



Petrified wood in the Dennis and Mary Murphy Petrified Wood Gallery

This gallery was opened in 2003. All of its specimens are on loan from Dennis and Mary Murphy, friends of the Rice family. The Murphys started their collection in the 1970s with a pair of petrified wood bookends, which can be seen in the gallery at the museum today.

One of the most exciting features of the gallery is the “talking log”. This petrified oak tree tells his story of how he became petrified. The log was covered in a thick coat of basalt lava, near the Stinkingwater Mountains, with time, all cells were gradually replaced with silica.

Listen to the talking log. Was the tree very close to a volcano, or farther away? What did NOT happen while log was buried under the basalt lava before becoming agatized?

Can you find the beaver gnaw in this gallery?

If you use your imagination, you can see the shapes of animals in the patterns inside the petrified wood. How many animals do you see? Name all the animals you find.