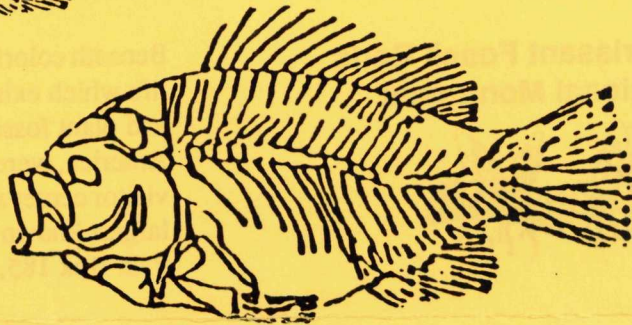
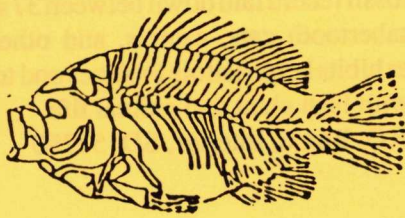


Fossil Butte National Monument

Wyoming
U.S. Department of the Interior



A Guide to Fossil Parks

Challenge your imagination! Project yourself backward in time through millions of years. At first, the scene before you is not unusual: wide grasslands dotted with trees and sluggish streams. Then you spot gigantic rhinoceros-like beasts, dwarf goats, and three-toed horses roaming the land. You are imagining a moment 21 million years ago in what is now the American Midwest.

of Mammals behind and travel farther back in time. Picture a landscape during the Age of Reptiles, 150 million years ago. A river winds across a broad plain covered with ferns, palm-like cycads, and scattered stands of tall conifers. Dinosaurs—some of them smaller than you, some so huge that you can scarcely comprehend them—dominate the scene.

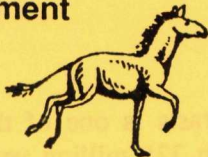
really existed, but we know they did because of their fossils. Those traces of ancient life are our only clues to plants and animals that are now extinct, and their study provides a glimpse of time gone by.

The National Park Service administers eight major fossil sites in the United States. Each is a window through which you can imagine the past, as well as enjoy the present.

Many plants and animals of the past seem so bizarre that it can be hard to believe they

Challenge yourself again: leave the Age

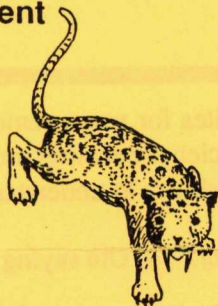
Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument



Hagerman Fossil Beds perches on high bluffs above the Snake River in southern Idaho. Its fossils date from about 3 million years ago. At that time the area was dotted with lakes and marshes, and supported a diverse fauna including beavers, otters, mastodons, sabertoothed cats, fishes, and birds. However, the site is most famous for more than 150 specimens of the Hagerman horse, an extinct species. The national monument is still undeveloped, but you can learn about it at the visitor center in the town of Hagerman.

P.O. Box 570, Hagerman, ID 83332

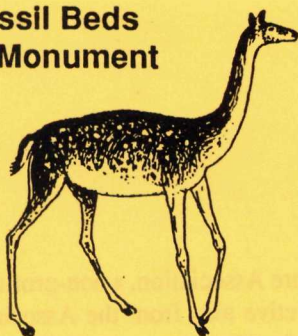
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument



Among the valleys and bluffs of north-central Oregon is a scenic landscape of juniper trees and sagebrush scattered against a background of brightly colored geologic formations. The rocks and fossils here preserve a record from 50 million years ago, after the dinosaurs disappeared, to 5 million years ago, before the last great ice age. As the region's climate slowly changed during that time, so did the landscape, from semi-tropical jungle to forests to grasslands. Animal populations also changed, and many different kinds of mammals are being identified from fossils found there. Self-guiding trails, roadside exhibits, and museum exhibits explain the relationship between ancient life, the fossil resource, and the present scene.

420 West Main Street, John Day, OR 97845

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument



Fossil bones unearthed in the grassy plains and conical buttes in northwestern Nebraska date back to 20 million years ago. The most numerous fossils are those of prehistoric rhinoceroses, dog-sized camels, and early horses. These discoveries and others in the early 1900s were highly important to the young science of paleontology. As you walk about the hills where Agate's great fossil digs took place, recreate in your mind the area's ancient life and landscape.

