and volunteers receive a copy of the nomination form and are given the opportunity to nominate someone who exemplifies Outstanding Visitor Service in their everyday position.

This year, Gary Censoplano, Ruth Gulliver, John Schwabe and Mark Silas, the volunteers who make up the Trail Crew, received the award. Those nominating the Trail Crew described them as always concerned about visitor safety, communicating often with visitors to answer their questions and working tirelessly to keep our trails outstanding. They also stepped up to bridge the gap with maintenance when cutbacks created problems.

Congratulations to all of you!!



Left to Right:

Mark Silas, Gary Censoplano, Sally McCracken, John Schwabe, Michelle Melville-Speck

A Thank You - Seminars/Webinar

Reported by Sall McCracken

The Board of the Friends would like to thank both Clara Petersen and Dr. Kyle Nardi for their programs during August.



Clara presented a program on “Healthy Forests” at the Florissant Library on August 1st. Her program was very timely and of interest to the whole Pikes Peak region. Those in attendance appreciated her presentation and the information she provided. Clara works for CUSP (Coallition for the Upper South Platte).

Dr. Kyle Nardi works for NCAR (National Center for Atmospheric Research) in Boulder, and is a climate change scientist. His program focused on the way the National Park Service is dealing with extreme weather events. His presentation was very informative and gave the attendees lots of opportunity to participate.

This presentation was recorded for viewing afterwards.



More webinars are being planned for the rest of the year. Be watching for emails announcing their upcoming topics and dates.

Activity Updates From the Fossil Beds

Dr. Gabi Rossetto Harris, Paleontologist

The Resources team is wrapping up a busy summer field season at FLFO! We have had many ongoing projects and visitors over the past few months. At the beginning of the summer, I led the creation of a new Local Unit Resource Guide to direct fire personnel about FLFO's resources and values at risk and how to protect them in the event of a wildfire. We launched a new weekly program, the Resources Pop Up, where the team took turns engaging with visitors on our favorite topics. It was really fun to see Katie, our fabulous Scientists in Parks intern, shine there with her idea to create a tactile stratigraphic section. With Trevor, our brilliant biotech, we were delighted to host the Colorado Native Plant Society for a plant walk in June. Trevor and I also attended an excellent USFS Forest Health Training, where we learned lots and made great connections. I answered several questions for fossil identification this summer, and I was humbled to accept an amazing palm wood specimen donation from community member Toni Moore, before her tragic passing.

In July, we kicked off a few new projects – one was the archeological survey of the east side of the park, led by Colorado State University's Center for Environmental Management. The other project was an interagency partnership with Argonne National Labs (Department of Energy), focused on adding 3D scanning of the fossil stumps to our photogrammetry modelling efforts. They will return to the park again for additional archeological survey support on the west side of the monument. We had fun doing wetland and upland site monitoring with the NPS Rocky Mountain Monitoring Network. We also enjoyed hitches hosting the NPS Northern Rocky Mountain Invasive Plant Management Team, who worked diligently with Trevor to apply herbicide on invasive plant populations in the park. We were sad to see Ranger Caitlin depart on to her next chapter, but we threw a fun baby shower in her honor. I was also excited to see my first bear in the park, and the return of the pronghorn family.

In August, we launched into our annual fossil site inventory and monitoring project. I particularly enjoyed having our interdisciplinary team in the field together to accomplish this and increase our plant inventory alongside – Trevor has discovered at least seven plant species that were not previously recorded and has confirmed presence of 200+ other plants on our list. Our awesome archives technician Emma wrapped up her term with great progress toward getting the archives collection more in order. We appreciate the support of the Friends to bring Emma back this month to continue this important work. We also had research permit holders doing subsurface stump surveys, bee surveys, and searching for fossil mammals. I helped hire a new winter season education technician who will join us in November. I also organized and participated in a successful Junior Ranger Day event.

This fall, I am looking forward to co-leading a Geological Society of America Geoheritage Field trip at FLFO, one more hitch with the NRM IPMT to collect and disperse native seed, developing more project proposals, and the change of season! I've also really enjoyed getting to know and work with our new Facilities staff, Dewey and Heather, this summer. Next up, excited for a new Interpretation Manager to join and round out the FLFO team! - *Dr. Gabi Rossetto Harris, Paleontologist*



Trevor teaching about plant identification during the CO Native Plant Society hike.



