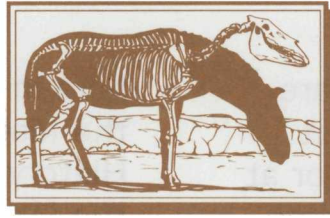


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# HAGERMAN FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

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The  
**FOSSIL**



**RECORD**

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JULY, 1996

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2

## THE BARE BONES OF THIS ISSUE:

Fossil Days Recap

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## VISITOR INFORMATION

TOUR SCHEDULE -Scheduled tours of the Monument continue through the month of August as noted at the end of this newsletter. Activities include Horse Quarry tours, the Monument by water, indoor programs and other interpretive tours.

## FOSSIL DAYS RECAP

Fun was had by all thanks to our volunteers, staff, and especially our visitors. The National Park Service Visitor Center was very busy Saturday and Sunday, May 25 and 26 with over 1,000 visitors! Along with the slide show presentation and fossil exhibits, many programs were provided.



Visitors were transported “back in time” with Maudie Miller (portrayed by Mary Inman), as she spun her tale of the mountain men who forged the route for the Oregon Trail emigrants’ wagon trains. Canoe trips were also offered, courtesy of Olin Gardner’s Idaho Guide Service, along the Snake River with interpretive programs about the Monument. And finally, two bus trips gave visitors a chance to experience the famous “Horse Quarry” up close and personal.

# Congratulations

to the Fossil Beds float for receiving Third Place award for Horses and Mules Division in the Fossil Days parade! Dr. Greg McDonald, Monument Paleontologist, portrayed an old-time prospector digging up bones while Judi Hart, seasonal Park Ranger, personified present-day National Park Service efforts. Chief Ranger, Bob Willhite and his wife Marcia, rode their Peruvian Paso horses as testimony of the Spanish re-introduction of the horse to North America.

## RANGER PATROL

Volunteers are needed to help the park staff remove purple loosestrife from the Monument. Hopefully, this year we will successfully eradicate this noxious weed from the banks of the Monument.

## HISTORICAL

Mathew Henbest, a graduate student from Boise State, has been examining developing trends and ideas on the history of paleontology during the early 20th century. His focus will include the role of Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument and the significance of the fossil material found in the famous “Horse Quarry.”



“If the American people held a popularity contest among all the activities of the Federal Government, it is a safe bet that the work of the National Park Service would stand high in the front ranks...But the very popularity of the parks is threatening their existence. They are right now in the process of being loved to death by the American people.”

New York Times editorial, November 24, 1953

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

WILDLIFE - Of the nine goose boxes installed last year, only one produced a clutch of six Canada goose goslings. According to biologists, this is common, as it takes some time for geese to take to new boxes. A sideline benefit was that owls apparently were using the nesting boxes as perches as they watched for mice.



## Thank You

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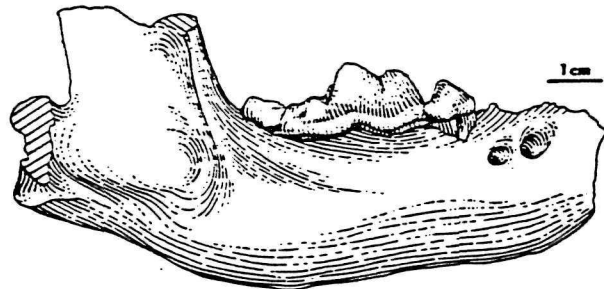
The Monument Clean-up on Saturday, June 15 was very successful thanks to several faculty and students of Miami University in Ohio. Over 500 pounds of garbage were picked up along Bell Rapids Road which transects the southwest portion of the Monument.

## CRITTER CORNER

### The Voracious Flesh-Eater of Hagerman Fossil Beds

By Greg McDonald,  
Monument Paleontologist

Although the title of this article may sound like a low quality, B grade movie, it is rather a translation from the Latin scientific name of one Hagerman Fossil Beds' rarer animals, Ferinestrix vorax. This animal was first described in 1970 based on specimens found at Hagerman by the University of Michigan and is known from only two bones, a jaw and a femur (upper leg bone).



Given the small number of specimens with which to work, it is difficult to

say much about this animal, but what is preserved is quite interesting.

Ferinestrix (since there is no common name, the first part of its scientific name, the genus, will be used) is a member of the family Mustelidae, which includes weasels, skunks, badgers and wolverines. The slicing tooth (technically called a carnassial) in the jaw is large and massive suggesting it could crush bones. Its overall size was probably only slightly larger than the modern wolverine but the leg bone is more robust suggesting an even stockier and more powerfully built body. Although this animal seems to be closely related to the Old World Honey Badger or ratel, its habits may have been similar to that of a wolverine and its role in the local ecology of 3.5 million years ago may have been that of a scavenger and carrion feeder.

