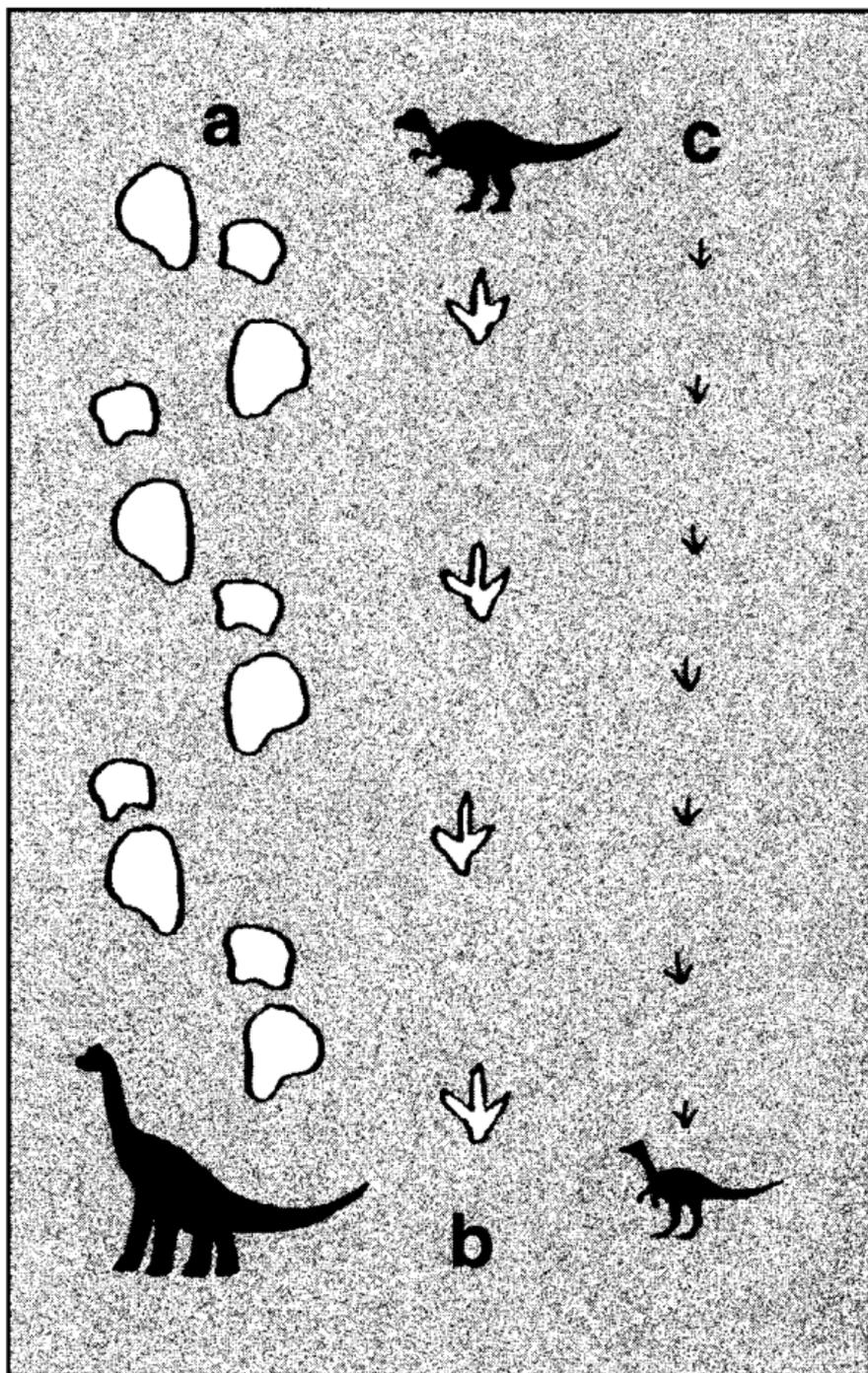


Copper Ridge Sauropod Dinosaur Tracks

Footprints from the Morrison Formation



