The Junior Explorer program of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) focuses on educating children about the history, conservation, and preservation of BLM lands through interactive activity booklets. These booklets provide a simple and fun method of learning for children, and are used to highlight the scientific and historic importance of specific areas. The Gold Belt Byway in southern Colorado exhibits extensive historic and scientific significance, including many fossil quarries and localities as well as a rich mining history (Figure 1). This scenic byway is a perfect tool for educating kids about basic geology and paleontology, as well as introducing practical economic geology.

**Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway**

The Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway connects many more points of interest than could be included in a single Junior Explorer book. Consequently, focus was placed on seven sites of particular scientific and historic value:

1. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is famous for its diverse and very well-preserved Late Eocene flora and fauna. Including Florissant also facilitates cooperation between the BLM and the National Parks Service for this and future projects.
2. Cripple Creek and Victor were established during the Gold Rush in the late 19th Century. These historic mining towns give the Gold Belt Byway its name, and continue to produce gold today.
3. Red Canyon and Shelf Road are home to a city park set in widespread outcrops (Figure 2).
4. The Garden Park area was a famous battlefield during the Civil War, and produced some of the most well-known and recognizable Jurassic dinosaurs. Today the BLM maintains interpretive sites near the Marsh-Felch Quarry and the Cleveland-Delfs Quarry.
5. The Indian Springs Trace Fossil Site is a National Natural Landmark featuring a remarkable array of trackways, feeding traces, burrows, and other trace fossils in the Ordovician Harding Formation. The site is protected on private land, but the landowners offer tours for interested visitors.
6. The Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River offers a spectacular view of Precambrian gneiss, granite, and schist carved by the Arkansas River within the last five million years. The human history of Royal Gorge involves legendary explorers, heated railroad disputes, and a bet leading to the construction of one of the highest suspension bridges in the world.
7. Skyline Drive was built in 1909 by prison labor along the suspension bridges in the world.

**Motivation**

The Geology of the Gold Belt Byway Junior Explorer book uses a mix of instructional prose and activities to meet these educational goals and to cater to different learning styles. Older activities are utilized to engage kinesthetic learners. Tables and illustrations engage visual learners, whereas puzzles and vocabulary boxes are in place to assist intellectual learners. The large vocabulary associated with geoscience is introduced by providing definitions on the same page where new terms are used in context.

**Objectives and Book Design**

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**Educational Goals**

Children who read The Geology of the Gold Belt Byway Junior Explorer Book will:

1. Know where to find several points of geologic and historic interest along the Gold Belt Byway.
2. Understand how geologists and paleontologists at the past based on rocks and fossils.
3. Be able to identify several common types of rock found in the Gold Belt area.
4. Understand the Geologic Time Scale and how it is used.
5. Be able to describe how Colorado’s geologic past has shaped the present.
6. Be able to make good choices for the conservation and stewardship of public lands (Figure 5).

**Objectives and Book Design (cont.)**

An essential theme for this activity booklet is encouraging diversity in STEM fields. The illustrations used throughout depict a multicultural view of who can be a Junior Explorer. Readers are accompanied through the activities by characters from a variety of backgrounds to demonstrate that science is not the specialty of any one demographic (Figure 4).

The book is being disseminated in hardcopy from several locations along the Gold Belt Byway including the Visitor Center at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, museums in Cripple Creek and Victor, and the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office in Canon City. Additionally, the book is available as a PDF file from the Gold Belt Byway Association website and the BLM Junior Explorer website.

**Educational Outreach to Young Scientists**

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**Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway**

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**Acknowledgements**

We thank GeoCorps America and the Geological Society of America for sponsoring this project through internships at the Bureau of Land Management Royal Gorge Field Office and at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. We thank Herb Meyer and the staff at Florissant, the staff at the Royal Gorge Field Office, Renee Garfias, and our fellow GeoCorps interns.