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Grand Canyon News Release

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Grand Canyon National Park to Celebrate Earth Science Week October 10 – 16, 2010

The Trail of Time Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting is at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 13

Grand Canyon, Ariz. - Grand Canyon National Park will celebrate Earth Science Week and National Fossil Day by offering a variety of special programs and events during the week of October 10 – 16, 2010. The highlight of the week's activity is the grand opening of the Trail of Time, a geologic exhibit, on Wednesday, Oct 13. Special interpretive programs, including fossil walks, evening programs, and a guided fossil hike on the Hermit Trail will round out the park's celebration of Earth Science Week.

Earth Science Week promotes understanding and appreciation of the value of earth science research and its applications and relevance to our daily lives. Grand Canyon National Park is an ideal place to celebrate Earth Science Week, as the park is a natural classroom and laboratory for the earth sciences, and is one of the most well known and most scenic geologic landscapes on the planet.

National Fossil Day is Wednesday, October 13 and is a part of Earth Science Week. National Fossil Day is a celebration organized by the National Park Service to promote public awareness and stewardship of fossils, as well as to foster a greater appreciation of their scientific and educational values.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

The feature event of Grand Canyon's celebration of Earth Science Week will be the ribbon cutting for Trail of Time at 2:30 p.m., on Wednesday, October 13 adjacent to Verkamp's Visitor Center. The ribbon cutting will be followed by an informal walk along the trail from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. The Trail of Time is an interpretive walking trail that focuses on Grand Canyon's vistas and rocks, encouraging visitors to ponder, explore, and understand the magnitude of geologic time and the stories told by canyon's rock layers and landscapes.

Superintendent Steve Martin said, "Grand Canyon National Park is very pleased to offer special events in recognition of Earth Science Week. The earth sciences are essential tools that the National Park Service uses to preserve and protect Grand Canyon. We're very excited to offer special programs throughout the week, especially the grand opening of the Trail of Time. The Trail of Time is an outstanding interpretive exhibit that will greatly add to visitor's understanding and appreciation of the park's geologic story."

In addition to the Trail of Time Grand Opening, Grand Canyon National Park will offer a variety of other special programs to commemorate Earth Science Week. Daily Fossil Walks will be offered from Sunday, October 10 through Friday, October 15. Fossil Walks begin at 10:00 a.m., meet at the patio behind Bright Angel Lodge and will visit a fossil bed containing the remains of a variety of marine organisms exposed near the rim of Grand Canyon. The programs will last approximately one hour and include an easy ½ mile walk.

On Tuesday, October 12, the park will celebrate No Child Left Inside Day as part of Earth Science Week by offering a special family-oriented Fossil Walk at 4:30 p.m., meeting on the patio behind Bright Angel Lodge.

Several evening programs offered during the week will be on the earth sciences. On Monday, October 11, Science and Resource Management Outreach Coordinator Allyson Mathis presents "*Clocks in Rocks: How Geologists Tell Time,*" On Tuesday, October 12, geologist and author Wayne Ranney presents "*Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau.*" On Friday, October 15, Dr. Karl Karlstrom, Dr. Laura Crossey, and Ryan Crow of University of New Mexico present

“The Making of the Trail of Time.” Evening Programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately one hour and are presented in the Shrine of the Ages auditorium.

On Saturday, October 16, a special ranger-guided hike on the Hermit Trail will stop at three fossil beds. Participants can view marine fossils in the Kaibab Limestone near the trailhead, vertebrate tracks in the Coconino Sandstone approximately 1 mile (and 1000 ft) down the trail, and fern fossils at 1.75 miles (and 1,400 ft) below the rim.

Participants can join the hike for one, two or all three fossil beds, and hike up on their own. Plan on one hour to view the Kaibab fossils, three hours roundtrip for the vertebrate tracks, and five hours for the entire hike. The Hermit Trail is very steep. Each participant should wear hiking shoes, and bring water and food. Hiking poles, hats and sunscreen are recommended. Meet at the Hermit Trailhead. To arrive on time for this program, board the free Hermits Rest shuttle bus by 8:00 a.m.

During Earth Science Week, an exhibit on Earth Science Week and fossils will be on display in Park Headquarters and in the Grand Canyon Visitor Center. The Junior Paleontologist Program, self-guided activity booklet for kids ages 5 through 12, will also be available at Park Headquarters and the Grand Canyon Visitor Center. Kids can learn about ancient life, complete fun activities, and explore some of the national parks that offer a look into the past in the Junior Paleontologist booklet. Upon completion, Junior Paleontologists will receive a Junior Paleontologist badge.

The Grand Canyon Association, the official nonprofit partner of Grand Canyon National Park, will also be offering a 20 percent discount on related merchandise in their bookstores from October 8 – 17, to help promote Earth Science Week.

To learn more about Earth Science Week activities at Grand Canyon National Park, please contact Allyson Mathis, Science and Education Outreach Coordinator, at (928) 638-7923

or visit <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/earth-sci-week.htm>. Additional information on the Trail of Time is available online at <http://tot.unm.edu/>, and on National Fossil Day at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/index.cfm>.

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