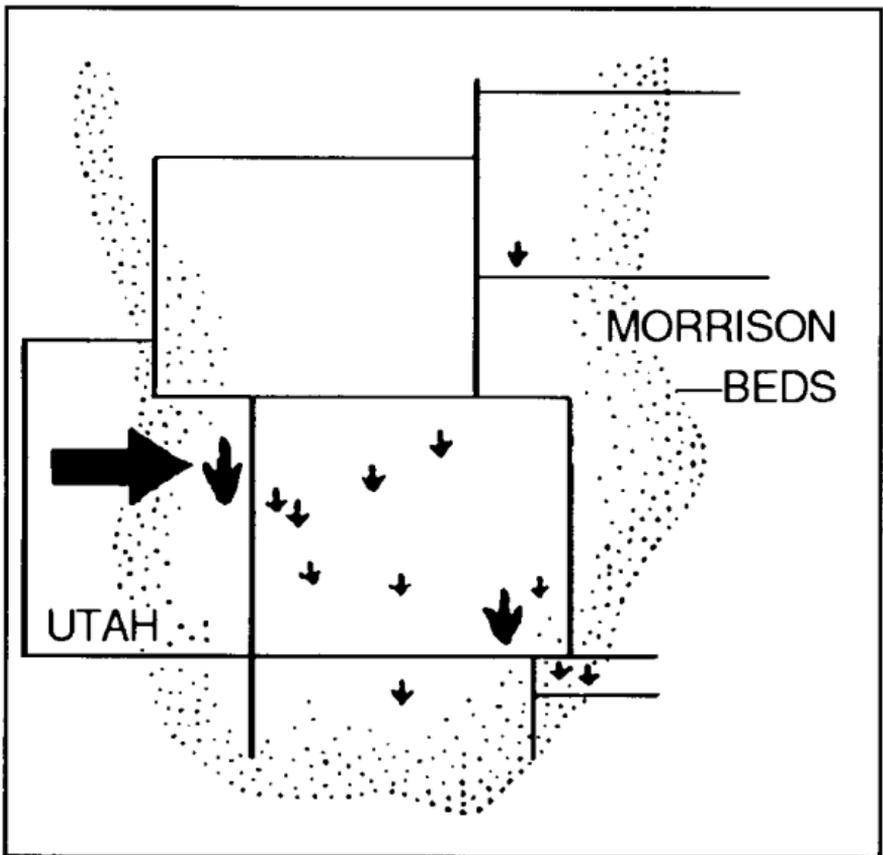
**Typical tracks from the Morrison
Formation include those of**

