Time Travel

This program is available to schools with teleconference equipment and as park staff member availability allows.

Grades: 3 to 5
Length: 30 minutes

Main Idea

Fossils in Badlands National Park help us understand ancient times and ancient life.

Procedure

Introduction and Welcome

- Badlands National Park in South Dakota
- What is a national park?
  - A special place preserved for people to enjoy
  - Badlands National Park is special because of the rocks and fossils.
- What is a fossil?
  - Something that tells us about ancient animals that lived long ago.
  - Brief explanation of how fossils formed in Badlands

Camer Pan

- Show the Badlands.
- Explain why it is called the Badlands.
- Paleontologists go out there, climb those rocks, and look for fossils.
  - What do paleontologists do?
  - Why study fossils?
  - What can we learn?

Fossil Detectives - Fossil Mysteries (more than just dinosaurs!)

- Titanothere
  - We can learn about fossils by their size.
- Turtle
  - We canlearn about fossils by *comparing them to modern animals* that are living now.
- Saber-toothed cat
  - We can learn about fossils by looking at their *teeth* (sharp versus flat).

Slide show of reconstructed animals and murals of what it looked like long ago

More Fossil Mysteries

- *Mesohippus*: ancient tiny 3-toed horse.
- Mouse: Some fossils are very tiny!
- Hornless rhino: long ago South Dakota and Nebraska looked very different than today.

Conclusion

Fossils help paleontologists solve the mystery of what life was like a really, really long time ago. National parks protect special places like this so that everyone can enjoy them and learn from them.

Questions and Answers