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Cupressaceae fossil remains from the Paleocene of Carneyville, Wyoming

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ABSTRACT

Conifer remains including petrified wood resembling Sequoia, and leafy shoots and seed cone scales of Glyptostrobus (Cupressaceae s.l.) were found in the late Paleocene Fort Union Formation (Tongue River Member) in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming, northwestern USA. These findings indicate either a wider distribution of both Sequoia and Glyptostrobus in the late Paleocene compared with narrow habitat of modern genera, or possibly that Glyptostrobus-like cones were borne on trees with wood resembling that of Sequoia. The well-preserved wood is assigned to the new species Sequoioxylon carneyvillense sp. n. while the cone fragments and foliage are assigned to Glyptostrobus europaeus (Brongniart) Unger. Wood anatomical features of extant cupressaceous genera including Glyptostrobus, Metasequoia, Sequoia, Sequoiadendron and Taxodium were studied to provide more information for the identification of fossils.

Keywords: late Paleocene, Sequoioxylon, Glyptostrobus, Wyoming, Cupressaceae, Fort Union Formation

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