

Project Completion Report

Project Title: Acquisition, Entry, and Maintenance of Resource-related Information for “Synthesis” and “Views of the National Parks.”

Park: FLFO, and others

Funding Source: WASO Natural Resources Information Division

Contact: Bruce Nash, 303-987-6697

University Partner, PI: University of Colorado - Denver, Cherrie Grove

Project Description:

“... the National Park Service embrace[s] its mission, as educator, to become a more significant part of America’s educational system by providing formal and informal programs for students and learners of all ages inside and outside park boundaries.” — National Park System Advisory Board, “Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century”

The National Park System is a magnificent outdoor classroom for teaching and inspiring students in the area of earth science. Exploring the many parks in the system is like taking a visual trip through a book on earth systems and processes. Coastal processes and mountain-building, volcanic landforms and fossil remains of times past, ecological science and nutrient cycling, nightsky and daytime viewsheds, invasive species and cultural connections to the land. All of these topics may be explored in our national parks – and to that end the National Park Service (NPS) has initiated an interactive, multimedia education system named “Views of the National Parks.” Its purpose is explained on the opening screen:

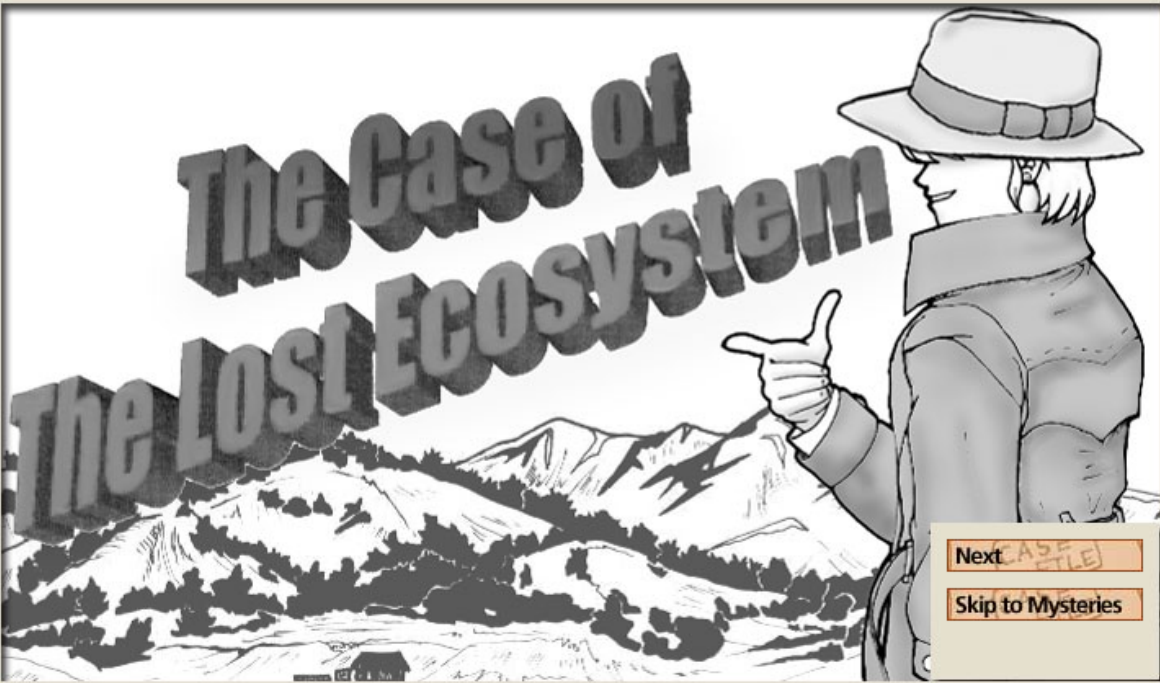
“Welcome to Views of the National Parks. The United States’ national park system is a magnificent quiltwork of people and places stitched seamlessly in the fabric of the American experience. Come; explore this mosaic where the natural world and our cultural heritage are deeply intertwined. Investigate natural wonders and the powerful forces that sculpt them. Discover how the natural landscape has shaped - and been shaped by - the American people. Recognize the uniqueness and diversity of our many cultures and celebrate the threads that join us all as Americans. Connect with the stories of your national parks, and “Experience your America.”

