

RM-CESU - Project Completion Report, FY 05

Project Title: Produce an Introductory Film for Florissant Fossil Beds NM

Park: FLFO

Funding Source: Rocky Mountains CESU Technical Assistance Funding \$5,000, Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, Inc. \$10,000, Geologist in the Parks Program \$2,500.00

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University Partner, Montana State University, MFA Program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking, Principal Investigator: Ronald Tobias,

Student Participants: Ryan Fitzgibbons

Project Description:

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument has never had an audio-visual presentation to introduce and inspire visitors about the significances of the park resources. Visitors and the education community often ask to see “the film.” Most visitors to national parks and monuments have come to expect high quality audio visual productions that will impart an overview of the parks’ resources and its significance. The film will provide the Division of Interpretation more flexibility allowing for more varied personal services. During the off-season, when personal visitor services are not offered, this film will be one of the main ways for visitors to learn about the Monument. We have committed to increasing visitor understanding of the park resources (GPRA Goal IIb1). Production of a park film is an important component of achieving this goal. A park film is also a park priority as outlined by our draft Comprehensive Interpretive Plan.

This 13 minute film will provide the general public, outreach groups, park volunteers and curriculum based education groups with brief, but effective understanding of the geologic and paleo story at Florissant, the significances of the fossils, a look at some of the other important cultural and natural resources, and to inspire viewers to seek further understanding about the Monument. A strong resource preservation message will also be incorporated to help prevent further resource losses. The film also includes a section of computer animation that depicts the geologic story at Florissant. This is to serve as “the” audio-visual production for the Monument and will be shown in the Monument’s theater as well as to off-site groups, to on site school groups, etc. The video will be shown at the visitor center of Florissant Fossil Beds throughout the whole year. It will be used for onsite and offsite curriculum based programs and offsite outreach programs. The video will also be used for orientation for new employees, volunteers, contractors, and other partners of the Monument. The video may be sold at the bookstore by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

Project Results:

Ryan Fitzgibbons has produced the final cut of the 13 minute “Shadows of the Past” film for Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. Within the next month, subtitles and/or captioning will be added and the film will be shown to the general public. Park management and staff feel that the film succeeds in providing the most important information, introducing our interpretive themes, and also inspiring viewers to seek out more in depth information and interpretation.

Ryan incorporated film, digital photography, animation, narration, historic photographs, stock footage, sound effects, and a music score into “Shadows of the Past.” Ryan shot the film clips and worked with the Monument to find the most appropriate digital graphics. The three minute animation was completed by the Geology Department at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The script was written by Ryan Fitzgibbons and Jeff Wolin and performed by Mark Toole of Denver. Ryan did the entire computer editing to create the film.

The film begins with artwork depicting the ancient Florissant valley and then cuts to the animation which explains the geologic story of the Florissant area. The film then describes the significances of the fossils and history of research in the area. The film transitions to the history of the area; from the early inhabitants to the efforts that led to the creation of the Monument. Lastly, the film describes the National Park Service’s mission and invites the viewers to explore the Monument.

Products expected/ with dates: The RM-CESU will receive a copy of the film when completed; this should be by April 2006.