

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman

Hearing Memorandum

February 2, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Will Layden
Subcommittee Federal Lands (x 6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on a **H.R. 835 (Rep. Doug Lamborn)**, To update the map of, and modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in, the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.
February 6, 2018 at 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

Bill Summary

Introduced by Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO-05), H.R. 835 revises the title, number, and date of the map depicting the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument in Colorado and increases from 6,000 to 6,300 the maximum number of acres that may be made available for inclusion in the Monument.

Cosponsors

Rep. Jared Polis [D-CO-02] and Rep. Scott Tipton [R-CO-03]

Invited Witness:

The Honorable Norm Steen
Commissioner
Teller County, Colorado
Colorado Springs, CO

Background

The Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument was designated in Teller County, Colorado in 1969 to preserve one of the richest fossil deposits in the world and interpret its geological significance and its paleontological resources.¹ The Monument features detailed fossils of insects, plants and giant petrified redwood stumps, teaching visitors about prehistoric Colorado. The Monument offers a variety of recreational activities including hiking, sightseeing, ranger-led experiences and stargazing.²

¹ “Learn about the Park.” Florissant Fossil Beds. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/flfo/learn/index.htm>

² “Basic Information” Florissant Fossil Beds. National Parks Service.
<https://www.nps.gov/flfo/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm>

The Monument has a collection of more than 12,000 fossil specimens and is part of ongoing collaborations with universities.³ These resources have allowed scientists to study the ecosystem of the area from 34-35 million years ago.

The Monument currently encompasses 5,998 acres just west of Pikes Peak, 35 miles west of Colorado Springs, Colorado.⁴

In May 2016 the National Park Service (NPS) received a proposed donation of 280 acres of private land adjacent to the current northwestern boundary, shown on the map as “Flint Property”⁵. The donation would provide access to the Monument for wildland fire protection and additional wildlife habitat.

The Monument size is capped at 6,000 acres by Public Law 91-60 and requires legislative action to expand the boundaries.

H.R. 835 would allow for modification of the maximum area of the monument to 6,300 acres and allow NPS to accept the 280 acres currently being held by the Palmer Land Trust and Coalition for the Upper South Platte until the Monument boundaries can legally be admitted into the Monument.⁶

This legislation would allow for updates to the official map of the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument. According to NPS, the only additional expenses associated with accepting the donation would be the minor labor cost to move boundary fences and update maps. No additional funding or staff is needed.⁷

Support for the Legislation

Sanborn Western Camps
Teller Historic and Environmental Coalition
The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Palmer Land Trust, Coalition for the Upper South Platte
The Pikes Peak Historical Society

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

³ Statement of Dr. Stephanie Toothman, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science, National Parks Service. June 15, 2016.

⁴ S. Rept. 115-38 - TO UPDATE THE MAP OF, AND MODIFY THE MAXIMUM ACREAGE AVAILABLE FOR INCLUSION IN, THE FLORISSANT FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

⁵ Statement of Dr. Stephanie Toothman, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science, National Parks Service. June 15, 2016.

⁶ S. Rept. 115-38 - TO UPDATE THE MAP OF, AND MODIFY THE MAXIMUM ACREAGE AVAILABLE FOR INCLUSION IN, THE FLORISSANT FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

⁷ Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument Questions and Answers. National Parks Service.

Administration Position

The Administration's position is unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)