



Start of the Forest

Early to Mid Cretaceous Period

In the moist and humid climate of ancient Southeast Oklahoma, trees grew rapidly with shallow root systems. When they toppled over, they sank into the mud and eventually fossilized.

Did you know that dinosaurs roamed this area? Oklahoma's state dinosaur, the *Acrocanthosaurus atokensis*, was discovered not far from here along the banks of the Mountain Fork River. A cast of this impressive dinosaur can be seen at the Museum of the Red River in Idabel.

As climates changed, the prehistoric trees disappeared, leaving only ferns to survive. Today, you can find an abundance of fossils embedded in limestone rock within riverbeds.