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to many animal and plant fossils some of which can clearly be seen in the large boulders along the sides of the trail. These are left from a semi-tropical forest that existed here 44 million years ago and was swept up in volcanic mudflows, called lahars and deposited here.

The palisades are eroded lahar deposits with striking red colorations that deepen in the rain.

The unit's Geologic Time Trail has signs posted beside it that indicate the changing in time with each food representing 37,000 years which makes a great tool in visualizing how much time has passed.

Alvord Desert

The playa out in one of the more remote corners of Oregon sits in the impressive

shadow of the Steens Mountain.

Alvord Desert is only about 20 miles long and receives most of its rainfall and moisture over the winter, thanks to runoff from the mountain and can at times become more of a lake. When it gets wet, it gets muddy so one can easily get stuck out on the flats.

But when things dry out, the ground hardens and the wind can often howl over the plain creating the desolate and alien-like landscape that could be found in the worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Lava Cast Forest

Closer to home, though best explored during the summer after the snow has melted, the lava rock-filled places of the Newberry National Volcanic Monument resemble a lot of what could be found out on other tertiary planets and moons. In fact, during NASA's Apollo program of the



Photos by Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin

LEFT: The Clarno Palisades, an ancient rock feature formed 54 to 40 million years ago, still holds fossils of plants from the semi-tropical climate of ancient Oregon. **ABOVE:** The trail through the lava field at Hoffman Island.

1960s, a handful of astronauts trained in these lava fields to test their equipment and maneuverability along the rocky terrain.

If you want a really secluded space-filled hike, Lava Cast Forest is more tucked away than its neighbors in the monument. Here you can explore hollowed-out casts of trees

that were burned away when lava came spewing out of the fissure off the side of Newberry Volcano thousands of years ago.

Even more out of the way is the trail to Hoffman Island, a kipuka, or an island of trees surrounded by the jagged lava rock beyond it.



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