



John Day Fossil Beds

The official newspaper of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

Paleontology Center On Track

Construction of the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center, begun last September by the 2-G Construction Company, is on track for completion by November 2003. After initial ground preparations, the new structure started to take shape and rise skyward last January. As of this date, crews are applying the roof panels and finishing surfaces on the interior and exterior walls.



July Photo of New Paleontology Center

Once the building has been completed, it will undergo final inspections before being furnished and occupied by park staff. The furnishings will include extensive exhibits in the main lobby and the spacious 2,500 square foot museum. The exhibit contract has just been awarded for production and installation of exhibits for both the new paleo center and the renovated James Cant Ranch house. The creation of these new exhibits is expected to take over one year to complete.

The staff expects to move all operations this winter to the newly completed center. This will allow renovation work to commence on the Cant Ranch house, such as installation of new electrical work, an HVAC system, and cultural history exhibits.

Once the ranch house is completed, the headquarters staff will return their operations to the house. The transition from one building to the next will allow the park to continue visitor services with minimal interruptions.

Chasing Butterflies at JODA

In addition to several ongoing inventories related to mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, the park has initiated an inventory of the butterflies that inhabit its various habitat types.

After just 2 months of field work, nearly 45 species have been identified of the 50+ species that may inhabit the drier, lower elevation portions of the John Day watershed where the Monument's three Units are located.

Sue Anderson, a contracted naturalist and butterfly expert for eastern Oregon is leading the butterfly portion of the inventory. Individual butterflies are observed using binoculars or are caught using nets and then are released. New species are photographed using a high quality digital camera, and field notes are collected.

Sue has many years of expertise in both butterfly identification and professional photography,

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Acmon Blue Butterfly

Paleontology News

Matt Smith, preparator extraordinaire, has made molds and casts for approximately 130 of the 500 specimens the park has borrowed from the University of California at Berkeley and the Los Angeles County Museum... he has been busy (as have all of the staff) working on ordering new equipment for the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center (TCPC), which is going up very fast... went to Florida recently and picked up a fine cast of a very large *barbourofelis lovorum*, a “saber-toothed” predator, for comparison in reconstructing the John Day “Toy Sabertooth”... He reports that **Cindy Kilpatrick** has been a very quick study and exceptionally diligent laboratory worker... she is also helping him spend money, and researching various kinds of airbrushes to apply pigments to many of the casts... Cindy has also been doing her homework on making bronze casts for use at the TCPC, exploring the vagaries of mixing metals, waxes, and epoxy resins... **Regan Dunn**, the park’s new paleobotanist, has been working hard on building up a comprehensive locality database... she is compiling sections from numerous different outcrops and times to put together a composite section of strata... compiled a large order of paleobotanical books for the library which heretofore has been pretty biased towards animals and strata... **Karon Decker** made great headway on getting site digital photos and relocating many localities that have been obscure and is now greening up her pastures at graduate school... **Ted Fremd** has been working on TCPC concepts, service-wide committees and professional duties, some fieldwork around the Clarno and Ironside areas of eastern Oregon, and very rarely working on some research projects ... **Scott Foss** has been a ramrod getting the spreadsheets

and orders ready for equipment in offices, library, collection storage and almost everywhere else... leading field parties into classic localities, like the Foree Beds, that contain abundant skulls and specimens from well-known strata... Scott’s also been working hard supervising **Chris Schierup** as he catalogues last year’s field collections... Chris’ work is a model of excellent cataloging procedures!



Skull of a saber toothed carnivore, *Nimravus brachyops*

May in Paradise; Memories of a month at JODA

I had the great pleasure of volunteering last May at JODA to work in the prep lab learning preparation and molding skills under the expert guidance of Matt Smith, and to work with the professional staff.

I felt privileged to interact with Ted Fremd, to help Scott Foss excavate a Miocene chalicothere (*Moropus cf. oregonensis*) scapula from its bed of lithified volcanic ash and sediments, and to prospect for botanical fossils with paleobotanist Regan Dunn and technician Karon Decker. My singular contribution was to find and excavate a trackway not far from the scapula. I choose to believe the prints are those of a chalicothere, though Scott identified them as probably ancient canid tracks.

The exhilaration of the beauty of the John Day River basin dominated all my experiences for four weeks.

Each day brought joy, whether rain or shine, dawn, noon or golden dusk, among the steep slopes of red, blue-green and beige ash stark against the dark caprock of Miocene Picture Gorge basalt 1000 feet above.

The simple, unhurried life I enjoyed much too briefly in Dayville, with no radio reception (NPR withdrawal pangs), very limited TV, and no cell phone service, has become my ideal.

Thank you all for welcoming me last May and making me feel so appreciated. I look forward to working with you all again in summer 2004.

-Phyllis Park Saarinen

Phyllis Saarinen is a paleo volunteer at the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, and a retired natural resource economist.

Joda Welcomes New Interpreters

Lia Vella and **Sarah Herve** are new permanent employees in the Visitor Services Division at JODA.