P.O. Box 427, Gering, NE 69341

Badlands National Park



The steep canyons and sharp ridges of the South Dakota Badlands reveal an excellent fossil record laid down between 37 and 23 million years ago, with remains of giant pigs, sabertooth cats, camels, and other mammals. An interpretive trail and museum exhibits help visitors look beyond today's arid, eroded landscape to an earlier time rich with lush plant and animal life.

P.O. Box 6, Interior, SD 57750

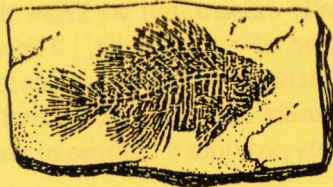
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument



Beneath colorful meadows and pine-topped ridges in central Colorado lies a record of life which existed 38 to 26 million years before the present. Some of the best insect and plant fossils in the world, and almost all of the fossil butterflies known in North America, were found at Florissant. Visitors can see detailed fossil impressions at the visitor center and tour the park for a look at petrified tree stumps, including one of the largest known sequoia stumps ever excavated.

P.O. Box 185, Florissant, CO 80816

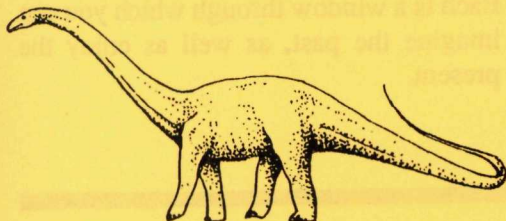
Fossil Butte National Monument



In the high desert country of southwestern Wyoming is the most remarkable fossil record of freshwater fish ever found in the United States. These fossils provide a glimpse of what life was like 50 million years ago in a now-extinct lake. Visitors can hike to the site of an historic fossil quarry on the butte, or stop at the visitor center to see the delicate remains of prehistoric fishes on rock and learn about fossil preparation.

P.O. Box 592, Kemmerer, WY 83101

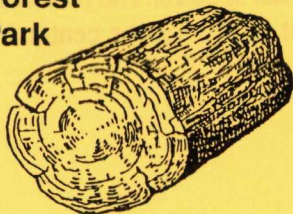
Dinosaur National Monument



The bone-bearing rock layer at this quarry site has been carefully excavated to reveal more than 1,600 fossil bones in their original positions. Although dinosaurs are the most spectacular fossils here, they are by no means the only ones. This world-renowned site preserves a 150-million-year-old community of animals, from tiny amphibians and mammals to the largest creatures ever to walk on land. Explore farther and find a park that encompasses over 329 square miles of high desert and rugged canyons, where visitors can enjoy activities ranging from whitewater river rafting to watching for endangered peregrine falcons.

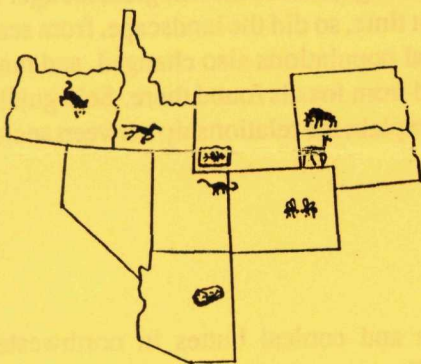
P.O. Box 210, Dinosaur, CO 81610

Petrified Forest National Park



This land of quiet grandeur and vivid contrasts is one of the world's greatest storehouses of knowledge about life on Earth 225 million years ago. The large concentration of petrified wood and the remains of plants and animals that lived in this prehistoric forest continue to provide insight into a world long since vanished. The park contains a portion of the vast Painted Desert and hundreds of archaeological sites, as well as living plants and animals of the Colorado Plateau.

Petrified Forest National Park, AZ 86028



The National Park Service protects these sites for you to enjoy. **Do not collect or remove any fossils or other material.** As science becomes more refined, each piece of material becomes more important to our ability to understand the distant past.

"We are here not to destroy, but to be part of." — Ute saying

Printing of this leaflet was funded by Dinosaur Nature Association, a non-profit organization. When you purchase books, maps, or other interpretive aids from the Association, you are making a contribution to the educational and scientific programs of Dinosaur National Monument. To receive a free mail order catalog, phone 800-845-3466.