



# Fruita Paleontological Locality

## Colorado State Natural Area

### What to Expect

The Fruita Paleontological Locality Natural Area protects fossil-rich outcrops dated to the Late Jurassic era 140 million years ago. The fossil bearing layers are derived from ancient stream channels and floodplains. The site has produced some of the oldest mammal fossils in the Western Hemisphere, including a new species of a cat-sized carnivorous mammal (triconodont) and a new group of prehistoric armadillo-like mammals. Other unique findings include extinct crocodylians, two new species of Stegosaurus, and the world's smallest known dinosaur.



*Sedimentary deposits within the site*



*Hiker viewing fossil rich Morrison formation*

### About the Natural Area

**Location:** Mesa County, 4 miles southwest of Fruita

**Landowner:** Bureau of Land Management- Grand Junction Field Office

**Size:** 280 acres

**Address:** Fruita, CO 81521. [Google maps link to Fruita Paleontological Locality.](#)

### Know Before You Go

Visitors can access the gentle 1 mile loop trail from the parking area. Illustrated interpretive signs provide a snapshot into the prehistoric past when dinosaurs ruled. Help preserve the past by staying on trail and keep in mind that fossil collection is illegal. This site is primitive and visitors should be aware that bathrooms and camping are not provided. Be sure to bring sun protection and water, as this area gets very hot in the summer. Visit the [BLM webpage for Fruita Paleontological Locality](#) for more information.



*Claret cup cactus*

**For more information about the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) visit [CNAP's website.](#)**