Jorge and Noelia, Argonne National Labs, doing 3D scanning of the Trio.



Wetland site visit, with ROMN staff Cali and Elizabeth, Trevor, and Katie, learning how to measure groundwater.



Collecting mammal fossils with CU Boulder staff Jaelyn Eberle and Nancy Stevens, Herb Meyer, Katie, and Trevor.

ART IN THE PARK !!

By Michelle Melville-Speck

This has been a very successful season for Art in the Park at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

We have experienced fun sessions with kids from 3 to 103 (no exaggeration)! Participants enjoyed learning about plants, animals and birds common in the Fossil Beds, using drawn samples. Others chose to create their own artwork in watercolor, crayon, or colored pencil. The template rubbings were a big hit with all. It's been so enjoyable, there have been many repeat visitors!

The Friends of the Fossil Beds funds Art in the Park and community members and Friends volunteer to provide development and assistance. We're especially thankful for assistance from Laine Weber, Holly Sample, John Schwabe and Michelle Melville-Speck for this season.



The Hungry Black Bear



The mid-point of the fall season is the time when the Black Bear begins his / her preparation for the five-to six-month period of hibernation.

In mid-November the black bear will begin to consume over 20,000 calories each day in a process called hyperphagia. This is the caloric equivalent of almost 35 Big Macs. The black bear is not welcome nor served in McDonalds and instead finds itself in an intense forage mode. The black bear diet consists primarily (70%) of plant matter that is supplemented by insects, fish, and

meat. During the last weeks of November and early October the black bear is driven by [hyperphagia](#), an increased appetite and a sense of an almost insatiable hunger. Monument visitors are encouraged to respect any foraging bears and allow them ample distance.

Black Bear in Hibernation

There is some disagreement among naturalists and physiologists on the topic of black bear hibernation and/or torpor. We will leave the scientific distinction to those properly trained to make such distinction. We will call it hibernation for convenience but will also accept torpor, seasonal dormancy, lethargy and sleep.

During hibernation the bear's body temperature will fall by somewhere in the vicinity of 12 degrees. This relatively minor body temperature decline allows the bear to wake up quickly if disturbed. You do **not** want to disturb the sleeping bear. The hibernating bear will generally lose almost 25% of their body weight and enjoy - *if undisturbed* - a rest of 5 months. When the spring alarm bell rings, the bear will s-l-o-w-l-y readjust to the day-to-day routine. They will find themselves going through a phase called walking hibernation. The bears remain a tad lethargic during this period of metabolic readjustment and eat little. After 2 or 3 weeks the bear is good to go and ready to fully enjoy the spring season.



Impact Your Local National Park Service Site TODAY

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Friends of Florissant are launching one of our most impactful campaigns to date. With the generous support from our partners at the National Park Foundation, we are raising funds for remodeling the A-Frame housing structure on Monument grounds. The pre-existing structure, built in the 1970's, allows the footprint and basic structure to provide a housing option, when remodeled, for our interns and future stewards of public lands. In addition, it can provide temporary housing for transitioning NPS employees and those NPS employees who work at the Monument for short deployments.

Intern housing has been the Friends' major expense in support of interns in recent years. Our current donations and grants are insufficient to attract many interns. The same is true for seasonal and permanent NPS employees. The high cost of short-term housing and lack of local availability of rentals, force most interns and seasonal employees to seek housing in Colorado Springs. This adds two+ hours to their workdays in addition to transportation costs and weather-related delays. Providing housing options can attract the best of the best.

NPS employees will pay rent when they utilize this housing. It will also allow for climate-controlled storage of fossils with fire suppression protection. It can free up future Friends' funds for financial support of additional intern expenses and Monument needs when indicated.

The plans include establishing two trailer pads with hookups for traveling employees who provide their own travel trailers/small motor homes. Previous Friends' financial contributions have established a septic system and water system in anticipation of this long-term project. This housing option has been a goal of the Friends and the Monument for over 20 years.

Our CO Gives fundraising efforts this autumn and on CO Gives Day on December 8th will be promoting this project along with the Vim Wright Legacy Fund to support our most treasured resource-our Monument's human resources. Your generous contribution can be made by hitting the DONATE button in this newsletter. Additionally, CO Gives Foundation provides the Friends an avenue for donations by major credit card, bank account, PayPal, IRA Charitable Distribution, donor advised fund (DAF) and many more forms of payment.

