

Blue Basin hike holds hidden treasure

FOSSILS ARE STILL FOUND IN BLUE BASIN AREA

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle



After traveling little over a half-mile, two hikers enjoy the scenic blue-green claystones of the Island in Time Blue Basin hike. **BELOW:** The end of the trail at the Blue Basin Island in Time hike.

While visiting the state-of-the-art Thomas Condon Paleontology Center in the Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds, be sure to take in one of the surrounding hikes.

The Blue Basin's Island in Time Trail, approximately 3 miles north of the Paleontology Center, is more than just spectacular scenery for the eyes.

The tan and blue-green layers of claystones and siltstones, volcanic ash turned to stone, have peeled back a treasure trove of fossils over the years.

At 1.3 miles, round-trip, the hike has a gravel trail with metal bridges and benches to rest on along the way.

The hike is easy enough for children, too.

Interpretive signs and fossil replicas located along the trail show the variety of vertebrate fossils that have been found, including oreodonts, similar to field hogs, and tortoises.

Even after 150 years of study, new fossils continue to be discovered in the basin.



An oreodont fossil replica is on display along the Island in Time Blue Basin Trail.

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