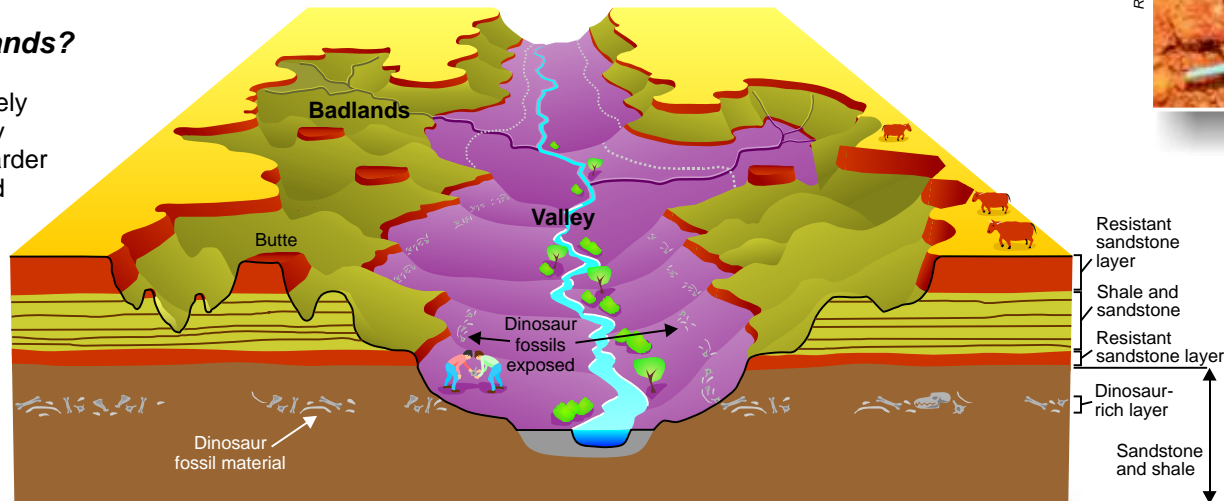


THE BADLANDS: DINOSAUR COUNTRY!

What's so bad about badlands?

Badlands are a complex terrain of largely unvegetated gullies and hills formed by differential erosion of soft shale and harder sandstone. Buttery slick when wet, and without shade in the hot sun, these lands were referred to by French explorers as “bad lands to travel through” — giving rise to the term ‘badlands’. However, to many they are beautiful and fascinating.



Making badlands — what's the recipe?

Badlands form where the natural recipe is right — the required ingredients are a semiarid climate resulting in sparse vegetation, steep slopes, summer thunderstorms that produce flash floods, and underlying soft rocks. Why do these conditions favour badlands?

For dinosaur detectives: why badlands are a good place to look

Badlands are ideal places for paleontologists to look for fossils. There is little vegetation to cover the rock that contains the fossils. The rock is being continually eroded, exposing new material every year. To find dinosaur bones, rocks of the right age — that is, rocks that formed during the Age of dinosaurs — must be exposed. Younger and older rocks can contain fossils, but not of dinosaurs.



Badlands: not just in Alberta!

The Drumheller and Dinosaur Provincial Park areas in southern Alberta may be Canada's best known badlands, but southern Saskatchewan can lay claim to its own, in the Big Muddy, Frenchman River valley, Grasslands National Park, and Avonlea regions.



Badlands, Frenchman River valley near Eastend.