

OREGON PALEO LANDS CENTER

December 2019

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.

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Notes on Butterflies and Rattlesnakes

By Richard N Ross, Paleo Center Treasurer, Oregon Master Naturalist

Sherla Collins' pictorial memoir, *Butterflies and Rattlesnakes*, captures a century of ranching in the John Day Basin. Sherla, who passed away this year at age 97, tells a compelling tale of family and community life on the John Day River. She shares stories and images of floods and fires, beauty and danger, and the hard work of building three family homes. You can get a copy of this local gem at the Paleo Center store

"Throughout my life, graceful butterflies on silent fluttering wings have held me spellbound with their delicate beauty. Menacing rattlesnakes I have encountered have struck a note of fear, caution, and trepidation at every unexpected meeting" Sherla Collins, *Butterflies and Rattlesnakes*

As Sherla noted butterflies far outnumber the rattlers. Butterflies are key pollinators of high desert plants and gardens. The John Day River and its tributaries are a butterfly "hot spot". You can find them almost year-round, from exquisite Mourning Cloaks, to Fritillaries, to Admirals, and Swallowtails (See Photo).



LINK <https://northwestbutterflies.blogspot.com/search?q=species+profile>

This July a big, buzzing rattler (See Photo) disturbed a peaceful family picnic with grandkids and dogs, at our camp near Service Creek. Oregon's native Western Rattlesnake (Northern Pacific) usually avoids humans.



Oregon rattler bites are rare, and treatable with anti-venom. When in rattler habitat, like canyon bottoms, be alert to keep dogs and kids and livestock safe. The uninvited rattler put on the best show at our 3-generation picnic. My brother Doug, aka St Patrick, gently herded the rattler out of camp.

Geoheritage and Geotourism as concepts for economic development in John Day Basin?

From National Parks to private fossil sites, geoheritage sites play key roles in promoting public awareness in the understanding of Earth history, as well as providing opportunities for regional sustainable tourism development as 'geotourism'. One of our board members, Dr. Yann Gavillot from Oregon State University, attended the 2019 Geological Society of America Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, where presentations and discussions from many experts and advocates highlighted the relevance, current status, and future development of geoheritage projects taking place across the United States and internationally. The John Day basin, famous its landscape, river, culture, ecology, geological record, and fossil sites would represent a prime potential candidate for future geoheritage development projects. The combination of rich natural and cultural sites in proximity to multiple rural communities would offer the perfect ingredients to boost the local economy through a regional development plan, as proposed within the Joint Interpretative Strategy. OPLI and Oregon State Parks are currently exploring these ideas through new projects in the John Day Basin to benefit the various gateway communities to the John Day Fossil Beds; including Antelope, Condon, Dayville, Fossil, Kimberly, Mitchell, Monument, Service Creek and Spray.

SUPPORTING THE John Day Basin and the Paleo Lands Center DONORS AND SPONSORS NEEDED

Again, this year the Center thanks its Park Hosts, recruited through Oregon State Parks. Beyond the regular exhibits, the Center now offers new items such as ballcaps, stuffed animals, affordable guides on the High Desert Birds, Butterflies, Dinosaurs, the Night Sky, cycling, and a poster History of Life in North America.

With State Parks and grantor help (Oregon Community and Wheeler Family Fdns.), the Center is finalizing the John Day Basin Joint Interpretive Strategy (Link: www.paleolands.org) with federal, state, tribal and museum partners. This Strategy supports the Center's top priority: A new Program Manager to lead the Strategy and Develop new Center exhibits.

Please consider a tax-deductible Fall donation or sponsorship now, to help the Center tell the story of the Basin's natural wonders and its outback communities.

The Center needs \$2000/mo. from donors or sponsors to keep operations sustainable. You can Donate with a check or online at the Center's Home Page: www.paleolands.org or by using the Center's Sponsor page at: <https://www.oregonpaleolandscenter.com/sponsor-benefits>
All donations to the Center are tax deductible and matching gifts up to \$1000 to the Oregon Cultural Trust qualify donors for an Oregon tax credit.

*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 2019 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
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