



The Phantom Ship
from Garfield Peak

Reflections Visitor Guide Summer/Fall 2026

Road Closure on East Rim Drive

Road alert! It won't be possible to drive all the way around Crater Lake this summer. An 8-mile (13-km) section of the East Rim Drive—between Park Headquarters and the Phantom Ship Overlook—will be closed for construction (*see map on page 5*). To allow the contractor to work efficiently, the road will be closed to all traffic, including bicycles and pedestrians. If work proceeds ahead of schedule, the road might reopen in September or October. Otherwise, it will reopen in 2027.

Some viewpoints and hiking trails will be affected. Vidae Falls and the Sun Notch Trail will be off-limits. The Castle Crest Trail will be open via a 0.4-mile (0.6-km) spur trail from Park Headquarters. The Crater Peak Trail will be reachable only by hiking or bicycling 4.3 miles (6.9 km) to the trailhead on the Grayback Road.

This is the final year of a 4-year effort to stabilize and repair 20 miles (31 km) of the historic East Rim Drive, built in the 1930s. Funding for the project comes from the Great American Outdoors Act, passed by Congress in 2020 to address infrastructure needs on public lands.



East Rim Drive

Cleetwood Cove Trail is Closed for Improvements

Maintaining a footpath inside a crumbling volcano is not easy. The Cleetwood Cove Trail is the only legal access to the shore of Crater Lake, descending 650 feet (200 meters) over 1.1 miles (1.7 km) in a series of switchbacks that have suffered greatly from erosion since the trail first opened in 1959. To ensure safe access for future generations, the trail will be closed for reconstruction in 2026, 2027, and 2028. It will be stabilized and improved, while the lake shore will receive a new dock, pier, and restroom (*see article on page 7*).

Although it's not possible to swim, fish, or take a boat tour during this major rehabilitation project, most of the park's other trails and viewpoints are open for your enjoyment and discovery.

Find the Phantom Ship

Plus 10 Other Ways to Enjoy Your Park



The Phantom Ship

Near the southeast shore of Crater Lake is an island that appears to be sailing away. While it doesn't actually move, it can be elusive: many people fail to notice the Phantom Ship during their visit. Can you spot it? It's most easily seen from the viewpoint named in its honor on the East Rim Drive (*see page 5*). For a different perspective, hike to the summit of Garfield Peak (*see page 3 and the photo above*).

The island, made of 400,000-year-old lava, is larger than it looks. Standing 173 feet (53 meters) above the lake's surface and measuring 400 feet (122 meters) in length, it's as tall as a 16-story building and longer than a football field! Another surprising fact: if Crater Lake was 30 feet (9 meters) shallower, the Phantom Ship would not be an island at all. It would just be a promontory between two bays (bays that formed when giant landslides slid into the caldera during the collapse of Mount Mazama). Here are 10 additional ways to make your stay at Crater Lake memorable, meaningful, and fun:

Watch the Park Film

Explore the park's violent past and its present tranquility in this 22-minute film, shown on the hour and half-hour at the Steel Visitor Center at Park Headquarters.

Walk Among Wildflowers

In June and July, flowers line many of the park's roads and trails. Take a stroll on the Castle Crest Trail to view the park's premier display (*see page 4*).

Have a Picnic

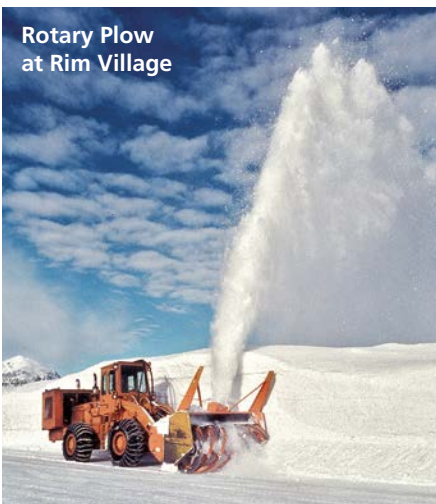
The pullouts and picnic areas on the Rim Drive are perfect for outdoor eating. Stop by the Rim Village Café or Mazama Village Store for grab-and-go sandwiches.

Visit the Sinnott Overlook

Perched on a cliff at Rim Village, this historic overlook features a dramatic view of the caldera and exhibits that explain its geologic features (*see page 3*).