Views of the National Parks (Views) consists of two complementary components: virtual experiences and knowledge centers. Virtual experiences provide multimedia gateways to park-based educational experiences. They help park interpreters and education specialists reach a greater number of people, including park visitors that do not have time to take a ranger-led tour, students in classrooms (local and distant), handicapped visitors who cannot reach remote park sites, or members of the public unable to visit the park. Virtual experiences also allow interpreters and educational specialists to re-create historical, natural, and cultural landscapes. The ability to experience vanished landscapes will provide a new understanding of the past and of the processes that created the landscapes we see today. Knowledge centers present general information and principles on a variety of natural resource themes. They provide the basic knowledge required to better understand and appreciate the natural processes that have created our national parks. Knowledge centers provide a means of connecting national parks that share natural resource themes and also to provide linkages to citizens across the country, whether they live in an urban or rural environment. People will protect what they understand. It is the responsibility of the NPS to help all its citizens understand earth resources and earth processes so they can become responsible stewards of our planet’s resources.

The funds from this project were used to hire a student intern to assist in the development of several Views modules. The student selected, Ms. Jeni Chetwin, provided primarily expertise in graphic design and visual arts. Staff from Florissant Fossil Beds (FLFO) NM wanted a cartoon-based introduction for the FLFO Views module which would present the concepts of the scientific method and ecosystem change over geologic time. Jeni was given this assignment and produced a series of cartoons to accompany the text written by the FLFO interpretation staff. Jeni also assisted Views staff with the creation of digital images required for other modules, including the “geo[logy]-flag” requested by staff from the National Mall.

Project Results:

Jeni produced a series of cartoons for the Florissant Fossil Beds NM introduction, the “geo-flag” (actually a series of many screen images) for the Geology of the National Mall module, an interactive map of the National Mall, and many individual graphics needed for various Views modules. Jeni also assisted the team by checking each module for functional web links, proper alignment of graphics and text, proof-reading, and evaluation of the organization of screen elements. Jeni performed her tasks in a cheerful and thorough manner and she was an excellent addition to the team. To illustrate the work that she completed under this project, there is an attached a series of graphics that Jeni designed and created on the computer using Adobe Photoshop and other graphics software. This is only a small portion of the graphics she produced, but it offers insight into the quality of her work. The entire sequence of graphics mentioned above may be seen at the Views of the National Parks website: (<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/views/>).

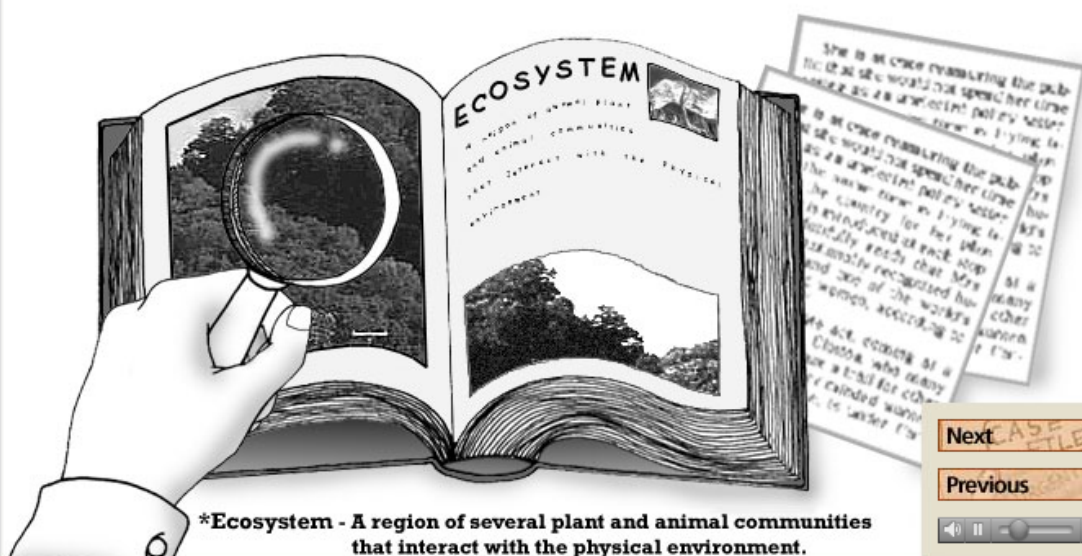


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Illustrations drawn by Jenifer Chetwin Voices performed by Jeff Wolin