- a brontosaurus
- b large theropods
- c small theropods

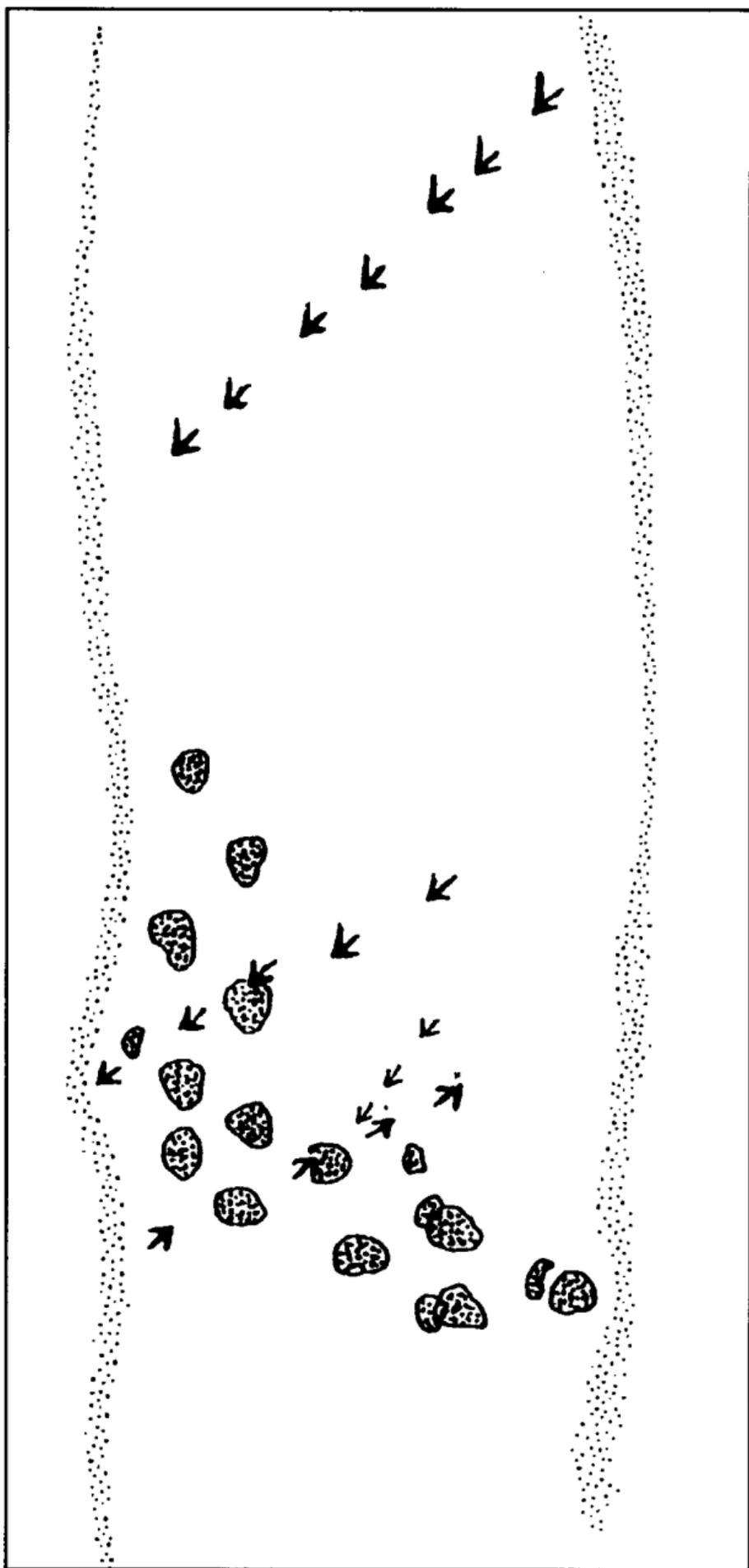
Morrison Formation Sites

The Morrison Formation is one of the most famous dinosaur-bearing deposits in the world. It has yielded some of the best known Jurassic dinosaurs, including Apatosaurus or “Brontosaurus”), Diplodocus, Stegosaurus and Allosaurus. Productive dinosaur quarries in the Morrison Formation include Dinosaur National Monument and the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry. Skeletal remains of 150 million year old dinosaurs are very abundant in the Morrison Formation, but tracks are known from only about two dozen sites.

With the exception of the giant Purgatoire Valley tracksite in southeast Colorado, most sites only yield a handful of three-toed tracks. This trackway is rare for its abundance of varying tracks.



Location of dinosaur tracksites in the Morrison Formation of the Western USA.

