



# John Day Fossil Beds National Monument



## From the Superintendent

Dear Friends:

You are invited to participate in the planning and preservation of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The monument protects unique resources, fossils, forests, wildlife and other natural features, safeguards and interprets some of the area’s cultural history, and provides for public education, appreciation, and the recreational use and enjoyment of these resources.

The last general management plan for John Day Fossil Beds National Monument was completed in 1979. Since then, the monument has been expanded, visitation has increased, monument staff and researchers have learned much more about the significance of the monument’s resources, and a major paleontology center has just opened. The park staff are also coordinating paleontological research, collection, and curation on many federal lands throughout the entire John Day Basin and possibly other areas in the northwest United States. This is a somewhat different mission from that envisioned in the 1979 GMP. Finally, most of the facilities contemplated in the 1979 GMP have either been constructed or determined not to be feasible. Thus, the monument’s current plan is in need of revision.

This year we will begin to develop a new general management plan to set long-term directions for the overall management and development of the monument for the next 15 to 20 years. The new plan will help us make decisions on the direction of resource management, visitor use and interpretation, and facilities management. The plan should be completed in the next four years.

We are looking forward to working with you to craft a general management plan that will capture the connections visitors have had with the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument over the years and that will continue to protect and enhance the park’s resources and visitor experiences. We hope you will join us to express your thoughts, ideas, and vision so that together we can make the monument a wonderful resource for the future.

Jim Hammett  
Superintendent  
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

## What is a General Management Plan?

A general management plan (GMP) identifies the overall direction for the future management of units of the National Park Service (NPS). Such plans take a long-range, broad, conceptual view, answering the question “what kind of place do we want this area to be?” General management plans provide a framework for managers to use in making decisions about such issues as how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should gain access to the monument. All concepts, strategies, and actions in a general management plan must be consistent with the reasons for the area’s establishment — its purpose and significance. Federal legislation, such as the National Park Service Organic Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Wilderness Act, and NPS policies also direct what the plan can and cannot consider.

The general management plan will describe the general path the National Park Service intends to follow in managing John Day Fossil Beds National Monument over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan will identify desired resource conditions and visitor

experiences that would be appropriate for each part of the monument and the strategies for achieving those conditions. It also will identify general locations where certain types of development would be appropriate, and other areas where it would not be appropriate. The general management plan will not resolve all the issues facing the monument, provide detailed facility designs and management actions, or guarantee funding. Specific questions regarding how desired conditions will be achieved also will be answered in new or revised implementation plans, such as resource stewardship plans and backcountry management plans that will be prepared after the general management plan is completed.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and NPS policy, the general management plan will be combined with an environmental impact statement. *The John Day Fossil Beds National Monument General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* will identify significant issues and concerns, present a reasonable range of management alternatives, and analyze the environmental consequences of each of the alternatives.

## Park Purpose and Significance

At the beginning of the planning process it is important to reaffirm the monument’s purpose and significance. We do this to establish a framework within which we can evaluate proposed actions to ensure that they are consistent with the mandate of this national monument. Below are the monument’s purpose and significance statements.

### Purpose

The purpose statements clarify the reasons John Day Fossil Beds National Monument was established as part of the national park system and provide the foundation for the management and use of the monument. Such statements are based on a unit’s establishing legislation and legislative history, other special designations, and NPS policies.

The purpose of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is to protect the paleontological resources of the John Day region and provide for and promote the scientific and public understanding of those resources.

### Significance

Significance statements identify the resources and values that are central to managing the area and express the importance of the area to our natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements do not inventory site resources; rather, they describe the area’s distinctiveness and help to place it in regional, national, and international contexts. Understanding the national monument’s significance will help managers make decisions that will preserve the

resources and values necessary to accomplish the area’s purposes.

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is significant as a unit of the National Park system because:

- The John Day region contains one of the longest and most continuous Tertiary records of evolutionary change and biotic relationships in the world; this outstanding fossil record heightens our understanding of earth history. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument contains a concentration of localities that are a major part of that record.
- The John Day region is one of the few areas on

the planet with numerous well-preserved and ecologically diverse biotas, entombed in datable volcanoclastics, spanning long intervals of dynamic paleoclimatic changes.

- There are multiple well-preserved fossil assemblages in the John Day region that represent over 40 million years of the earth’s history and may be dated with great accuracy.
- John Day Fossil Beds National Monument contains regionally representative scenic, natural, and cultural landscapes — notably, the Cant Ranch National Historic District, which represents the history of sheep ranching in the region.





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General Management Plan  
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U.S. Department of the Interior



How to be Involved

You can begin providing feedback by completing the enclosed comment form. Please let us know your concerns, issues, and thoughts on what should be addressed in the general management plan. Also, please let us know if you would like to be included on the monument’s mailing list. After you have finished filling out the postage-paid form, just fold and tape it and drop it in a mailbox.

You also can log on to John Day Fossil Beds National Monument home page at <http://www.nps.gov/joda> or the National Park Service planning web page. All newsletters will be posted on the web site, along with a response form if you prefer to participate electronically.



Schedule

	Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
1	<b>Set the stage for planning:</b> Reaffirm purpose, significance, and mission of the park; determine issues and concerns	Fall 2004 to Winter 2004	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns using a response form.
2	<b>Develop preliminary management alternatives:</b> Identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the park’s future, assess their effects, analyze public reactions, and select a preferred alternative.	Winter 2004 to Fall 2005	Provide comments on the initial alternatives using a response form. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
3	<b>Prepare and publish Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement:</b> Prepare draft describing the planning, alternatives, and impacts; distribute to the public.	Fall 2005 to Fall 2006	Provide written comments on the draft document. Attend public meetings and provide comments.
4	<b>Revise and publish Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement:</b> Analyze comments, prepare responses to comments, revise draft document, distribute to the public.	Fall 2006 to Fall 2007	
5	<b>Implement the approved plan:</b> Prepare and issue Record of Decision and implement plan as funding allows.	Winter 2007 and beyond	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.

A Public Planning Effort

If you live in the area, the planning team intends to arrange two public open houses the week of December 6, 2004. We welcome your comments and suggestions and hope to see you at one of the meetings listed below.

Monday  
December 6, 2004  
6:30- 8:30 PM

Malheur National Forest  
Supervisor’s Office  
431 Patterson Bridge Road  
John Day, Oregon

Tuesday  
December 7, 2004  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

Above the Fossil Museum  
Corner of 1st & Washington St.  
Fossil, Oregon