View the Lodge

For a glimpse into a bygone era, check out the history exhibits—and the Great Hall—of Crater Lake Lodge, renovated in the 1990s but first opened in 1915 (*see page 3*).



Rotary Plow
at Rim Village

Climb a Peak

The summits of Mount Scott, Union Peak, Watchman Peak, and Garfield Peak each offer panoramic—and very different—views of the park (*see page 4*).

Photograph the Pinnacles

Formed by the same eruption that gave birth to the lake, these colorful volcanic spires are tucked away in the park's southeast corner (*see page 5*).

Take a Trolley Tour

See the park with those who know it best. Narrated, 2-hour tours depart daily from Rim Village, stopping at overlooks as they travel along the Rim Drive (*see page 2*).

Savor a Sunset

Sunsets in the park can be spectacular—especially from the top of Watchman Peak and from roadside pullouts high on the Rim Drive (*see page 2*).

See the Milky Way

On moonless nights, the park offers some of the darkest skies in America. Look up to see meteors, satellites, planets, and the starry arms of our galaxy.

When is the Park Open?

The park is open year-round, 24 hours a day. No reservations are needed to enter. Some roads, however, are closed seasonally due to snow. The North Entrance and Rim Drive close for the season on November 1 (or earlier if there is significant snowfall). Highway 62 and the road to Park Headquarters are open year-round. Rim Village is also reachable year-round except during periods of heavy snowfall. In the spring, opening dates vary. The North Entrance and West Rim Drive open between mid-May and late June. The East Rim Drive typically opens between mid-June and late July.

Look Inside! →

- 2... Activities, Park Rules
- 3... Food & Other Services
- 4... Hiking Trails
- 5... Map, Viewpoints
- 6... Feature Articles
- 7... FAQs, Cleetwood Cove Trail
- 8... Climate Chart

Park Profile

Crater Lake National Park protects the deepest lake in the United States. Fed by rain and snow (but no rivers or streams), the lake is considered to be the cleanest large body of water in the world. The water is exceptional for its clarity and intense blue color.

The lake rests inside a caldera formed 7,700 years ago when a 12,000-foot-tall (3,700-meter) volcano collapsed following a major eruption. The eruption may have been the largest in North America in the past 630,000 years. Later eruptions formed Wizard Island, a cinder cone near the southwest shore.

Today, old-growth forests blanket the volcano's slopes, harboring more than 700 native plant species and at least 72 types of mammals. The park is central to the cultural traditions of local American Indian tribes, whose ancestors witnessed the lake's formation.

- Park established: 1902
- Size: 183,224 acres (74,148 hectares)
- Number of visitors last year: 632,000
- Lake depth: 1,943 feet (592 meters)
- Lake width: 4.5 to 6 miles (7 to 10 km)
- Highest point: Mount Scott, elevation 8,929 feet (2,721 meters)



Artist Paul Rockwood's conception of Mount Mazama, the volcano that collapsed to form Crater Lake. If you gathered up the ash from the mountain's big eruption and spread it evenly across the state of Oregon, it would form a layer 8 inches (20 cm) thick.



The Pumice Castle



Bicycling on the East Rim Drive



Junior Rangers



Summer Sunset



National Park Service
U.S. Dept. of the Interior

Crater Lake Visitor Guide
Summer/Fall 2026

This is the official newspaper of Crater Lake National Park. It is published twice a year and funded by the Crater Lake Natural History Association through sales made in the park's visitor centers.

Park Phone: 541-594-3000
Website: www.nps.gov/crla
Mail: PO Box 7, Crater Lake, OR 97604
Email: craterlake@nps.gov



National parks belong to everyone. We all share responsibility in protecting them. Please take a moment to become familiar with these important regulations. For a full list of the park's rules, visit go.nps.gov/regs.

Drones
Operating remote-controlled aircraft in the park is prohibited.

Guns
Firearms are allowed in the park in accordance with Oregon state laws. They are prohibited, however, in all park buildings.

Marijuana
Possession of marijuana is prohibited. Oregon state laws allowing the use of marijuana do not apply in the park, an area of federal jurisdiction.

Overnight Parking
The park is open 24 hours, but overnight parking is not allowed except for people who are backpacking (permit required) or staying in the park's campground or hotels.

Feeding Animals
Do not feed wildlife, including birds and squirrels. Exposing them to our food alters their behavior, is bad for their health, and can be dangerous for you. Store food properly. Generally, this means in your vehicle or in a campground food locker. Backcountry campers should hang their food or use a bearproof canister.