For more information regarding this high-priority project, please contact: Patty Glatfelter, Treasurer via email at: jspg@live.com or text: 719-684-6405.



Representative illustration only.

Bear Bells

Gary Censoplano



The Friends purchased bells for visiting hikers, as there has been recent bear activity throughout the Monument. A stand was made by member, Stu Ferguson, and placed in the vestibule entering the rear patio.

The feedback from park staff and visitors has been positive, so we hope to continue with this premium well into the future. Each bell is attached to a Velcro band. The band has the Friends' web address.

There is a slot in the box for donations, which have been significant.



Fall Astronomy - Florissant Fossil Beds Night Sky

Mark Harter, FLFO Volunteer, Astronomy Lead

September 2026

Fall It's the time of year when the aspens change into their brilliant golden colors, and the summer star constellations are replaced by some of the most spectacular and popular constellations of the night sky! Say goodbye to the Summer Triangle, Cygnus, Lyra, and Aquila. Say hello to the emergence of Orion, the mighty hunter, his faithful dog, Canis Major (with the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius), the Gemini twins, Cassiopeia, (which points to the spectacular Andromeda Galaxy), Pegasus, the flying horse, and the Pleiades (Seven Sisters) just to name a few. Along with all of these are rich stellar nebulas, star clusters, and new looks at numerous planets.

Fire in the sky! The Perseid Meteor Shower in August did not disappoint this year as we had dark skies (with a new moon) and the weather cooperated nicely. Hopefully you all saw some meteors. If you missed it, there are three more major meteor showers this fall. The first is the annual Orionid meteor shower, which peaks on Oct. 21-22 between midnight and dawn as Earth passes through debris from Halley's Comet. Expect rates of about 20-40 meteors an hour. To see it, find a dark, open area, lie down, and look up at the sky towards the constellation Orion, (the Mighty Hunter), allowing your eyes to adjust to the dark. You can see some meteors within a couple days of the peak night. The second is the Leonid Meteor Shower, November 17-28, which has meteors originating from the constellation, Leo the Lion. The Leonids occur when the Earth passes through the debris left by Comet Tempel-Tuttle, which takes 33 years to make one orbit around the sun. Finally, the annual Geminid meteor shower peaks December 13-14, offering one of the year's most reliable and spectacular displays of bright, fast, and often yellow meteors. Look towards the Gemini twins constellation (close to Orion), which is where the meteors appear to originate from. Some years the Geminids produce up to 75 meteors an hour.

Fall also brings us the last **Night Sky Astronomy Program** of the year at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Weather permitting, it is planned for Saturday, October 3, from 7:00-9:00pm. Weather has prevented two Night Sky Astronomy programs this summer, so we're hoping for a good night on October 3. Our partners from the Colorado Springs Astronomical Society (CSASTRO) will bring out about a dozen telescopes and astronomers to help us observe planets, nebulas, galaxies, comets, and satellites. Fall night skies are usually some of the clearest of the year, so we hope to see all of you out there on October 3 for a great display of the heavens!

Fall Astronomy - Florissant Fossil Beds Night Sky

Mark Harter, FLFO Volunteer, Astronomy Lead

September 2026



Andromeda Galaxy (M31)

As seen from Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument on August 8, 2026
(photo credit: Mark Harter)

Mark Harter is a Florissant resident, and is the FLFO Astronomy Lead and point of contact for International Dark Sky. He is a retired military veteran (Air Force) and aerospace engineer with 40+ years' experience in national security, civil, commercial space operations, and astronomy.

The Fossil Beds Remember

For Harv Burman

An Elegy

Created by Steven Wade Veatch

At Florissant, where time is pressed flat
and memory sleeps in pages of paper-thin shale,
a voice moved through ponderosa shade,
steady as the winding trail.

Harv Burman walked to the outcrop's edge,
where an ancient lake once held the sky,
and coaxed the quiet earth to speak
of giant sequoias that turned to stone,
and insects pressed into carbon whispers.

He turned fossils into stories, and stories into awe.
Kneeling beside a slab of shale, he waited
for a child to see the leaf imprinted there.
The young grew excited. The old looked on
and remembered how to wonder.

Along the trail, where the shadows settle
Deep on the shale and weathered soil,
the warm, clear echo of Harv Burman stays,
woven forever into the place he loved.