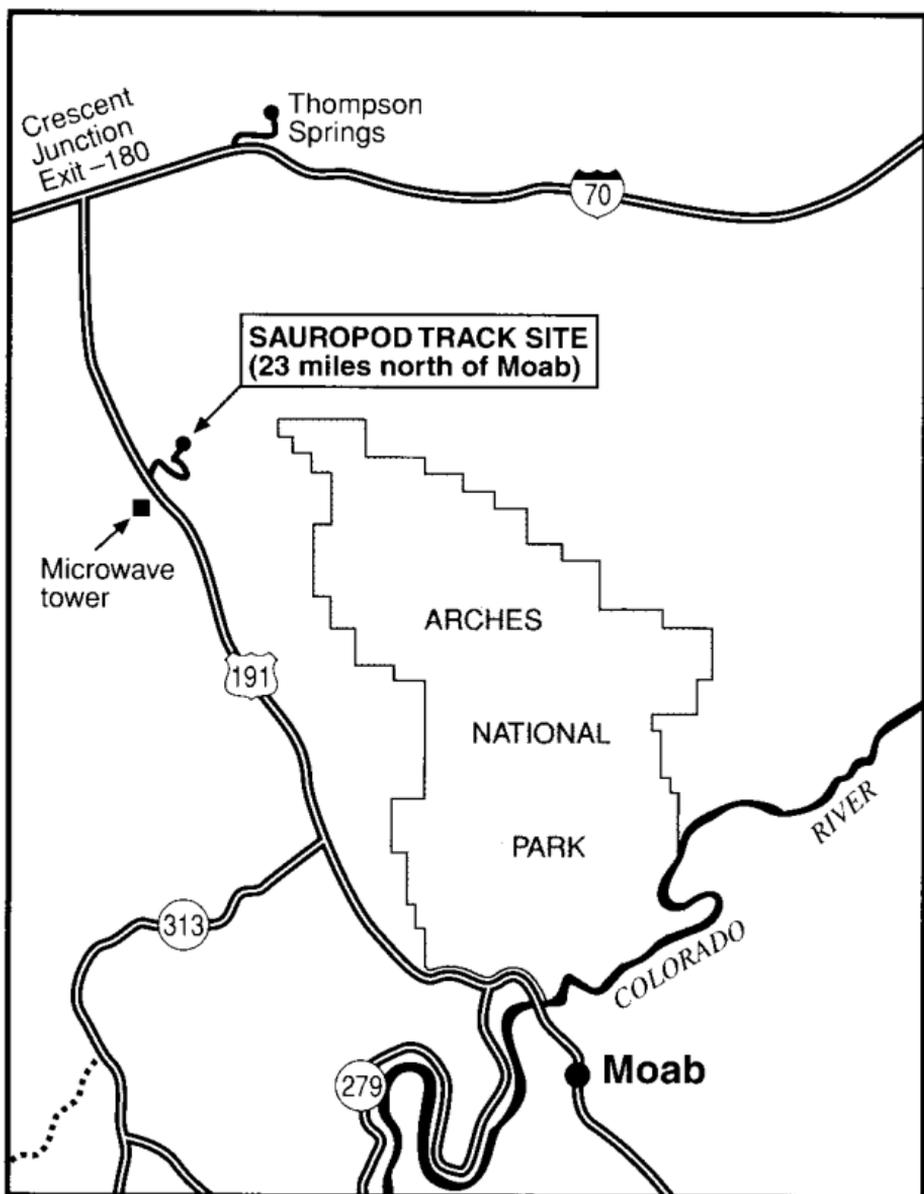


This map of the Copper Ridge Sauropod site shows trackways of a turning brontosaur and four carnivores.

Copper Ridge

The Copper Ridge Sauropod Tracksite was discovered in 1989. The site which is located north of the Moab airport, reveals the first brontosaurus trackway reported from Utah, as well as trackways of four theropods of various sizes. The dinosaurs walked in several directions across a ripple-marked sand deposit that had accumulated in an ancient river channel. The brontosaurus had large hind feet, about two feet in diameter, and smaller front feet that did not leave such clear impressions. The whole trackway makes a pronounced turn to the right. Such obvious changes of direction are rare in fossil trackways. We do not know which of the species of brontosaurus made these tracks. The most common types were Camarasaurus, Apatosaurus and Diplodocus.

The three-toed tracks range from fifteen inches in length to about eight inches. The large trackmaker may have been Allosaurus, the most common carnivore in Morrison times. It is interesting to note that the trackway to the east shows an alternation of long steps (about 5 feet) and short steps (about 4 feet). No one knows the reason for this irregular gait - perhaps the animal was hurt and limping slightly. The smaller three-toed tracks, which are hard to see except in low angle light, could have been made by one of a number of smaller bipedal species.



Directions to Copper Ridge

From Moab, go north on U.S. Highway 191 for 23 miles. Turn right 3/4 mile past milepost 148 (just north of the microwave tower). Cross the railroad tracks and follow the signs south on the dirt road. It is 2 miles to the tracksite from the highway.

If coming from Crescent Jct. (I-70), turn left 1/4 mile past milepost 149, cross the railroad tracks and continue south on the dirt road.

The dirt road is suitable for passenger cars driven carefully. **AVOID** this road when wet.



Alternating long and short steps made by a theropod with an irregular gait.



Credits

This site was discovered by Linda Dale Jennings Lockley in 1989. Research and brochure design by the University of Colorado at Denver, Dinosaur Trackers Research Group and the Bureau of Land Management. Fossil footprints are a rare, non-renewable resource. Please help to preserve and protect them.



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