

## 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 Mon-

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

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 milelong 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

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

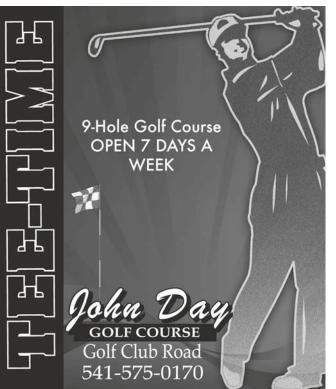
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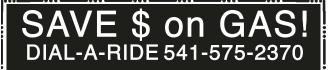




Naomi Mullin and Levi Carpenter hike back down from the Blue Basin Island In Time Trail at the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

Center.





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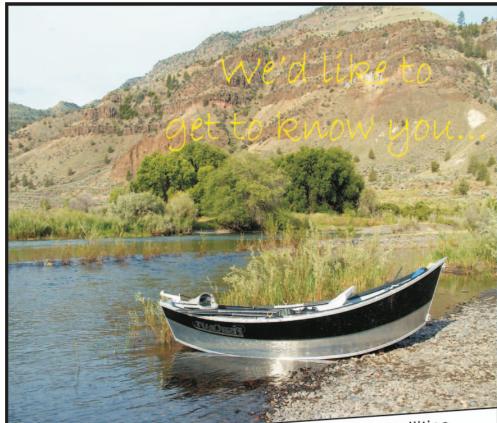
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