



National Park Service
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Grand Canyon News Release

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Grand Canyon National Park to Dedicate the Trail of Time During Earth Science Week

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – In a ribbon-cutting ceremony planned for October 13, 2010, Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin, Chief of Interpretation Judy Hellmich-Bryan, interpretive staff and special guests will dedicate a new interpretive exhibit, the Trail of Time, on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

Visitors are invited to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony at 2:30 p.m., adjacent to Verkamp's Visitor Center, followed by an informal walk along the trail from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. The event is one of several events planned by Grand Canyon National Park as part of Earth Science Week, October 10 – 16.

The Trail of Time is an interpretive walking timeline that focuses on Grand Canyon vistas and rocks and invites visitors to ponder, explore, and understand the magnitude of geologic time and the stories encoded by Grand Canyon rock layers and landscapes.

The exhibit follows the existing paved rim trail on the South Rim of Grand Canyon between Yavapai Observation Station and Grand Canyon Village and is marked by brass markers every meter, representing one million years of time. Viewing tubes and other interpretive materials help visitors connect the rocks visible in Grand Canyon to their place along the geologic timeline.

The exhibit is part of Grand Canyon National Park's efforts to improve and integrate geosciences into interpretative programs at the Grand Canyon with links to other parks in the region. The physical Trail of Time is supplemented with an electronic web-based component called the "Virtual Trail of Time, found at <http://tot.unm.edu/>." The Trail of Time employs culturally responsive and inclusive content and is part of a research program in informal science education aimed at understanding and improving public cognition of geologic time – the connection between human time scales and the million year heartbeat of the Earth.

Chief of Interpretation Hellmich-Bryan states, "The Trail of Time is a powerful tool that park staff can use to help visitors understand and connect with the story of Grand Canyon geology. Since its final installation, park visitors have been very enthusiastic about the trail and are enjoying the opportunity to touch rocks from deep within the canyon."

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The Trail of Time was developed through a partnership between Grand Canyon National Park and the University of New Mexico. The project was funded with a \$2 million grant provided by the National Science Foundation. Dr. Karl E. Karlstrom, a Geology Professor at the University of New Mexico, led a team comprised of interpretive specialists from the National Park Service and academics from Arizona State University and the University of Massachusetts in the design and development of the exhibit.

Other partners include Wells Resources, Inc. (Fort Collins, CO), project management; Selinda Research Associates, Inc. (Chicago, IL), exhibit evaluation; Jim Sells Design (Fort Collins, CO), exhibit design; and Hebrew University, Dartmouth College and Lewis and Clark College, cognition research.

”The Trail of Time project is a great representation of a project that came about through working in partnership with interested organizations. Partnerships such as this allow the park to achieve things we could not do on our own,” said Superintendent Martin.

Visitors are invited to walk the newly completed Trail of Time. Starting just west of the Yavapai Geology museum, visitors can walk backward in time from today toward the oldest rock in Grand Canyon, Elves Chasm gneiss (1,840 million years old) or begin east of Verkamp’s Visitor Center, walking forward in time from 1,840 million years ago toward the youngest rock in the Grand Canyon, Kaibab Limestone (270 million years old).

In addition to the dedication of the Trail of Time, the park will present a variety of special programs during Earth Science Week on the park’s geology. Visitors can check any Grand Canyon National Park visitor center or park headquarters for a complete schedule of events or they can also visit www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/earth-sci-week.htm. For additional information on the Trail of Time, please contact Judy Hellmich-Bryan, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Education, at judy_hellmich-bryan@nps.gov.

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