Recently our knowledge of Ferinestrix took a leap forward with the discovery of additional specimens, not at Hagerman, but in South Dakota. Philip Bjork who studied the carnivores of Hagerman and originally described Ferinestrix has found new specimens from a cave/fissure system in the Black Hills. This new find includes bones of the forearm which like the hind leg

indicates a strong powerful animal. But the story of Ferinestrix is not limited to North America. Recently it appears the animal has been found in Mongolia. These Mongolian discoveries have not yet been fully studied so we don't know yet if they represent the same or a different species of Ferinestrix. Other interesting questions that need to be answered are whether this new specimen comes from rocks older, the same age, or younger than Hagerman. Since Ferinestrix appears to be related to the Honey Badger which today is found in the Middle East and Africa, it is most likely that the animal originated in the Old World and later entered North America along with other animals such as the bear. Both of these discoveries from outside the Monument will help put the Hagerman fauna into a broader context. Once the Mongolian and South Dakota specimens are studied and comparisons made with the Hagerman specimens, we may have a better idea of the evolution and ecology of this rare animal and the timing of its appearance in North America.

Hagerman may have set the stage with the first discovery of Ferinestrix but it is only by these additional studies of specimens from other

locations that we are learning more about this rare animal. Perhaps a more complete skeleton will one day be found on the Monument.

## SCHOOL DAYS

The entire month of September will be devoted to "parks as classrooms." Park Rangers at Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument will provide programs for any school that would like to learn more about your National Monument. Programs can vary in subject length, as well as location. Each program will be specifically tailored to fit the needs of each interested school group. Call the National Park Service at 837-4793 to schedule your class for a special program to be given at the Monument or your school.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We're proud of our VIP's (Volunteers in Parks), who contribute their time by assisting in the field with collection and preparation of fossils; greeting visitors and answering questions at the Visitor Center; providing administrative

skills; and assisting with interpretive programs.

If you are interested in helping out this summer, contact Park Ranger, James Ward at (208) 837-4793 or stop by the Visitor Center. Training will be provided.

# Good-bye & good luck!

The staff at Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument wishes to extend their **deepest thanks** to Ethel (Woach) Carleton for her many hours of volunteer service. She has contributed over 1,300 hours since she began volunteering at the Fossil Beds in May 1994. In March of this year, the Hagerman Fossil Beds staff honored Ethel with a framed photograph of the fossil beds, a gift certificate, and an honorary degree as a "Doctor of Visitor Inquiry." The Times-News newspaper wrote a feature article recognizing her major contribution of 1,200 hours of service to the Monument.

Unfortunately, for the staff and the visitors, Ethel will be leaving the area. The staff sadly bids Ethel adieu and wishes her the **best of luck!**

## SCHEDULE OF SATURDAY SUMMER TOURS

All programs begin at the National Park Service Visitor Center, located along Highway 30 across from Hagerman High School. Programs are free and open to the public. Participants may need to bring their own transportation. Sturdy footwear, sunscreen, a windbreaker, and water are recommended for most programs. For more information, call the National Park Service at (208) 837-4793.

- JULY 6                    MONUMENT BY WATER - Enjoy the scenery and information locked in the layers of the Monument as you canoe along the Snake River. Participants will need to bring their own canoe or kayak. Rentals available from Riverwear and Idaho Guide Service in Twin Falls. Call 837- 4793 for tour reservation and details.
- JULY 13                    THE NAME GAME - What's in a name? Did you ever wonder how rocks, plants or animals ended up with the names we use? Did you know that the Jurassic Period was named for the Jura Mountains which border France and Switzerland? Find out how and where these names developed. Inside program begins at 2:00 pm.
- JULY 20                    FOSSILS FOR KIDS (of all ages) - Find out how to identify fossils and learn about the animals that once lived here. Program begins at 9:00 am.
- JULY 27                    FOSSIL BEDS - Travel to the famous "Horse Quarry" where the now extinct Hagerman Horse was discovered. Program begins at 9:00 am.

- AUGUST 3 HISTORY OF PALEONTOLOGY - Learn why the hunt for big game at the Hagerman Fossil Beds was so important to the Smithsonian Institution. Inside program begins at 2:00 pm.
- AUGUST 10 MONUMENT BY WATER - Relax and enjoy the scenery and information locked in the layers of the Monument as you canoe along the Snake River. Participants will need to bring their own canoe or kayak. Rentals available from Riverwear and Idaho Guide Service in Twin Falls. Call 837- 4793 for tour reservation and details.
- AUGUST 17 OREGON TRAIL LIVING HISTORY - Ever wonder what it was like to travel the Oregon Trail? If you have any interest at all in the Oregon Trail, come join our program and learn about the people, the experiences, and challenges of the emigrants' journey. Program begins at 9:00 am.
- AUGUST 24 FOSSIL IDENTIFICATION DAY - Here's your chance to find out what those old bones are that have been cluttering up your closet. Our experts will be on hand to examine and identify your treasures. Inside program begins at 10:00 am until 1:00 pm.
- AUGUST 31 FOSSIL BEDS - Last Tour of the Season!  
Travel to the famous "Horse Quarry" where the now extinct Hagerman Horse was discovered. Program begins at 9:00 am.