

OREGON PALEO LANDS CENTER

November 2018

Our Mission Statement

The Oregon Paleo Lands Center (OPLI) works with the Gateway Communities of the mid-John Day Basin (Condon, Antelope, Fossil, Service Creek, Spray, Mitchell, Kimberly, Dayville and Monument) to build social and economic vitality through efforts:

To conserve, interpret, and promote the natural and cultural history of the John Day Basin/Blue Mountains through time.

To develop and connect, with partners, the John Day Basin/Blue Mountains' visitor services, recreational services, natural and cultural history education opportunities.

To welcome, educate, and connect visitors, schools, area residents and businesses at the Oregon Paleo Lands Center (OPLC), and through other media.

Contact OPLI at:

**Post Office Box 104
333 Fourth Street
Fossil, Oregon 97830**

(541) 763-4480

paleolands@gmail.com

www.paleolands.org

Presidents Message

I'm pleased to report that Oregon Paleo Lands Institute (OPLI) was open to the public more this year than it has since 2011. The strengthening partnership with Oregon State Parks led to securing 3 Park Hosts this summer. The Park Host program provided experienced volunteers to staff the Center greeting visitors and providing information about services in the John Day Basin. Utilized extensively by Oregon State Parks to staff their facilities across the state, OPLI provided Host training and orientation and a Host RV space at the Wheeler Fairgrounds RV park.



Working with State Parks senior staff this summer, the Board decided to change some of the Center's educational mission. OPLI is redirecting resources to explore both the geological "Birth of Oregon," as well as its ancient Cretaceous seas and the natural and cultural history of the John Day Basin / Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains were some of the first land masses to emerge from ancient seas and today contain some of Oregon's richest biodiversity.

During the Cretaceous period much of Central Oregon was part of the ancient sea. Which can explain why the 80-90 million year old Plesiosaur was discovered near Mitchell in 2003. Our 1/2 size replica sculpture housed at the Center will become more of a focal piece. Developing new exhibits and media focused on the ancient seas of Oregon and its first land masses along with telling today's remarkable stories of the John Day River, the extinction and return of horses, the Juniper invasion, and the watershed restoration, will allow the OPLI Center to clearly differentiate important natural and cultural themes.

OPLI will be working to finalize the draft Interpretive Strategy for the John Day Basin. Oregon State Parks is assisting its development along with us. The draft is available on our website. Please have a look and send your comments to us.
www.oregonpaleolandscenter.com

The Board continues to seek new volunteers, Board members, partners and ideas to sustain the Center and implement the Mission over the long term. We were pleased to install a solar electric system this year that has reduced the electricity cost of the center. Bonneville Environmental Foundation secured the resources to have the system installed and assisted Board volunteers in organizing a regional educator workshop. Fifteen educators from the Basin received stipends to attend the training and renewable energy educational materials to take back to their students.

Our message continues to resonate with funders in the region. Support for new exhibits and ongoing education services was realized again this year from the Wheeler Family Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation. While funds for specific projects are regularly secured, it continues to be a challenge to secure resources for general administration and maintenance of the Center, about \$2000 a month.

We continue to ask for your support. Please consider sending a generous Year-End donation to support our ongoing work.

Thanks again,
Jeffrey Kee
Oregon Paleo Lands Institute President



Cottonwood Canyon Experience Center – Just Completed!

Story and Photos thanks to Oregon State Parks Foundation

<https://www.oregonstateparksfoundation.org/our-work/current-initiatives/>



September 18th, 2018 – Cottonwood Canyon State Park hosted a grand opening celebration including presentations, a ribbon cutting and a tour of the new facilities. These include a 1,500-square foot Experience Center that will serve as a classroom for outdoor education and a reservable event space. The \$2.5 million project also includes four cabins and a new restroom facility with showers. Among those who hailed the Center's opening were former Governors Barbara Roberts and Ted Kulongoski.

"We are so excited to open these facilities to the public," said Cottonwood Canyon Park Manager Iris Benson. "The Experience Center and cabins will truly enhance Oregon's second-largest state park for the local community and all Oregonians." The center includes an indoor meeting room with capacity for 69 people and an outdoor kitchen and lawn area with space for outdoor seating. Under the new partnership between the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Dept. and the Oregon Paleo Lands Center, these twin learning centers will expand educational horizons in the John Day Basin, for schools and other visitors

The Experience Center supports Eastern Oregon University's Cottonwood Crossing Summer Institute, a week-long residential field study course for high school students held each June. It was largely built thanks to donors and fundraising by the private nonprofit Oregon State Parks Foundation (oregonstateparksfoundation.org), which contributed \$600,000 in money and donated products.



Cottonwood Canyon's 8,000 acres straddle the John Day River with a campground on the banks of the river, as well as trails for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. The park is also known for its fishing and access to hunting outside the developed park area.

2018 Donors & Sponsors

Jenny Young
Jeanette Kloss
Stephen Carlson
Peter Fry
Wolfgang Grote
Robert Strebin
Richard Ross
Jeffrey Kee
Michael Whitenack
David Griffith
Donald Podrabsky
Sherry Podrabsky
Charles R Ault Jr.
Wayne & Molly Kee
Carman Almodovar
Charlotte Corkran
David Corkran
Bonnie Lofton
Jane Lear
Sarah Johnson
Bette Andrew
Remmal Nivens
Martin Winch
Carolyn Winch
Marian Flood
Katie Hachimoto
Donald Leethem
The Fossil Cartel

2018 Grantors

Wheeler Foundation
Wheeler County Cultural Heritage Coalition
Oregon Community Foundation

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Oregon Paleo Lands Center Needs You!

You can support the Oregon Paleo Lands Center in a variety of ways. Your financial support now in 2018 is vital to continue our mission of exploring, teaching about, and protecting Oregon's paleo lands. Donor benefits include a 10% discount on retail merchandise at the Oregon Paleo Lands Center in Fossil, a regular newsletter with information about scientific discoveries, history, and news of the Paleo Lands, and advance notice of upcoming OPLI and partner organization events. All donations are tax deductible.

Interested in volunteering at the Center or serving on the Board?
Contact us at paleolands@gmail.com or www.paleolands.org or at PO Box 104, Fossil, Oregon 97830 (541) 763-4480.