The Big Stump, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.
Photo by S. W. Veatch

Where and How to Hike at Florissant Fossil Beds

By Harv Burman

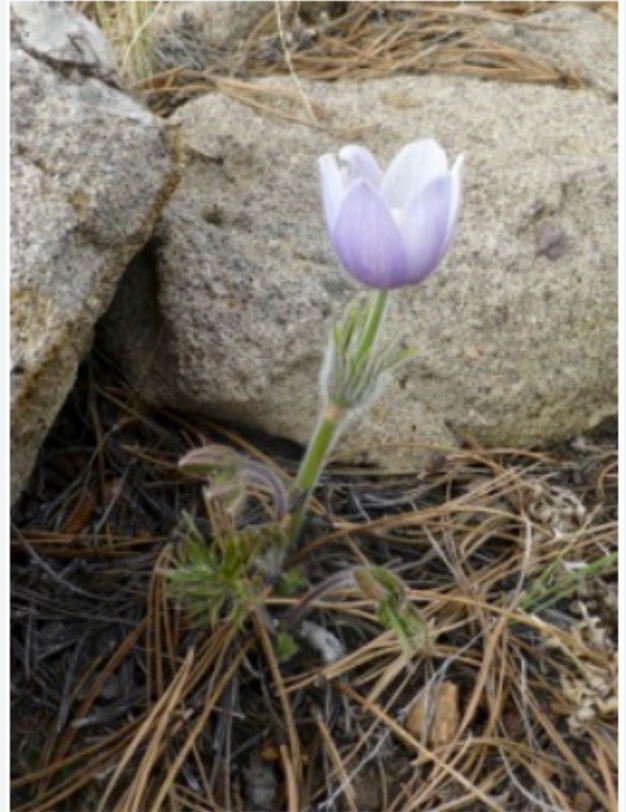
Park Ranger

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

(Submitted by Steven Veatch)

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument has 14 miles of trails to walk, hike, and enjoy. There are short loops, long loops, self-guided trails, and some paths where it's just you and nature. Maps with brief descriptions and mileages are available at the visitor center, but the cold, dry mileage numbers, lines on a map, and the brief descriptions don't really tell you what the experience of exploring the Monument is really about. Let me tell you what I feel and experience when I walk the trails. Maybe that will help you decide where and how far you want to explore here.

In my opinion, the minimum exploration, or the beginning of a longer exploration, is to take one of the self-guided loops that are intended to help you see and understand the fossil beds themselves. The 15-minute Walk Through Time trail is less than ½ mile, has relatively little up-and-down walking, has numbered posts (which correspond to numbered explanations in a guidebook) along the way, and generally stays in the woods. It's a fascinating exposure to the paleoenvironment (ancient environment) of fossilized redwood tree stumps mixed in with today's forest of ponderosa, aspen, fir, and spruce trees. At the end of the loop are two fascinating petrified redwood formations with large ponderosa trees growing right from the stumps. Both paleo- and modern forests together on the same spot!



A Pasque flower blooming along the Petrified Forest Loop trail.

Photo by: S. W. Veatch

The 40-minute Petrified Forest Loop, which is also self guided, is just a bit longer than a mile (don't think miles – think just over 12 blocks!), with some gentle ups and downs through a mostly meadow environment. It's worth the time just to get out to see the "Big Stump," but there are more things to see, including several petrified redwoods, the 1877 Scudder fossil pit, and flower-filled meadows in season. It's a quiet, relaxing walk with benches along the way on which to sit and contemplate what you have seen and learned. I particularly enjoy the postcard view of the Hornbek Homestead in the distance. In my mind I eliminate the highway, cars, and power lines and imagine myself back in the 1800s.

After those trails you are ready to explore the other 12 miles of nature trails. Want to get away from people? The further you hike, the fewer people you will encounter. Classifying the degree of difficulty of each trail is not easy because hikers vary considerably in their level of fitness, desire to walk distances, the altitude at which they live, and more. Generally, none of the trails here are difficult walking, and classification is more a function of distance. A short part of the Boulder Creek Trail is steep, uphill walking. No, you won't need climbing ropes! A quarter mile section of the Hornbek Wildlife Loop is also a little steep, with some rocks in the trail, but you won't need ropes and technical gear there either! Some folks consider a short section of the Sawmill Trail steep, too, but those folks are almost always used to much lower elevations.

