

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

Registration for this trip includes snacks, water, transportation, and entrance fee

Leader: Susan Abbott, AS

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is an hour's drive from Colorado Springs and contains one of the richest Eocene fossil deposits in the world. The site contains fossils of insects, leaves, seeds, fish, and a few mammals and birds. Most of these fossils are still buried underground, but the visitor center contains beautifully excavated and prepared specimens. One of the first things you will notice are the massive petrified tree stumps of redwood trees next to the visitor center. You will see more of these and along the short park trails.

We can begin our time at the monument at the visitor center by watching a 14-minute film, *Shadows of the Past*. Then we are free to explore the visitor center and the short self-guided park trails near the visitor center; one trail is ½ mile long, and the other is a mile. We will spend about 2 hours at the monument.

The drive to Florissant takes us through Manitou Springs, past the cutoff to the Road to Pikes Peak, and up Fountain Creek canyon. It is a pretty drive that should include nice views of Pike's Peak.

This is a truly unique and fascinating place to explore fossils. Florissant is at an elevation of 8,388 feet. Please consider whether the altitude will affect you. The weather in Florissant is likely to be cooler than Colorado Springs and may be very different, so be prepared for rain, wind, and potentially, snow. Walking shoes are recommended.