

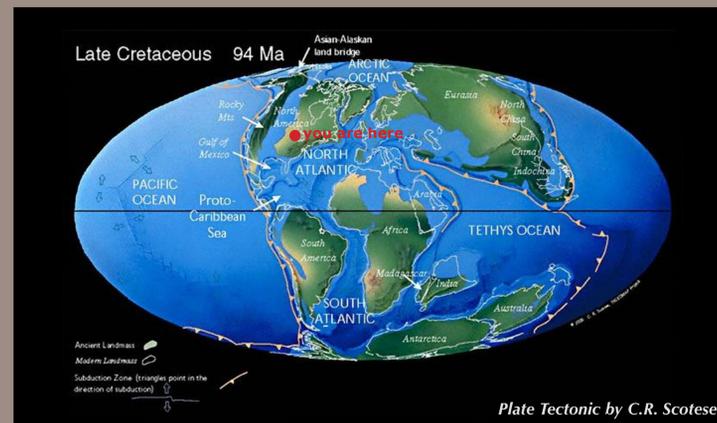
Digging for Dinosaurs Treasure in These Hills

Why Here?

The Kaiparowits Formation's stunning fossil record results from a perfect combination of circumstances. First, during the Late Cretaceous, this region was a lush, subtropical, coastal plain where an enormous number and variety of animals lived. Second, abundant rivers and coastal storms moved great volumes of sand and mud, so animals that died were sometimes buried quickly, preserving their remains. Lastly, uplifting of the Colorado Plateau over the past 60 million years has brought this deeply buried treasure to the surface.



Original Art by Larry Felder, Courtesy of Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument



Scientific Frontier

In a region famed for once being the last unmapped frontier in the continental United States, the Kaiparowits Formation remains a largely unexplored scientific frontier. By protecting the fossils of this formation through proper collection and study, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument conserves a vast storehouse of knowledge available nowhere else on earth.

Kaiparowits Fossil Bonanza

There's treasure beneath your feet. Not of the gold-and-rubies variety, but rather a treasure of fossilized bones, eggshells, and other paleontological gems, buried in these gray rock formations some 73-77 million years ago. Known as the Kaiparowits Formation, these sedimentary rock layers lie at the top of what is perhaps the best and most continuous record of Late Cretaceous terrestrial life in the world.

Forty-foot long crocodiles, rhinoceros-like horned dinosaurs, tyrannosaurs, and velociraptors—scientists have surveyed only a small fraction of the Kaiparowits Formation, and already they've unearthed more than one hundred species of vertebrates. Excavations are revealing a long-lost ecosystem inhabited by a fantastic array of animals, including some of the earliest marsupial and placental mammals ever found. These discoveries are helping to explain the origins of our present world.