What trail do I recommend? You're asking the wrong person. I love them all! For a "destination" trail try the Boulder Creek Trail, which leads you to an area of giant boulders known as the "Caves." Kids love it.

The greatest mix of meadows, forests, and flowers? Try the Hornbek Wildlife Loop, which also leads you through the Hornbek Homestead grounds.

Great views of Pikes Peak? Definitely the Sawmill Trail plus Hans Loop. Prettiest? I like the Twin Rock Trail, which leads you next to a small stream and large rock formations.

The trails are all in good shape, easy to follow, and relaxing. They are all at about 8500 feet elevation (wear sunscreen and don't hurry in the thin air), where storms can move in rapidly, so it's important to carry appropriate clothing and head for shelter before lightning. To avoid fleas and disease, a hiker should also not approach any wildlife encountered along the trails, which often wind through squirrel, rabbit, and chipmunk habitat.



Friends Support our Current Intern-Katie Quinlan

Patty Glatfelter

In October the Friends will be supporting Katie Quinlan's attendance at The Geological Society of America's conference in Denver for five days. The abstract she will be presenting is titled "Putting the Rocks Back in the Stratigraphic Section: The Geology of the Florissant Fossil Beds in a Box". Our support will cover abstract submission, registration and lodging. This \$2,046 investment in Katie will keep the Florissant Fossil Beds at the top of the Society's focus. She will be leading a GSA field trip to FLFO on October 10th.

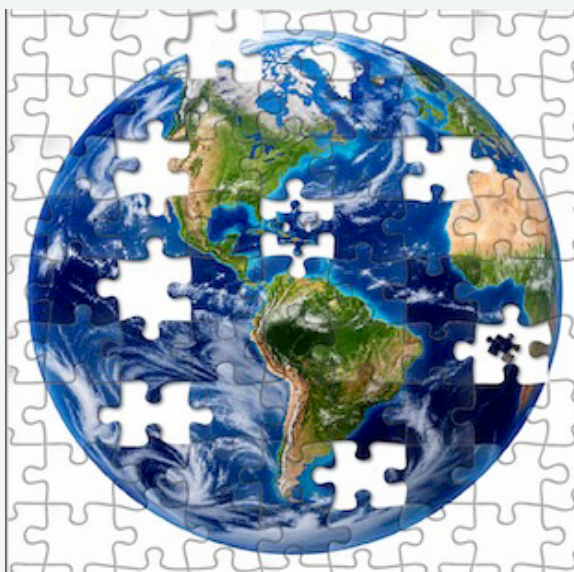
Keep an eye out for the scheduling of an article and presentation for our generous supporters-Lake George Gem and Mineral Club, Colorado Springs Gem and Mineral Society and, of course, the Friends!

[The Geological Society of America](#)

Geoscience Policy

GSA connects the geoscience community with the policymakers and decision-makers who shape our world. Through position statements, Congressional Visits Day, fellowships, policy briefings, and community-driven solutions initiatives, GSA ensures that earth science informs the policies addressing our most pressing challenges.

