



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This image shows footprints estimated to be about 4 million years old. They come from **Laetoli**, a paleontological site in northern Tanzania. Laetoli is famous for its fossil footprints of **hominins**: a taxonomic group that includes humans and their extinct ancestors. In addition to hominin footprints, Laetoli also has fossil footprints of other mammals and birds.

In the 1970s, scientists at Laetoli discovered the footprints of three hominin individuals. In 2015, the footprints of two more individuals were found, some of which are shown in the image. It's believed that the footprints were left by hominins walking over the ash from a volcanic eruption.

Scientists can use these footprints to estimate the heights of the hominin individuals who made them. They can also use the footprints to infer other biological information about these hominins, such as how they moved, how quickly they moved, and how individuals of the same species varied.