



DRILL DOWN DEEPER INTO STORIES FROM THE CORES

Where and when were the glacial megafloods?

Between 22,000 and 11,000 years ago, a huge sheet of ice covered Canada and parts of the northernmost United States. Part of the ice sheet went across a valley near the border of Idaho and Montana. This glacier dammed up the Clark Fork River that ran through the valley. The ice dam created a huge body of water called Glacial Lake Missoula. This Ice Age lake covered parts of western Montana and was as big as Lake Ontario and Lake Erie combined.

The ice dam was not permanent. It periodically broke and released all the water in the lake (possibly 500 cubic miles worth of water, as much as half of Lake Michigan.) This water flooded over present day Washington and Oregon with enough force to carve deep canyons out of the rock and to carry boulders embedded in ice from Montana to the Western Oregon.

The flood had so much force that it did not stop when it entered the Pacific Ocean at the mouth of the Columbia River. The sediment from the flood kept flowing out into the ocean, some of it traveling over 700 miles from the coast.



Try this!

Check out the "Stories from the Core" backpack from the front desk to look at maps that tell the story of the glacial megafloods of the last Ice Age



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Learn more about how cores reveal the secrets of glacial megafloods at www.insearchofearthsecrets.com.



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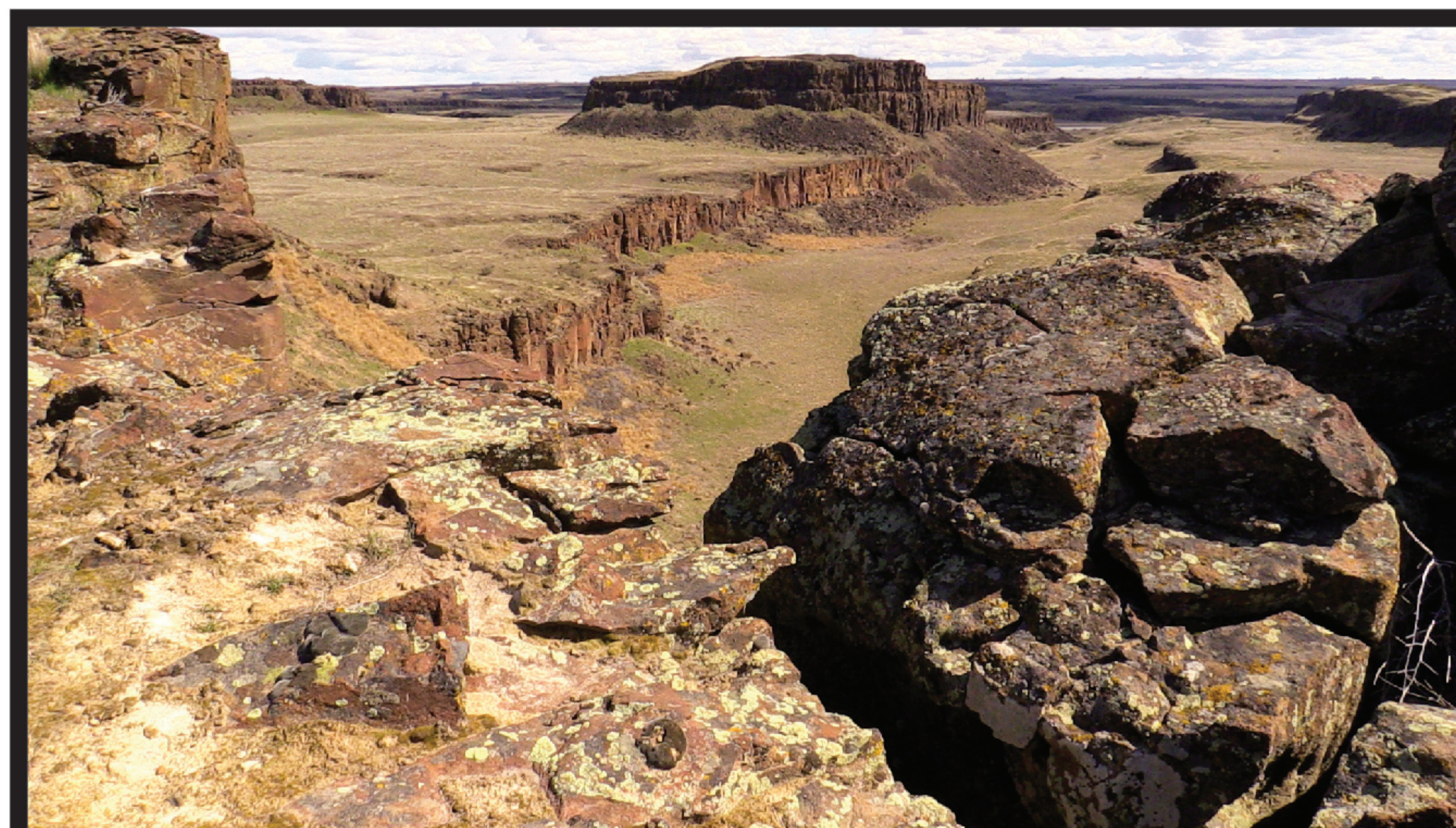


Collect your *Stories from the Cores* passport sticker

Did anyone see the glacial megafloods of the last Ice Age?

It is quite possible. We know that there were indigenous people in North America at the time of at least some of these megafloods. The Umatilla people who live in the Pacific Northwest have ancient tribal stories of massive floods in the region. But no archaeological evidence of people in the flood zone has been found, so far.

We do know for sure that Ice Age animals like mammoths were in the area because their fossil remains have been found in the flood zone. Because of the massive power of the flood, it is very unlikely that any living thing in its path would have survived.



The powerful floods carved out channels and dropped giant boulders that still mark Oregon's landscape today.



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