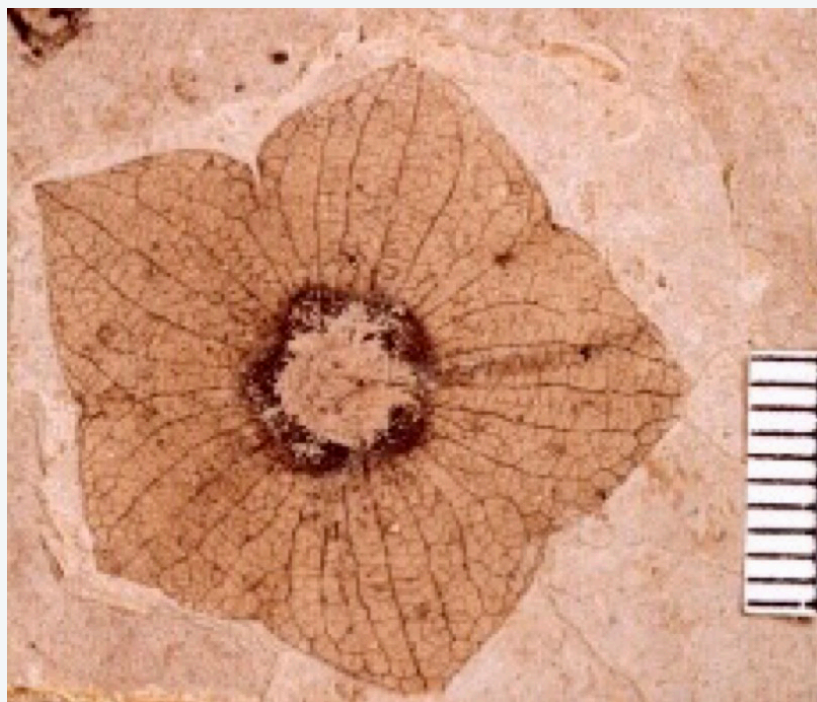
*Why
Explore?*



*Because
so much
remains
to be
discovered.*

Florissantia and Florissantia: Florissant's two namesake fossil genera by Herb Meyer

When scientists name living or fossil organisms, it's an opportunity to be creative. Sometimes the names are derived from Greek or Latin root words that somehow describe the new organism. Others are created from the names of people or places. There are numerous fossil species that are named for Florissant (typically as "*florissantensis*" following the generic name), as well as two genera. Unlike species, generic names must be unique and cannot be used twice. However, it is possible to use the same generic name for a plant and an animal, and that's what happened in the description of new fossils from Florissant. The naming of organisms is strictly regulated by the rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, and the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, each of which prohibits using a generic name that already exists. But because each of these codes independently regulates a different kingdom of organisms (plants versus animals), the same name can be used for one of each of these. And that's how we came to have *Florissantia* the flower, and *Florissantia* the insect!



Florissantia speirii is a star-shaped flower that retained its toughened calyx as it matured into a fruit. This umbrella-shaped form probably facilitated dispersal in the wind. It is one of the most beautiful fossils found at Florissant, and you can see a nice example in the fossil case in the visitor center. Because this genus is extinct, its relationship to modern plants is uncertain, and its corresponding leaf is unknown. Fossils of this genus have actually been found more commonly at some other fossil sites than from Florissant.

Scale is 1 cm (in mm increments).

Florissantia and Florissantia: Florissant's two namesake fossil genera

by Herb Meyer



Florissantia elegans is a fossil insect classified among the planthoppers. With its colorful wings spread, it may have resembled a butterfly. It was first described from Florissant by Samuel Scudder as an extinct genus. The type specimen was collected in 1877 when the Princeton Scientific Expedition met with homesteader Charlotte Hill.

Scale is 1 cm (in mm increments).

Paleontology: Noun

A science dealing with the life of past geologic periods as known from fossil remains.

[merriam-webster](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paleontology)

Friends Summer Offsites

Reported by Gary Censoplano

This year the Friends participated in 5 offsite programs. Four were at the Woodland Park Farmer's Market and one was at the Mueller State Park Outdoor Skills event. Each event drew substantial crowds to our booth, setting visitation records. Overall, the average attendance was over 198 people, asking questions and learning about the Monument. Without the support of park staff and tireless volunteers this would not have been possible.



Volunteer Sally and Ranger Julie at the Friends' booth for the Farmer's Market on June 26, 2006, which drew 251 visitors.



Volunteers, John, Jerry, and Robyn with Intern Katie at the Friends' booth for the Mueller State Park Outdoor Skills day event, July 11, 2006, which drew 232 visitors.

Friends Summer Offsites



Volunteer Jerry with Intern Katie at the Farmer's Market booth, July 17, 2026, which drew 141 visitors.



Volunteers Gary, Sally, and Jerry with Superintendent Marin at the July 24, 2026, Farmer's Market booth, which drew 224 visitors.

Friends Summer Offsites



The Farmer's Market Booth on August 7, 2026, with volunteer Jerry. We had 144 visitors for our final offsite. The prize wheel on our table attracted a lot of attention. Prizes included seed packets, stickers, socks, tote bags, holiday cards, post cards, and pencils. Both children and adults enjoyed spinning the wheel.



Thank you to the Friends, NPS staff, and Volunteers who helped support the summer off-site activities. We enjoyed visits with almost 1000 visitors who stopped by our tables and collected information and engaged in conversations with our team members.

