

OREGON'S OTHERWORLDLY PLACES

By **MAKENZIE WHITTLE**
THE BULLETIN

Recent images from Mars might have you longing to blast off and explore the final frontier for yourself. But faster than any travel for a continuing mission, you can explore these Oregon vistas to give you that spacey feeling, no astronaut training required.

Painted Hills

Probably the most “out there” view you’ll get in Oregon, the Painted Hills is regarded as one of the state’s seven wonders.

Part of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, these colorful hills made of paleosols, or ancient soils, tell their geologic story on each hillside with every color indicating a different ancient climate. This is also a place where hundreds of varieties of leaf and nut fossils have been found indicat-

ing the more temperate life that thrived here around 33 million years ago.

The best trail to get that Martian experience is along the Painted Cove Trail. Here, wooden, raised boardwalks wind through the deep red hills giving visitors that up-close look at these beautiful hills.

The stunning hills are incredibly fragile so stay on designated trails while visiting and take only pictures.

Clarno

The Clarno Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is also the least visited of the three designated areas of the monument. Located 18 miles west of Fossil, the smaller site has four trails that stretch below the towering palisades that have been eroded by time and wind.

Like all of the units, this one also is home

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A view of the Painted Hills from the Overlook Trail.

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