



Florissant Fossil Beds

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is located in a high mountain valley in central Colorado. Beneath the Monument's 6,000 acres of forests and meadows lies one of the richest fossil deposits in the world. Massive petrified redwood trees and an abundance of diverse, detailed insect and plant fossils reveal a very different Colorado of 34 million years ago.

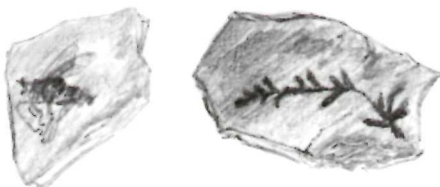


Thousands of delicate insect and leaf fossils, like this wasp, have been found in an ancient lakebed beneath the Florissant valley.

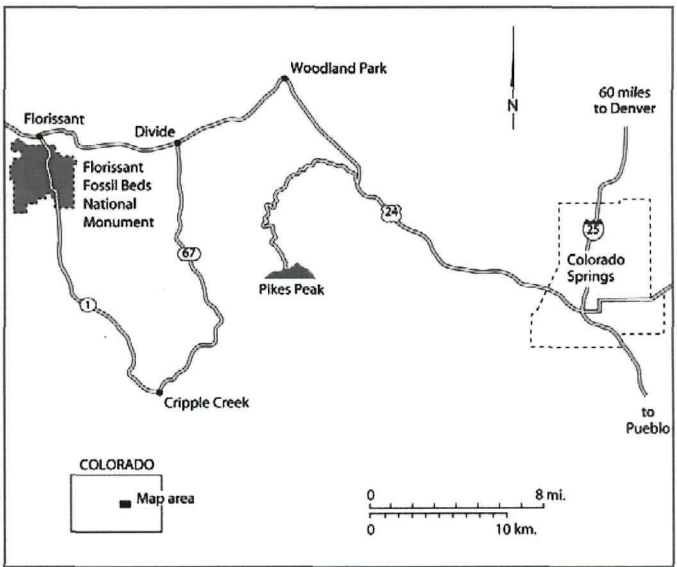
Things to do:

Fossil redwood stumps can be seen in an outdoor exhibit area behind the visitor center and on the one-mile, self-guided Petrified Forest Loop trail. A large display of plant and insect fossils is located in the visitor center along with other geologic exhibits, a film, and a bookstore run by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Children can earn their Junior Ranger Badge by completing an activity book. Ranger-guided walks and talks are offered throughout the summer.

There are over fourteen miles of hiking trails that lead through rolling, ponderosa pine forests and mountain meadows where wildlife is often seen. Visitors can also take a self-guided tour of an historic 1878 homestead.



Compression fossils of an insect and a leaf.



Directions:

The closest airport is in Colorado Springs. The Monument is located 35 miles west of Colorado Springs on Highway 24 (Exit 141 if coming from I-25). Follow Highway 24 west to the town of Florissant. Turn south on Teller County #1 then follow the signs two miles south to the visitor center.

Weather and Climate:

Summers are generally of short duration with pleasant warm days and cool nights. Freezing temperatures can sometimes occur during the summer nights. Summer thunderstorms with lightning and hail occur frequently. Sub-zero lows are common in the winter; dress in warm layers to keep dry and to prevent hypothermia. The altitude is 8,400 above sea level so pace yourself in any season, drink a lot of water, and use sunscreen.

Accessibility:

The visitor center, outdoor exhibit, 1/2 mile Ponderosa Loop Trail (summer) and amphitheater area are fully wheelchair accessible.

Pets:

Pets are prohibited within the Monument except for a small pet exercise area adjacent to the parking lot.

Contact Information:

Florissant Fossil Beds National
Monument
P.O. Box 185
Florissant, CO 80816
719 748-3253
FLFO_information@nps.gov
<http://www.nps.gov/flfo>

Hours of Operation:

Open year round from 9 AM to 5 PM.
Hours may be extended during the
summer. Closed on Thanksgiving,
Christmas, and New Year's Days.

Entrance fee of \$3.00 per
adult is required. Anyone 15
years or younger is free.