Intern Update

Katie Quinlan - Scientists in Park Intern

As the Natural Resources Management Assistant and Scientists in Parks intern here at the Florissant Fossil Beds for the past seven months, I've enjoyed getting to know the park and all of its incredible resources. I've been fortunate enough to work on fun projects and gotten to know my coworkers. Some highlights from the past several months include making a hands-on stratigraphic section of the Florissant Formation that I've present at several resources pop-ups over the summer and at Junior Ranger Day. I'm excited to present a poster on this section at the Geological Society of America conference next month, thanks to the generous support of the Friends' of the Florissant Fossil Beds.

I've also enjoyed getting some hands-on experience with fossil collections. I prepped some fossil specimens by removing small portions of shale that covered the fossil. I also got to participate in mitigating some shale exposed by the recent rains on one of our trails. Dr. Gabi, Trevor (our biological technician), Heather (our full-time maintenance worker), and I collected some nice fossils before the shales were safely covered and the trail was re-established by our wonderful volunteers. I also got to visit a new site to collect some fossils and geological samples that haven't been documented at FLFO before!

One of the most important duties in my position is assisting with the annual inventory and monitoring the Fossil Beds' paleontological and geological resources. I spent several weeks photographing these sites with Dr. Gabi to determine changes over the previous year. I got to see several off-trail areas of the park and learn more about the incredible fossil sites present here.

Some of my favorite moments include finding a beautiful specimen of a fossilized leaf with insect damage, talking with visitors about Florissant Fossil Beds' geology, and getting to know all the wonderful people who work and volunteer here!



Katie with her tactile stratigraphic section at the Resources Pop-up.



Katie looking at a fossil using a hand lens.

From left to right: Heather, Katie, and Trevor collecting fossils from the exposed shale along the Boulder Creek Trail.



Katie (pink arrow) photographing the Big Stump.

Images from A-Frame Tour

Submitted by Sally McCracken



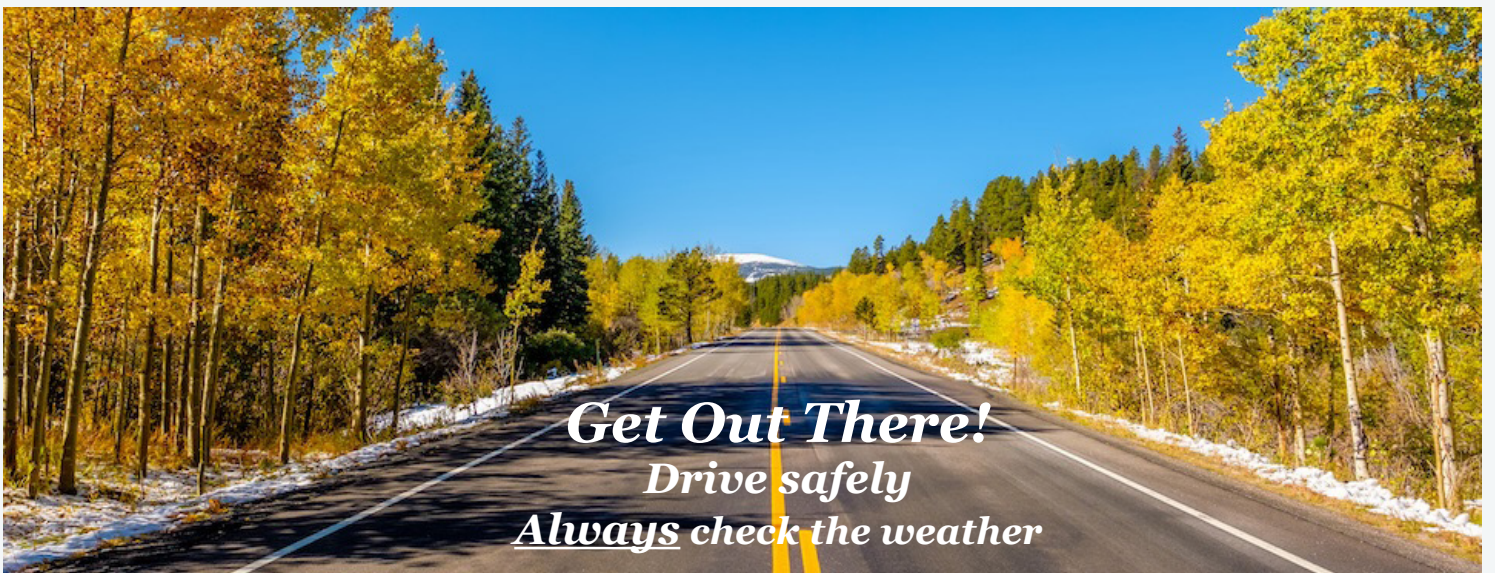


The ***aspen trees*** are expected to display their beautiful fall color toward the end of September through the first weeks of October. Weather patterns, location altitude and atmospheric changes can alter the schedule.

