



Utah Department of **NATURAL RESOURCES**

FACT SHEET

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Utahraptor State Park Fact Sheet and Background Information

Salt Lake City (April 13, 2021) -- Today, Governor Spencer Cox held a ceremonial signing of HB 257, which created Utahraptor and Lost Creek state parks, located roughly 15 miles northwest of Moab in Grand County and 10 miles northeast of Croydon in Morgan County, respectively.

Governor Cox signed the bill at the Utah Geological Survey's fossil preparation lab at the Utah Core Research Center, in front of a 9-ton sandstone megablock containing thousands of bones of baby to adult *Utahraptor* dinosaurs, as well as other dinosaurs they preyed upon. For more information on the *Utahraptor* megablock see- <https://geology.utah.gov/new-utahraptor-discoveries-continue-to-be-revealed-from-utahs-most-astounding-fossil-block/>

Below is information specific to the designated Utahraptor State Park location and paleontological resources in the area:

Why make the area a state park?

As tourism in Utah continues to expand and grow, additional outdoor recreation facilities are needed to keep up with the increasing demand.

- The Dalton Wells/Willow Springs area is a popular recreation location, which also contains many dinosaur bones.
- The area has been lacking amenities such as updated trailheads, restrooms, and other facilities. This has led to issues such as an increase in trash and human waste being left behind.
- Utah State Parks believes that — with proper planning and coordination with partners — we can better protect the area while maintaining its recreational value.
- The area is currently undeveloped with only primitive camping and recreation options. The creation of a state park will bring much needed infrastructure to the area.
- While it is still in the planning process, future park visitors to the area can expect two modern campgrounds, restrooms, office and entrance station, and trailheads for access to the nearby OHV and mountain bike trail systems.



- The exact size of Utahraptor State Park is still being determined as Utah State Parks works to finalize lease and purchasing agreements with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands and the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration.
- It's anticipated the park will be between 7,000 and 8,000 acres in size.

Paleontologic resources of the Dalton Wells Quarry, located in Utahraptor State Park

- The Dalton Wells site has one of the largest dinosaur bone beds in North America.
- Over 5,500 bones representing over 10 dinosaur species have been recovered by Brigham Young University during the site's 45-year history of excavation and discovery. All these species are unique to Grand County, with some only found at the Dalton Wells site.
- The unique geologic story of Arches National Park is an integral part of the story of the unique dinosaur fossils in the Dalton Wells area.
- Over 30 museums around the world display full cast skeletons of dinosaurs from the Dalton Wells site.
- Paleontologists believe more than 100,000 bones may await discovery.
- The Dalton Wells site provides a unique window on a significant portion of North American prehistory. The site is in a beautiful setting with opportunities for interpretation and education.

Paleontological resources in Grand County near Utahraptor State Park

- Grand County has one of the most complete records in the world of dinosaur fossils from the Early Cretaceous, a time span ranging from 100 to 145 million years ago. The fossils are completely different from the older dinosaur fossils at Dinosaur National Monument and the younger dinosaur fossils found at Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument.
- Over 50 dinosaur species have been recovered in Grand County, 28 of which have only been found there!
- *Utahraptor*, Utah's official state dinosaur, is only found in Grand County. The rock layer preserving *Utahraptor* only occurs in the county and thus *Utahraptor* will likely never be found in other areas of North America.
- Grand County may contain more dinosaur sites than any other county in the country. New discoveries continue to be found.