



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLM to celebrate expansion of Garden Park National Natural Landmark designation

CANON CITY, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management Royal Gorge Field Office cordially invites you to celebrate the expansion of the Garden Park Fossil Area National Natural Landmark designation on Oct. 9.

The celebration will include stories behind the excavations at the Garden Park quarries. The festivities will begin at 10:30 am with a walking tour of the Marsh Quarry, followed by the dedication ceremony at 11:30 am at the Cleveland Quarry rest area off Garden Park Road.

In April 2013, the National Park Service and BLM expanded the Garden Park NNL was from a 40-acre designation to 3,208 acres. The NNL area now includes all the major Garden Park quarries, two of which are easily visited from Garden Park Road. The designation helps to preserve the history of the Garden Park Fossil Area, where 14 different Jurassic dinosaur species have been found.

Cañon City became a hotspot for paleontology beginning in the 1870s when prominent U.S. paleontologists Othniel C. Marsh and Edward D. Cope uncovered the first fossilized bones of many dinosaur species in the Garden Park Fossil Area. Since their famous “Bone Wars,” during which the scientists raced to discover and name new dinosaur species, many paleontology digs in Garden Park have provided the scientific world with irreplaceable information about the anatomy of Jurassic-aged dinosaurs and the types of environments they lived and died in.

The NNL designation ceremony is the first event of the Fremont County Fall Heritage Festival. Historic preservation not only furthers scientific study, but also supports local tourism. According to History Colorado, heritage tourism visitors spent \$244 million in just one year in Colorado (2008). The excavations in Garden Park sparked the world’s interest in dinosaurs when the first discovery was made here in the 1800s; there is still much to learn from Garden Park. By preserving it today, we allow future generations to gain knowledge and interest in our local area’s natural and recent history.

To learn more about the event or to RSVP, please contact Melissa Smeins at 719-269-8523 or mssmeins@blm.gov.



Dall Deweese, one of the dinosaur bone excavators in Garden Park, in his quarry in 1916. Photo Courtesy of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

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