There are a number of areas within, and surrounding the Florissant Fossil Beds where a fall morning or afternoon hike or drive will provide an opportunity to see Mother Nature's fall gift on full display.

The aspen trees are expected to display their beautiful fall color toward the end of September through the first weeks of October.

The Florissant Fossil Beds, and surrounding areas, are situated at approximately 8500 feet above sea level and conforms to the late September to early October display. Lower-level elevations, such as Colorado Springs – 6000 feet above sea level - will generally reach peak colors in the early weeks of October.



Local Artist Presentation



Crystal Peak / Oil Painting

View facing south from the Visitors Center at the
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

Local Artist
- Michelle Melville -

Antiquities Act

Signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906

[Most recent update of Title 54 USC §320301](#) – National Park Service and Related Programs

President Nixon signs bill establishing The Florissant Fossil Beds as a National Monument on August 20, 1969

54 USC §320301: National Monuments

(a) Presidential Declaration. -

The President may, in the President's discretion, declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated on land owned or controlled by the Federal Government to be national monuments.

(b) Reservation of Land. -

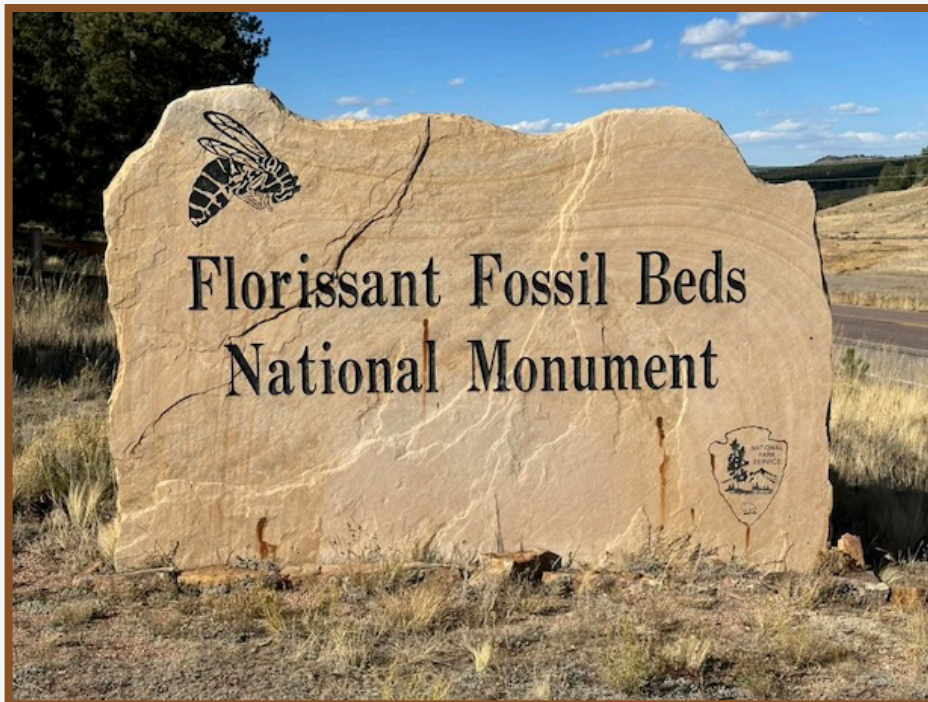
The President may reserve parcels of land as a part of the national monuments. The limits of the parcels shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

(c) Relinquishment to Federal Government. -

When an object is situated on a parcel covered by a bona fide unperfected claim or held in private ownership, the parcel, or so much of the parcel as may be necessary for the proper care and management of the object, may be relinquished to the Federal Government and the Secretary may accept the relinquishment of the parcel on behalf of the Federal Government.

(d) Limitation on Extension or Establishment of National Monuments in Wyoming. -

No extension or establishment of national monuments in Wyoming may be undertaken except by express authorization of Congress.



CODA



Good Advice!

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-Thanks Michelle-

