THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Fossil Butte National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE

Site: FOBU **Year:** 2007

Vision Statement

Fossil Butte National Monument presents a window into life in southwestern Wyoming fifty million years ago during the Eocence Epoch. Today the high-desert environment of the monument is a stark contrast to the subtropical lake environment of the past. The fossil record preserved within the Eocene Green River Formation of Fossil Basin is world-renowned. Collecting in the area for a century has revealed a wide diversity of fossil fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, and plants.

The monument represents perhaps one of the most complete records of a paleo-ecosystem to be found anywhere in the world. Most notably, the extraordinary quality of fossil preservation is nearly unparalleled in the fossil record. The quiet-water conditions, fine-grained lake sediments, and absence of scavengers combine to preserve fully articulated skeleton, so rare in the fossil record. The delicate bones of rarely-preserved fish, bats, and birds yield valuable scientific data and specimens from the area are located in museums around the world.

These fossils represent the most common articulated fossil vertebrates in the world and scientific as well as commercial quarry activity continue to produce tens-of-thousands to hundreds-of-thousands of specimens each year. The monument protects 22 square miles of the resource out of 900 square miles of mixed, federal (BLM), state and private fossil bearing lands. Stewardship responsibility by the monument is seen as working with all land owners to retrieve as much scientific information and important specimens as necessary to enhance increased scientific understanding and to provide educational opportunities for the public.

The Centennial vision for the monument is to lead primarily as a scientific and educational partner in Fossil Basin and the gateway communities. That goal requires, continuing broad scientific and educational undertakings that acts in partnership with other federal, state, and private land managers and civic entities to ensure geologic, and paleontological information and specimens add to our collective understanding of the complex geologic events and life forms that once existed in southwest Wyoming.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

David McGinnis, Superintendent

Site: FOBU **PROFESSIONALISM**

[X] **Model what it means to work in partnership.**

[X] **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Partner with local and state educational groups, national and international museums and academic institutions as well as with businesses and local governments to preserve the best of what exists in Fossil Basin. The monument will focus on drawing existing and new partners into common strategies to better understand and promote the wise uses of these fossil bearing lands inside and external to the monument. Emphasis will be placed on trying to enhance the advantage of public repositories for voucher specimens, casts, and photographic images of the most scientifically important specimens, geologic sites, and related geologic phenomena within Fossil Basin. Most recently the monument embarked on long-term cooperative efforts to document all new paleo-botanical specimens. This least-understood aspect of the fossil resource will become emphasized by commercial collectors and the scientific community working throughout Fossil Basin. The USGS will be a partner as will several academic institutions as the monument staff provides a clearing house service for review of all new fossil plants discovered in Fossil Basin.

[ ] The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS