

Journey

through Grant County
and beyond

Supplement of The Blue
Mountain Eagle



Fossil Beds journey takes visitors to Cenozoic Era

Scenic drives, hikes
and fossil displays await

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

KIMBERLY – Delve deep into history – millions of years back – with a visit to the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center is a state-of-the-art facility, offering an abundance of fossil displays and information.

Located between Dayville and Kimberly on Highway 19, the Center hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., daily, with free admission.

Scientists can be seen at work through a fossil laboratory viewing window.

“A Place of Discovery” is an 18-minute movie for young and old to enjoy, and a junior ranger room offers youngsters a place to color and learn more about the prehistoric mammals that once roamed the area.

Blue Basin Trailhead

Several hikes in the Monument show off the unique landscape, including two hikes at the Blue Basin Trailhead, just a few miles north of the visitor center.

One direction leads hikers on mile-long Island In Time Trail, a path which

gently ascends to a feast for the eyes – a blue-green claystone canyon landscape.

Held within the layers, created by redistributed volcanic ash, are many of the fossils one can find on display at the visitor center.

For a more strenuous adventure, the Blue Basin Overlook Trail loops up and around the canyon lending a breathtaking, bird’s-eye view of the canyon formation and beyond.

The trail is 3.25 miles long with a 760-foot elevation gain.

Hikers are required to stick to the trail, and digging for fossils and taking rocks or fossils is prohibited.

If a fossil is found, take a picture of it and show a ranger.

Cant Ranch

For a more recent history lesson, there’s the Historic Cant Ranch, located across the highway from the visitor center.

Built in 1917, the Cant Ranch is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Museum items owned by the James and Elizabeth Cant families are on display, and visitors are allowed to pick fruit from the historic orchards on the property.

A few short trails provide views of the Sheep Rock Overlook and the John Day River.

For more information, call 541-987-2333.



JoAnn, left, and Richard Bertram of Pendleton and their grandson Alex Greason of Tehachapi, Calif., view the Hancock Mammal Quarry display at the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center.

Photos by The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Naomi Mullin and Levi Carpenter hike back down from the Blue Basin Island In Time Trail at the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

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