



TAKE IT IN Fossil Beds

JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

The John Day Fossil Beds National Monument preserves a world class record of evolution - animal, plant, climate and ecosystem - spanning over 40 million years. Fossils of land plants and animals, as well as evidence of dramatic climate change, have been discovered, dating from 5 million to 44 million years old.

The monument's more than 14,000 acres are found in three diverse, separate units: the Sheep Rock Unit, Painted Hills Unit and Clarno Unit, all in the John Day River Basin. Although the units are spread out in rural areas over winding roads, with an early start it is possible to visit all three in one day.

The Sheep Rock Unit is the largest area of the monument and contains the Historic Cant Ranch and Thomas Condon Paleontology Center, the informational facility of the monument. It is the best place to see examples of what can be found in all three units, and you can find park rangers with answers to your questions. The center also

includes a lab, where the paleontology crew can oftentimes be observed at work.

The Clarno Unit, about 20 miles away and closer to the town of Fossil, holds a variety of rock formations known as the Palisades. Signs of small and large animals as well as plant life can be seen. Although digging for fossils is not allowed anywhere in the monument, near to this unit is the Wheeler High School Fossil Beds, where visitors are allowed to search for their own fossils (entrance fee required).

The Painted Hills Unit is aptly named, as it showcases varied colorful shades in exposed volcanic layers. This unit is best viewed in the late afternoon for panoramic scenes of the hills or close-up views of the multi-hued layers. Seasonal blooms add their own touch.

Hiking trails of varying degrees of difficulty are found throughout the monument, as well as picnic areas and restrooms.

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

32651 Highway 19, 8 miles west of Dayville
541-987-2333 • www.nps.gov/joda

Open: Daily, year-round, except federal holidays between Thanksgiving and President's Day.

Winter hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Summer hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Admission: Free

Whether you are interested in plants and animals, rock formations and geology or the history of the people who once lived here, the well-documented changing of the life and landscape is a must-see. Visit today for your chance to experience the prehistoric past of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.