

# **EARLY PERMIAN CRINOIDS FROM STRATHCONA PROVINCIAL PARK, VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA — LOSS OF A GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT FAUNA?**

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Limestones of the Mount Mark Formation exposed along the east side of Morrison Spire in Strathcona Provincial Park, central Vancouver Island, contain a diverse Early Permian crinoid fauna. This is the first Permian fauna containing crowns and cups from *Wrangellia* terrane. Specimens were observed and photographed in the field and no specimens were collected, adhering to park regulations. The fauna contains representatives of each of the major Paleozoic crinoid subclasses: Camerata, Disparida, and Cladida.

Preliminary identifications recognize several new genera and species within the fauna, but they are not named or described lacking specimens for repository. A minimum of 24 species are judged to be present making it the second most diverse Permian fauna known from North America. Identified genera reflect a closer relationship with North American faunas than with Paleotethyan faunas, suggesting that *Wrangellia* was closer to North America than to the Paleotethyan realm during Early Permian time.

Limestones of the Mount Mark Formation in the vicinity of Morrison Spire are undergoing karstification and specimens are being lost under the harsh weathering conditions. Observations of individual specimens over a five-year interval found that morphologic details critical for identification are being lost at a rapid rate. It is recommended that sufficient specimens in the fauna be collected as soon as possible for identification and analysis. These specimens should be preserved for future reference and could form a display in the park headquarters.