# I + M Excavation Site Evaluation

One of the difficulties paleontologists face is the preservation of their excavation sites so that they can continue to go back to find more fossils. Paleontologists regularly visit multiple sites at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and monitor changes to the sites. You are going to evaluate three sites from the National Monument and write down your evaluation on an I + M sheet.

## You will need:

* I + M Excavation site video
* I + M evaluation sheet
* Pencil

## Instructions

The I+M evaluation sheet is similar to what paleontologists use in the field to rate several factors of the preservation of their sites.

Step One: Take a look at the I+M evaluation sheet and get familiar with the rating system. The 1 to 3 rating key for each factor you will consider is at the bottom of the second page.

For each site, you will be rating six factors based on your own observations. Erosion is how much sediment you estimate has been moved. Erosion prevention is what has been done to prevent further erosion. Fossil abundance is how many fossils you can see at the site. Actual loss is how many fossils you think have been stolen, damaged, or lost to other factors such as erosion. Site access is how easy it is for people to get to the site. Access prevention is what has been done to protect the site and keep people from getting to the site when they shouldn’t be there. You will rate each factor from 1 to 3.

Step Two: Watch the I+M Excavation site video. The ranger will show you three sites including the excavation pit and two petrified stumps. Pause the video as needed to take time to look at the sites and make observations. Write down which site you are evaluating on the I+M evaluation sheet and rate each factor.

How do the sites you evaluated differ from each other? How are the sites similar? What do you think could be done to help preserve and protect these sites?

## Vocabulary:

* **Erosion**: *noun;* the action or process of eroding or wearing away by or as if by the action of water, wind, or glacial ice
* **Erosion Prevention**: *noun;* the act or practice of keeping erosion from happening
* **Fossil Abundance**: *noun;* the quantity of fossils found at a site
* **Actual Loss**: *noun;* the amount of loss of material or fossils from a site
* **Site Access**: *noun;* the state of how easily a site can be reached by people
* **Access Prevention**: *noun;* the measures that are taken to prevent or keep people from reaching a site