

NEWSRelease

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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“Once in a Lifetime” Fossil Discovery

Lakeview, Oregon – DNA from ancient human feces found in a cave on BLM-managed land provides biological verification that people were in North America 14,000 years ago.

A major archeological announcement was released by Science Magazine on April 3, 2008 titled “DNA from Pre-Clovis Human Coprolites in Oregon, North America.” This publication documents the discovery of human coprolites (petrified feces) containing human DNA that is 14,340 calendar years old. This finding has international significance for unraveling the history of humans in the New World, as it is the oldest human DNA obtained from the Americas.

These artifacts were recovered from the Paisley Caves, which are located within the Five Mile Butte area of the Summer Lake Basin north of Paisley, Oregon. The Paisley Caves are located on BLM-managed lands ceded by the Klamath Tribes. This archeological site is incredibly important to the scientific understanding of the origin of human beings in the Americas and the BLM has a responsibility to protect it from disturbance and vandalism.

The BLM’s Lakeview District is currently preparing a protection plan for this site. One of the measures to be implemented is the temporary closure of the Five Mile Butte area to protect the archeological resources it contains until a protection plan can be developed. BLM will post signs at main entry points to the area. Route 6134 will remain open, but vehicles will not be allowed to stop or park within the defined closure area.

“It is thrilling that America’s public lands have revealed such a significant key to our past,” said Shirley Gammon, BLM Lakeview District Manager. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with Dr. Dennis L. Jenkins and the University of Oregon in further research and protection of this once in a lifetime discovery,” continued Gammon.

For more information about the Five Mile Butte Closure, please call the BLM Lakeview District at (541) 947-2177.

About BLM

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

