

Petrified Forest



Fast Facts



Colorful petrified logs at Blue Mesa

The Basics

Petrified Forest was originally established as a national monument on December 8th, 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt. President Roosevelt stated that, "...the mineralized remains of Mesozoic forests...are of the greatest scientific interest and value and it appears that the public good would be promoted by reserving these deposits of fossilized wood as a National monument with as much land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof." Petrified Forest then became a national park on December 9th, 1962. President Dwight D. Eisenhower first approved the legislation in 1958, but President John F. Kennedy saw it completed in 1962.

First protected as one of the world's most colorful and largest deposits of petrified wood, the park now protects so much more, including archeology representing more than 13,000 years of human history. First and foremost, Petrified Forest is a science park!

The park contains over 120,000 acres (over 180 square miles). Within the park there is even 50,000 acres of designated wilderness where no roads or trails will ever be built.



Visitor facilities include the Rainbow Forest Museum which features fossil exhibits, The Painted Desert Visitor Center (a National Register of Historic Places site), and the Painted Desert Inn National Historic Landmark. Food, souvenirs, and other services are available at both sides of the park.

- President Theodore Roosevelt created Petrified Forest National Monument on Dec 8th, 1906. Petrified Forest was designated as a national park on December, 9th 1962.

- Annual visitation to Petrified Forest National Park fluctuates from year to year but recent averages show around 600,000 visitors a year.

- In 2004, congress created a new boundary line for the park saying that it could be as large as 221,551 acres. Currently Petrified Forest comprises about 123,000 acres of land within this boundary.

- The petrified logs in the park are fossilized tropical conifer trees from the Late Triassic epoch. They are over 200 million years old. They formed when dead trees became buried by river sediments then were infiltrated by silica from volcanic ash mixed in with the sediments which recrystallized into quartz and replaced the organic material.

- The brilliant colors in the petrified logs come mainly from three minerals; pure quartz (silicon dioxide) is white or clear, manganese oxides create blue, purple, black, and brown, and iron oxides provide yellow, red, orange, and brown.

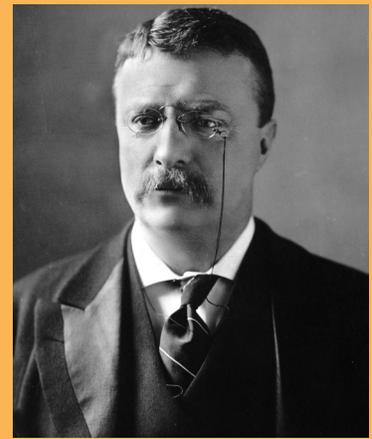
- The main environment of the park is an Intermountain Basin semi-arid steppe grassland (shortgrass prairie).

- Hundreds of species of plants and animals can be found in Petrified Forest National Park. Residents include pronghorn, Gunnison's prairie dog, coyote, bobcat, bullsnake, Arizona tiger salamander, meadowlark, golden eagle, cottonwood tree, yucca, four-wing salt bush, vetch, cliffrose, blue grama grass, and many more.

- There are nearly a thousand archeological and historic sites in Petrified Forest national park representing over 13,000 years of human history. New discoveries are made every year!

- Puerco Pueblo was built by the ancestral Puebloan people who occupied it between A.D. 1250 and 1380. It had over 100 rooms and housed more than 200 people.

- Agate House was occupied approximately A.D. 1100-1150 and was built out of pieces of petrified wood.



Theodore Roosevelt circa 1902



• Herbert David Lore built the Painted Desert Inn and opened it in 1924. The National Park Service bought the building from Lore in 1936 and reconstructed it into a Pueblo Revival style building using designs by NPS architect Lyle Bennett in the late 1930's. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was brought in to do the work. The restaurant operations continued in the building until 1963. The building is now a National Historic Landmark and is open as a museum.



• Petrified Forest National Park is the only national park site that contains a segment of Historic Rt. 66, though the pavement no longer exists within the park. Part of the National Old Trails Highway and the Beale Wagon Road also passed through the park.



• The Chinle Formation of the Late Triassic epoch (over 200 million years ago) is the main geologic formation exposed in the park.



• The Bidahochi Formation basalt outcrops, located at the north end of the park, formed during the Miocene and Pliocene epochs in the Cenozoic era 3-8 million years ago.

• Petrified Forest has more than 60 holotypes of extinct plants and animals in its fossil collection. A holotype is the specimen used to originally describe a particular species and all subsequent fossils are then compared to it.



• Petrified Forest National Park is Considered one of the Best late Triassic fossil localities in the world and is on the Tentative List to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Petrified Forest National Park can also be found at:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PetrifiedNPS>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PetrifiedForestNPS>

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/petrifiedforestnps>

You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNu0VLpgJZWl6MhW1yPPPw/feed>

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