Coal and The Flood

Coal is a product of plant material that has been subjected to high temperatures and pressures, converting it primarily to rock-like carbon. A global flood could produce large floating rafts of vegetation, deposit them on land, and quickly cover them with layers of sand and mud. Heat from catastrophic plate tectonics, and from decomposition of the plants, could have contributed to coal formation in a short time. This would explain some of the features of coal deposits that do not fit the standard hypothesis of coal formation in peat bogs.

Thick Coal Seams

Some coal seams seem to exceed the amount of coal that could be produced from any known peat bog or swamp. Coal production involves compression of plant material by a factor of about 5–10 times. A coal seam 60 m (about 200 feet) thick would require a peat bog or swamp at least 300 m (1000 feet) thick. Modern peat bogs are usually less than 18 m (60 feet) deep, not nearly deep enough to produce such a thick coal seam.



80 foot coal seam at the North Antelope Rochelle opencut coal mine *(Wyoming, USA)*
Image: Peabody Energy, Inc., CC by 3.0

Flat Layers

Coal typically occurs in stacks of alternating flat coal seams and flat beds of sediments. If each coal bed formed in a peat bog or swamp and was then covered by a blanket of sediment, with the process repeated over time, one would expect the layers of sediment to be disrupted by the roots of plants growing in them. Perhaps the coal was formed when a series of tidal surges transported floating rafts of plant debris from the sea to the land.



Coal seam in headland at Bell's Point, Austinmer Beach *(New South Wales, Australia)*
Image: TrimmerinWiki, CC by SA 4.0

Well-Preserved Fossils

Many well-preserved fossils of coal-forming plants are found in beds that have not been subjected to enough heat and pressure to coalify the original material. If these plants accumulated in a swamp, they should show some signs of decay, even if the acidity of the swamp acts to slow down decay. Their fragmented state with excellent preservation can be explained as due to catastrophic burial soon after their death.



Excellent preservation of plant fragments *(Nova Scotia, Canada)*
Image: GRI

Synthetic Coal

Synthetic coal, or biocoal, can be produced in a few hours under the proper conditions of pressure and temperature, in the presence of water. Although the Paleozoic coal plants are extinct, the same physical principles would apply today. Coal formation does not require millions of years, and some features of coal beds seem difficult to reconcile with such long periods of time.



Biocoal pellets
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