

REAL WORLD SOLUTIONS TO AMERICA'S FOSSIL FAMILY FEUD; A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE.

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Historically, America's vast fossil resources have been squandered through lack of pro-active law and misguided regulation. Opposing factions have delighted in their own rhetorical diatribes accentuating the horrors of abuse and bumbling of their adversaries. Academics are charged with elitism. Commercial collectors and amateurs are accused of callous greed. And so it goes, ad nauseum. To dignify the squabble as a debate does a disservice to the word.

If you examine each position, however, you will find many common concerns, nearly lost in the artificial elegance of the arguments and the personal nature of the attacks. Setting the egos and anecdotes aside, we can bring those threads of commonality together, and establish a policy that will begin to rescue the fossils over which we are all arguing.

Issues of personal freedom, resource management, and economic and scientific interests are at stake. Each of these can be addressed and resolved in a practical and manageable way through negotiation. A workable policy will preserve the fossils and the information they contain, while making it economically feasible to do so. Purist views will have to yield.

The human resources wasted on 20 years of quarreling are incalculable. Sadly, the amount of scientific knowledge and economic opportunity washed down the gullies while the dispute has raged is much greater.

A new era of cooperation and mutual respect beckons. Are we ready for it?