Since 1990, Lia Vella has worked as a seasonal NPS interpreter and museum technician at four different national parks and monuments. Here at John Day Fossil Beds, her interpretive work will focus mainly on the cultural history of the area.

A native of upstate New York, Lia has lived in Dayville for the past five years. She has a PhD in English with a minor in History and has taught literature and writing at the college and high school levels. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, writing, reading, yoga, kayaking, and playing the violin. Lia looks forward to gathering information and stories from local and regional resources and sharing this rich history with visitors.

Sarah Herve has worked as a seasonal park ranger and later as a SCEP employee at John Day Fossil Beds since 1999. She has a Bachelors degree in Liberal Studies with minors in Biology and art and has worked as a photographer, pre-school teacher and massage therapist before joining the National Park service.

Sarah will be responsible for the education programs at the park and she is very excited to begin designing new programs which fit the needs of the new paleontology center. One of her great hopes is to include an art making component to many of the new programs.

When she's not in uniform, Sarah spends time working in her garden, playing soccer with her dog Starr, doing yoga with Lia, and busying herself with one of her many hobbies.

Working as a park ranger fulfills a childhood dream for Sarah, and John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is a great park to be living a dream.

Chasing Butterflies cont. so the quality of the inventory and final report should be impressive.

Several park staff are assisting with the inventories. Sue has also conducted some hands-on courses with youth groups at the OMSI Hancock Field Station to give them experience in butterfly collection and identification techniques.

Monarch butterflies may also be captured, tagged, and released as part of a region-wide project to identify areas with resident populations. Sue is also helping with the identification of a number of butterfly species that were collected on the Monument and mounted in the 1980's by NPS staff.

Paleo-Academy Second Year Success

Early in the month of July, a week-long Paleo-Academy was conducted by the North-Central Education Service District office staff, of the Oregon Department of Education.

The purpose of the week-long teacher training is to introduce basic geology and paleontology concepts, represented in the landscape of eastern Oregon, in the context of activities that would easily transfer to the classroom.

Participating with NCESD instructor Julia King were BLM Archaeologist John Zancanella, Jeff Myers, a professor at Western Oregon University Monmouth, and monument park rangers John Fiedor,

Jenny DeLuca, John Laing, and Sarah Herve.

Teachers from the surrounding counties as well as from the Portland area attended.

Field trips to various locations around the town of Fossil, Oregon, were conducted, including the Clarno and Sheep Rock Units of the monument. After the success of the first Paleo-Academy in the summer of 2002, the second year was as great an achievement.

Those teachers interested in attending the next workshop should contact the North Central Education Service District office at 541-384-2772.

New Exhibits Save Paper

In the last few months park staff and volunteers have been converting three popular, self-guiding trails, making them more “green” in use.

The three converted trails are the Clarno Unit’s Trail of the Fossils & Arch Trail, the Painted Hills Unit’s Painted Cove Trail, and the Sheep Rock Unit’s Story In Stone Trail. In the past visitors would pick up a self-guiding brochure at each of the trailheads and stop at numbered posts along the trail route to learn about special features on display.

Thousands of brochures were distributed each year, requiring

periodic printings, and significant staff time keeping brochure boxes stocked throughout the year. Every so often, brochure boxes would be empty for visitors, and any recent discoveries near trails, such as fossils, would have to wait for the next printing of brochures before visitors were informed.

In 2002, park staff designed a metal, low wayside exhibit that stands about two feet tall and displays an 8 ½ “ by 11” exhibit panel. Exhibit panels can be easily and inexpensively produced by the park, and readily changed when new information occurs, keeping the low wayside exhibits current.

The panels can also be changed with the seasons, focusing on seasonal events, flora and fauna. Instead of numbered posts along the trail, each stop now has a low wayside with the message clearly displayed, eliminating the need for brochures. The trails are still self-guiding, but easily sustainable.

Park visitors have expressed their preference for the new low waysides, and expenses, maintenance, and paper use have dropped accordingly.

GMP Underway

Starting this winter, the monument will start the process of revising our General Management Plan (GMP).

The GMP provides the management direction for the monument for the next 10 to 15 years, and helps prioritize goals and objectives. Similar to a Forest Plan, the GMP will guide

resources management, interpretation, and visitor use within all three units of the monument (Sheep Rock, Painted Hills, and Clarno).

The planning process will include many opportunities for public input and participation and take approximately three years from start to finish. Core team members will include park division chiefs, regional office staff, and individuals from the Denver Service Center, the Park Service’s central office for planning and design.

New Junior Park Rangers

In the past this space has been reserved for listing all the names of our new Junior Park Rangers, but this summer our Junior Park Ranger program has been so successful, we have run out of space in our newsletter to print the names.

The staff at John Day Fossil Beds are very happy to see that our Junior Park Ranger program is so popular, and we thank all of you out there who have participated. We hope you will visit many other parks within the national park’s system and when you do, know that you are now officially one of the team of dedicated people who take care of these remarkable places.

Congratulations, Junior Park Rangers!

leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations

A portion of the act creating the National Park Service



National Park Service
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