Connecting Geoheritage Sites Having Common Assets: Links between Petrified Forests in Colorado, Peru, and Thailand

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**Geoheritage Sites with Common Assets**

The concept of geoheritage encompasses specific geologic sites that share common assets, purposes, and needs for geoconservation and protection. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument is currently involved in developing international collaboration between petrified forest sites in the USA, (Colorado), Peru, and Thailand. All of the sites have been designated for protection by their respective governments, and all have aspired to achieve Geopark designations.

**Paleontological Heritage Sites with Common Assets**

- Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Florissant, Colorado, USA
  - Florissant's fossils have been studied since the 1870s, and the site became a national monument in 1969. The late Eocene Florissant's fossils have been studied since the 1870s, and the site became a national monument in 1969. The late Eocene Florissant's fossils have been studied since the 1870s, and the site became a national monument in 1969. The late Eocene Florissant's fossils have been studied since the 1870s, and the site became a national monument in 1969. The late Eocene Florissant's fossils have been studied since the 1870s, and the site became a national monument in 1969.
- Peruvian Petrified Forest near Bantak, Peru
  - The middle Eocene petrified forest near the remote Andean village of Sexi became known in the early 1990s and was protected by the government of Peru in 1997. It is one of the most species-rich sites of fossil wood in the world.
- Bantak Petrified Forest Park, Thailand
  - The Pleistocene petrified forest was discovered in 2003 and has been protected since 2004. It is the largest diameter trunks known in the world.

**Sharing Common Goals and Exchanging Ideas**

**Conservation Issues and Stabilization Methods**

Florissant has sponsored 50 Paleontology Interns and also offers practical workshops to help young students learn about fossils.

**Promoting Education and Active Involvement for Students and Local Communities**

- Florissant has sponsored educational opportunities that promote geotourism and increase employment opportunities for the local economy, but the number has been decreasing due to the deterioration of the fossils. More resorts and shops have opened, and local crafts are sold.
- Bantak Petrified Forest Park
  - 150,000 annual visitors contribute to the local economy, but the number has been decreasing due to the deterioration of the fossils. More resorts and shops have opened, and local crafts are sold.

**Providing Economic Benefits for Local Communities**

- Promotes economic benefits for proposed Geopark development at each site.
- In Peru and Thailand, both curiosity and practical workshops help young students learn about fossils.
- Local students earn income as guides.

**Geohotage Collaboration and Partnerships**

- Scientists from Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and Clark University have collaborated on site research and conservation to support El Bosque Petrificado Piedra Chamana, including development of a site-inventory map and database.
- Community involvement, education, and economic sustainability. This has been pursued through several venues.
- The nonprofit Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds has joined in a formal partnership with a counterpart organization in Peru to effectively establish a “sister park” relationship between the two sites.

**Future Goals and Objectives**

- Developing a “sister park” relationship between the two sites.
- Broaden international research and conservation collaboration to involve more petrified forest sites worldwide.

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