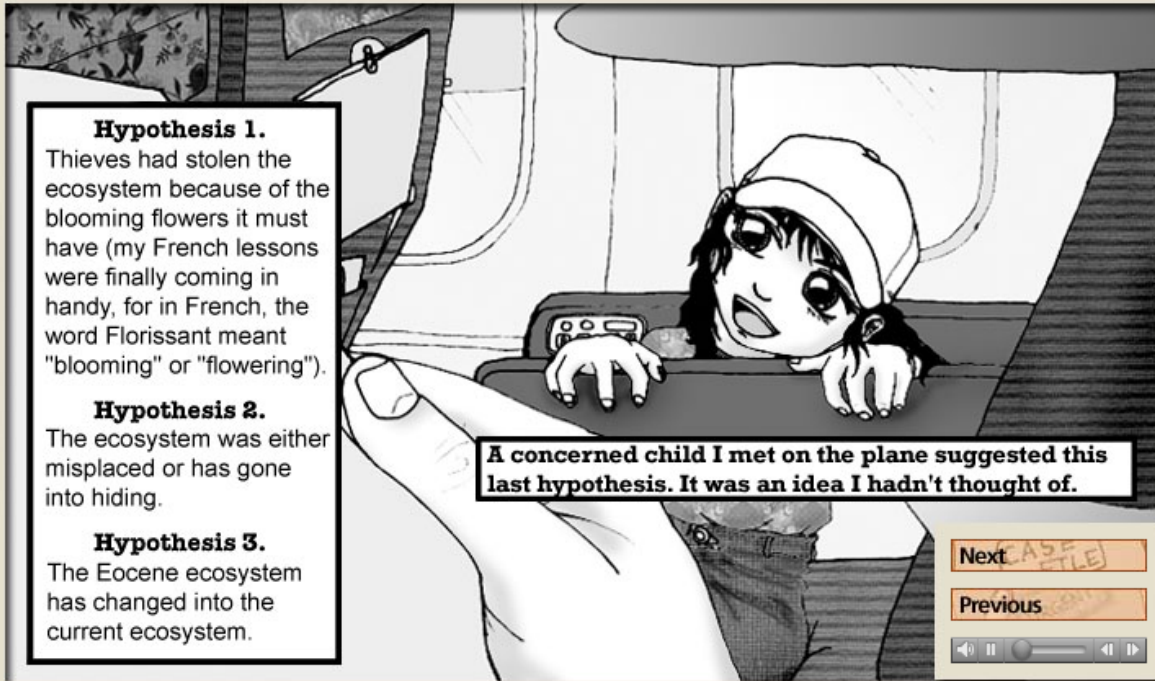
**At work, I consulted my best source of information: my dictionary.
 I knew the first step would be to clear up what an ecosystem truly was.**



***Ecosystem - A region of several plant and animal communities that interact with the physical environment.**

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Hypothesis 1.

Thieves had stolen the ecosystem because of the blooming flowers it must have (my French lessons were finally coming in handy, for in French, the word Florissant meant "blooming" or "flowering").

Hypothesis 2.

The ecosystem was either misplaced or has gone into hiding.

Hypothesis 3.

The Eocene ecosystem has changed into the current ecosystem.

A concerned child I met on the plane suggested this last hypothesis. It was an idea I hadn't thought of.

