

Off the Beaten Path Hikes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Petrified Forest National Park



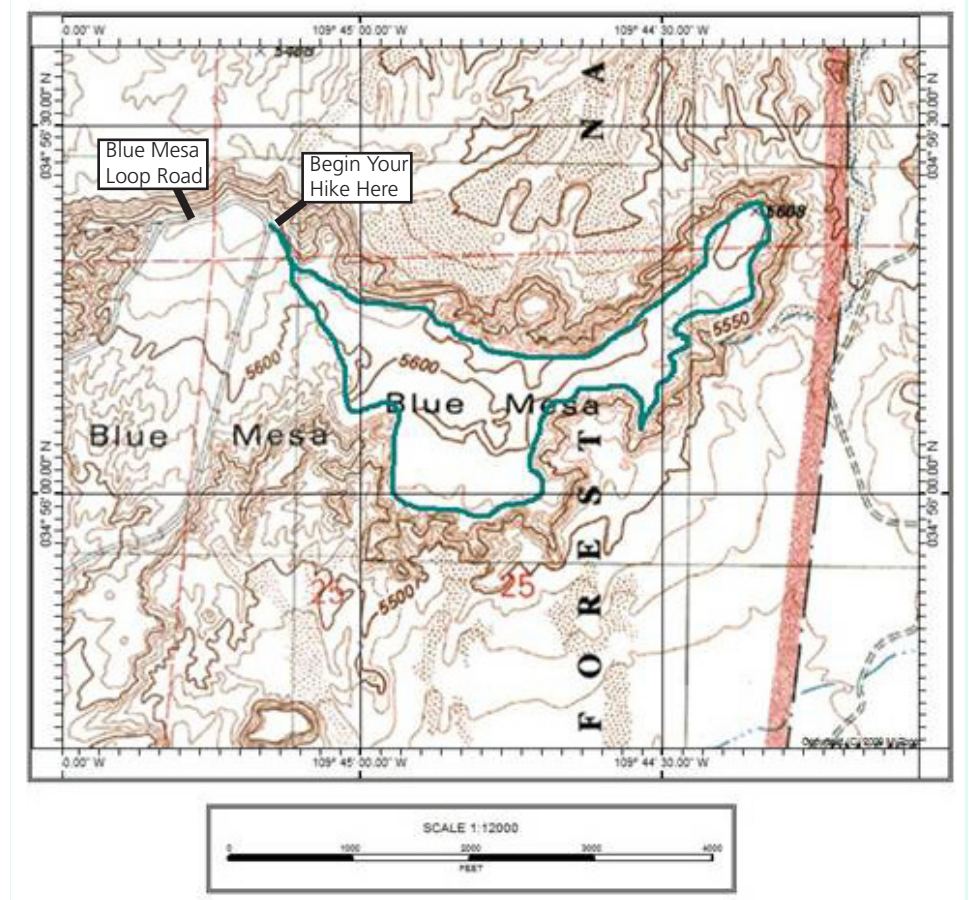
View from the Blue Mesa rim

Billings Gap Overlook

3mi (4.8km)

This hike is slightly less than 3 miles round-trip, and takes you to a great viewpoint of the Billings Gap area and badlands east of Blue Mesa. The hike follows the steep edge of Blue Mesa offering views of the badlands to the east and the broad grassy valleys to the south. The deep blues, purples, and whites which color the badlands seem to shift throughout the day and with the seasons. The summer monsoons add a touch of green vegetation, and water streams across the badlands, after a summer storm.

Please respect the visitors who follow you and leave all petrified wood, fossils, artifacts, and natural objects in their places.



Enjoy your hike safely and protect the park

This walk, although not strenuous, does require sturdy shoes. The footing can be difficult at any time—pay attention and don't walk too close to the steep rim edge. Do not attempt this hike if lightning is in the area. Please take normal hiking precautions and bring food and water, sun protection, and navigation aids. Pack out whatever you packed in. Do not attempt this hike if there is lightning nearby.



Blue Mesa rim looking east

Please park at the fourth pullout of the Blue Mesa Loop Road (before the pullout with the sun shelter). From the pullout you will walk northeast towards the flat part of the mesa rim. When you reach the Billings Gap overlook you are a little less than halfway done with the hike. Follow the other side of the rim back south towards the Blue Mesa Loop road.

The land associated with Billings Gap is part of the lands within the 2004 boundary expansion of Petrified Forest National Park. Many new archeological and paleontological discoveries have been made and are now protected in these lands. A hiking guide into this area is also available.



View of Billings Gap