

Rock Layers

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Millions of years have passed since the Eocene when Sexi's ancient forest grew. A single volcanic event led to the otherwise unlikely preservation of the fossil forest. While the eruption buried the forest and permanently altered the landscape, the rocks produced by the volcano also preserved clues for geologists to interpret what the Eocene forest was like.

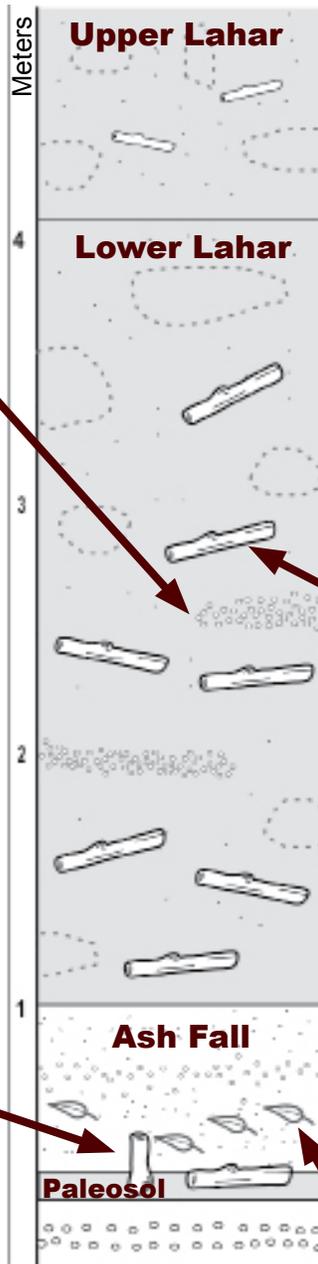


Accretionary lapilli formed when volcanic ash simultaneously dropped out of the atmosphere with rain. Lapilli at Sexi are about 1 cm in diameter.



Paleosol (the ancient soil) was buried by volcanic ash. Trees rooted in the paleosol are indicated by fossil stumps positioned "in situ," or in upright growth position, and extending up into the ash fall layer.

Rock Units



To the untrained eye, accretionary lapilli may be mistaken for fossilized eggs or seeds. Individual lapilli break into concentric layers because they formed as ash grains accreted while falling from the atmosphere.



Petrified trees carried by lahars, or volcanic debris flows, were haphazardly deposited as logjams near Sexi.



Leaves dropped from the trees during the eruption. Impressions of these leaves were preserved in volcanic ash.

Learn about the processes that fossilized the ancient forest in these rock layers.