
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

McAbee fossil site receives heritage designation

CACHE CREEK – The future of the McAbee fossil site is secure, now that the world-renowned fossil beds have been formally designated as a Heritage Site, Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Minister Steve Thomson announced today.

The McAbee beds are known both for the incredible number of quality fossils present, as well as their diversity. The fossil beds represent a paleontological gold mine of exceptionally preserved fossils from the Eocene epoch (56 to 34 million years ago). Many fossils being discovered there are entirely new to science.

Now appearing as a stark and wind-worn cliff face, McAbee was once the shore of an ancient lake. This lakeshore provided an ideal environment for creating a fossil record that includes a wide variety of plant life, as well as insects, fish, crayfish and even a bird and feathers.

The Heritage Site designation confers enduring protection for the site, which will be managed to provide research, educational and recreational opportunities.

A Conservation Management Plan is already under development, with input from stakeholders, which will provide guidance when considering future uses at the site. This plan will include opportunities for members of the public to continue to visit and enjoy McAbee. The plan is expected to be completed by spring 2013.

Quotes:

Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations –

“Today’s announcement ensures that the amazing fossil record at McAbee will be preserved in perpetuity, and that this incredible window into prehistoric life will be protected for the enjoyment of all. I congratulate all of the staff and stakeholders who worked so hard and for so many years to make today a reality.”

Dr. Richard Hebda, curator of botany and earth history, Royal B.C. Museum -

“McAbee’s rich and varied fossil record continues to change and enrich our understanding of life in the Eocene epoch. With today’s announcement, British Columbia has taken a lead role in safeguarding this globally exceptional natural heritage resource.”

Tom Cockburn, president, British Columbia Paleontological Alliance –

“The British Columbia Paleontological Alliance endorses today’s action to designate the McAbee fossil beds as a provincial heritage site. We look forward to the forthcoming Conservation Management Plan and details on how the scientific, educational and natural heritage values of these sites will be preserved in perpetuity.”

Quick Facts:

About the McAbee site –

- The fossil beds are 13 kilometres east of Cache Creek.
- The heritage site includes the known extent of the beds at two separate locations – known as Perry Ranch and McAbee-Battle Creek respectively, and will collectively capture key ecological features.
- In March, the B.C. government issued a Temporary Protection Order to protect the site while its designation as a heritage site was being completed.

About fossil protection in B.C. –

- Fossils in B.C. are protected through the Fossil Management Framework, which outlines the policy, procedures and guidelines for fossil collection, use and reporting.
- The framework sets out how existing legislative tools can be used to protect fossil sites, including the option for Heritage Site designation.

Learn More:

To learn more about the McAbee site visit:

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/land_tenures/fossil_management/mcabee/index.html

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