

Oldest Fossil Found in Michigan



Photograph of a specimen from Negaunee

The Negaunee Iron formation near Palmer in the Northern Peninsula is the home of the oldest megascopic (visible to the eye) fossil -- **in the world**. The fossils are of a primitive, filament-like relative of algae. Scientists have determined the age of the fossils to be 2,100,000,000 (2.1 BILLION) years old.

These are 700 to 1000 Million years older than previously found specimens from Wyoming, India and China. The specimens have been donated by the Empire Mine to the Geological Survey and Eddy Geology Center and will be on display in Lansing and Waterloo respectively.



Close up of one of the loops.



Another close up showing overlapping loops

The specimens are found in thin layers in one area of the mine. Technically the fossil is known as *Grypania* cf. *spiralis*, which is preserved as corkscrew-shaped or spaghetti like marks that look like a random combination of O's C's and 6's. The filaments do not branch and typically are about the size of a penny.

For more information please refer to: Tsu-Ming Han, & Runnegar, Bruce; Science -- Volume 257 -- 10 July 1992 -- pages 232 to 235