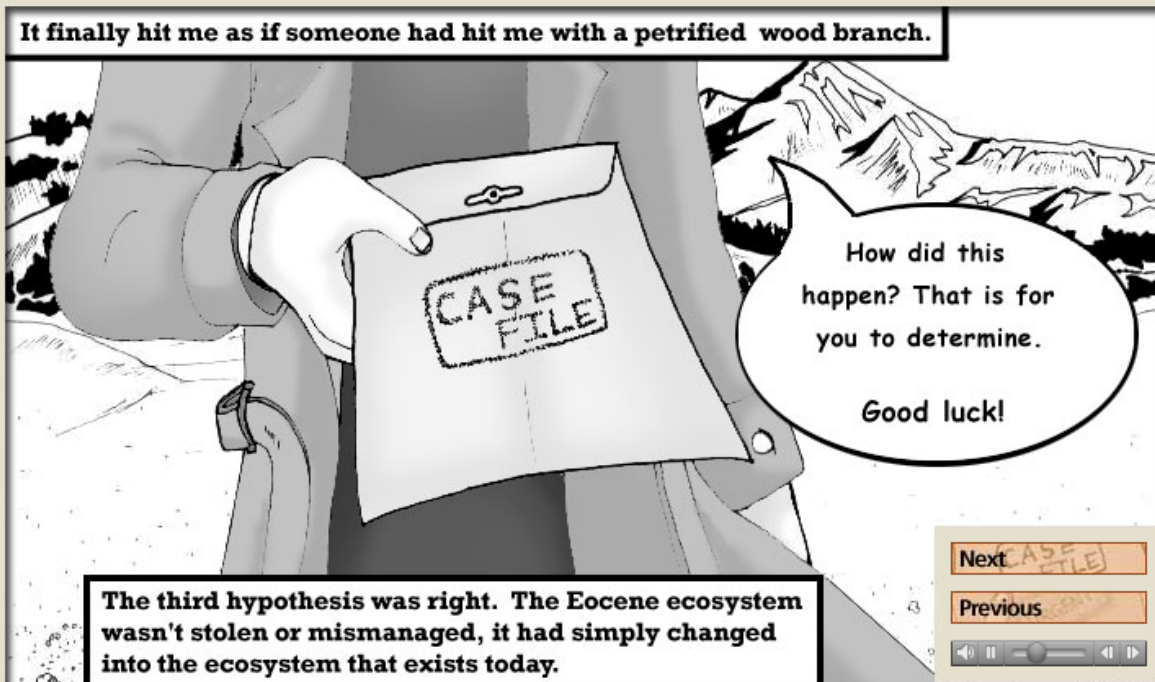
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It finally hit me as if someone had hit me with a petrified wood branch.

How did this happen? That is for you to determine.

Good luck!

The third hypothesis was right. The Eocene ecosystem wasn't stolen or mismanaged, it had simply changed into the ecosystem that exists today.

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Geology and History on the National Mall



Introduction

Tour

Quarry

Challenge

Take a Tour of the National Mall



Go ahead, be both a historian and a geologist as we explore the GeoStory –the Geology and History– of the National Mall. Discover how the stone not only provides the building blocks of each structure, but strengthens the themes and ideas of the monuments and memorials as well.

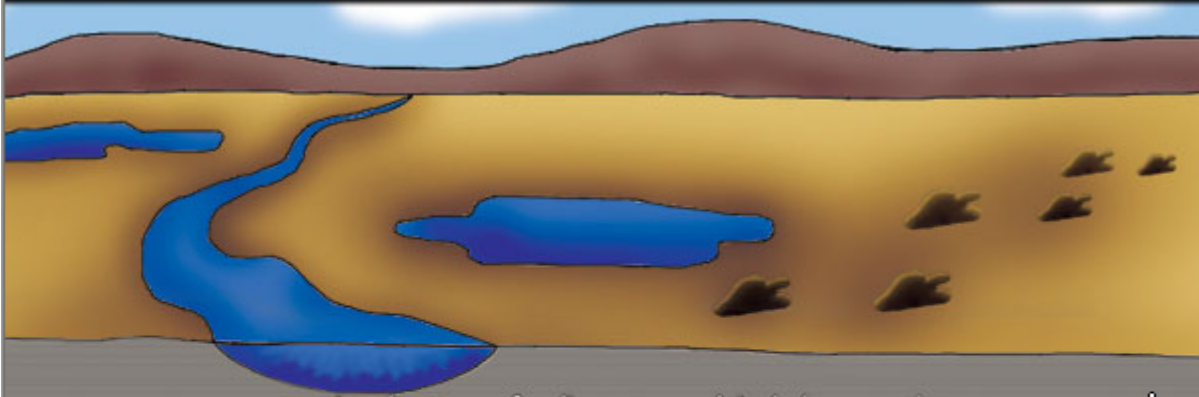
Guided Tour



Select the "Tour" button to the right for a guided experience, or explore the map by selecting each of the memorials individually.



Build a GeoFlag!



Another type of sedimentary rock is shale, or mudstone. Shales form in areas where mud has become lithified, or turned to rock. In shale, you can find trace fossils of bones, or trace fossils such as footprints or burrows. How are trace fossils different from fossils such as bones or shells?



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