

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: JODA

Year: 2007

### Vision Statement

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument contains some of the most scientifically important paleontological resources in the world. The long period of continuous deposition allows scientists to understand the evolution of species and how life responds as climate changes. This information is of particular importance now because it will help us understand how global climate change will affect species and their ability to evolve or adapt.

The monument also contains about 18 miles of the John Day River and its tributaries along with its riparian zone. The John Day River is the longest free-flowing river in the Columbia River system. The John Day River is a cornerstone for steelhead and salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest.

The staff of John Day Fossil Beds will be using the monument's outstanding fossil record and the concept of deep time to convey the seriousness to the public of the current rate of predicted climate change. In essence, the theme will be that life can adapt to changing climate as long as the change occurs "gradually." However, we will show that past climate changes, as documented in the fossil record, have not occurred as rapidly as the projections for the next 100 years. We will also convey that past sudden climate changes have caused the vast majority of the earth's species to quickly cease to exist. The last such event that even approaches the currently predicted rate of climate change that we face in future years was the Permian extinction, during which over 95 percent of the earth's species became extinct.

This will be the central take-home message at the Thomas Condon Paleontology center. The idea is to provoke the visiting public into confronting the issue of global climate change.

At the same time, the monument will be refocusing our protection efforts on the riparian zones of the John Day River. Bridge Creek, located in the Painted Hills Unit, will receive particular focus. Over the next ten years, along with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the NPS will improve spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish. This stream currently has one of the highest incidents of returning spawning steelhead. Our objective will be to triple the returning numbers of fish.

Finally, John Day Fossil Beds NM will be attempting to become carbon-neutral with our park operations. Through conservation and efficiency, combined with photovoltaic generation and green power contracts with Bonneville Power Administration, the park is currently carbon neutral with its electrical energy use. However, it has significant obstacles in carbon-neutralizing our transportation (gasoline and diesel fuel) needs.

The staff at John Day, have embraced these causes and are in consensus that we must provide information, leadership, and understanding of these issues to our visitors.

### Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

James F. Hammett

Site: JODA

STEWARDSHIP

**Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The park will expand interpretation of the Cant Ranch National Historic District by allowing visitors access to the barn and farm machinery at the Cant Ranch. We will be making all of the historic district more accessible to the public in order to convey the importance of the sheep ranching era to all facets of central Oregon's history.

More adequately convey the importance to the economy of Oregon of sheep ranching in the early 20th Century.

Work to acquire the last remaining privately owned parcel within the Sheep Rock Unit.

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

Site: JODA

STEWARDSHIP

**Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

John Day Fossil Beds will interpret global climate change as a primary interpretive theme, using the fossil record of the last 48 million years to provide a bench mark for the significance of projected changes. We will be constructing an exhibit that will be in a prominent location in the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center. At the same time, the park will strive to make its operations as carbon-neutral as possible. This will primarily be accomplished through green power contracts with Bonneville Power, but will include energy reduction, solar hot water systems on all quarters and the maintenance shop, and some photovoltaic equipment. By 2016, the monument expects to be purchasing 200 megawatt hours of green power and generating over 20 megawatt hours (inclusive of equivalent BTUs for solar hotwater) through our solar systems. We will also be actively interpreting the parks solar generating equipment and systems and providing real-time feedback of generation in our paleontology center.

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Site: JODA

**ENVIRONMENT**

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

John Day Fossil Beds NM will strive to make its operations as carbon-neutral as possible. This will primarily be accomplished through green power contracts with Bonneville Power, but will include energy reduction, solar hot water systems on all quarters and the maintenance shop, and as much photovoltaic equipment as we can place on the paleontology center. By 2016, the monument expects to be purchasing 200 megawatt hours of green power and generating over 20 megawatt hours (inclusive of equivalent BTUs for solar hotwater) through our solar systems. We will also be actively interpreting the parks solar generating equipment and systems and providing real-time feedback of generation in our paleontology center.

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Site: JODA

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.**

**Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

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**Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.**

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