Help keep wildlife wild.
Please do not feed!

Hiking and Climbing
Stay on trails. This prevents erosion, protects vegetation, and protects other hikers. Hiking and climbing inside the caldera is prohibited. The walls consist of unstable rocks and loose soil. The trail that leads to the shore of Crater Lake is closed for construction (see page 7).

Park Features
Leave rocks, plants, animals, and artifacts undisturbed for others to enjoy. It is prohibited to collect, deface, disturb, or destroy natural or cultural features. Do not approach, touch, feed, or disturb wildlife.

Activities

Backpacking

More than 95% of the park is managed as wilderness. Although some trails and areas are closed to backcountry camping (for example, there is no camping in the summer with a view of the lake), exploring the park's old-growth forests and volcanic landscapes can be a rewarding experience. Generally, backpackers must travel at least 1 mile from their vehicle in order to camp.

Before setting out, all backpackers must obtain a permit, in person, from the Ranger Station at Park Headquarters. (The one exception is through-hikers on the Pacific Crest Trail, who may instead sign a trail register as they enter the park.) Backcountry permits are free of charge and are available 24 hours a day. They are not available online or over the phone.

Bicycling

Bicycles are allowed on paved roads and the dirt/sand Grayback Road. They are not allowed on trails or off-trail. Helmets are required for riders under 16 years of age and are strongly recommended for all cyclists. The park's paved roads are narrow with heavy automobile traffic. The most popular trip in the park is the 33-mile (53-km) Rim Drive, but making the full loop is not possible this summer due to road construction (see page 1). The road features spectacular views but also long climbs that gain a total of 3,800 feet (1,158 meters) of elevation. The park's annual "Ride the Rim" event will not be taking place this year. (Typically, on two Saturdays in September, the entire East Rim Drive is closed to automobiles for the benefit of bicyclists and pedestrians.)

Enjoying the Park with Your Pet

Pets are welcome in the park, but only in certain areas. Pets on a secure, hand-held leash are allowed on the Godfrey Glen Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, and Lady of the Woods Trail (see page 4). They are also allowed on the Grayback Road (see map on page 5). Leashes must not exceed 6 feet and only one pet per hiker is allowed. Pets are not permitted on other trails or off-trail. Pets on leash (or otherwise physically restrained) are also allowed in picnic areas, campgrounds, parking lots, on paved surfaces, and up to 50 feet (15 meters) away from paved surfaces. Popular places to walk a dog include Rim Village and Mazama Campground. Pets are not allowed inside buildings, including Crater Lake Lodge and the Mazama Cabins. The preceding rules do not apply to service animals here to assist people with disabilities. Solid waste must be picked up immediately and disposed of properly, in a trash can or toilet.



Best Friends at Rim Village

Sky Gazing

With clean air and unobstructed views, the rim of Crater Lake is a great place to observe astronomical events. Discovery Point is a favorite spot to watch the sunrise. For sunsets and moonrises, try Watchman Overlook, Cloudcap Overlook, or hike to the top of Watchman Peak.

Junior Ranger Activity Book

Are you between 6 and 12 years old—or a kid at heart? Pick up a free Junior Ranger activity book! They are available 24 hours a day from dispensers outside the park's visitor centers. To become a Junior Ranger and earn an official badge, complete at least 7 pages as you explore the park. Then show your book to a ranger at a visitor center (see hours on next page).



Wildlife Viewing

The park is home to a variety of animals, but they can be difficult to spot. Many are active primarily at night or shy away from humans. The most commonly seen animals are squirrels, chipmunks, marmots, ravens, jays, and deer. Lucky observers might spot a pika, marten (a type of weasel), fox, coyote, bald eagle, or small herd of elk. Bobcats, mountain lions, and wolves are present but are rarely seen. Approximately 50 black bears live in the park, but they also prefer to stay hidden. You might see one crossing a road. The only creatures that tend to pester people are mosquitoes (in June and July) and yellowjacket wasps (in August and September).

Three of the park's species are currently listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act: the gray wolf, northern spotted owl, and bull trout (found in several creeks south of the lake). If you spot any wildlife during your visit, please let us know (see page 8).

Accessibility

Except for the Sinnott Overlook, developed areas in the park are generally accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. The most accessible path for people using wheelchairs is the paved promenade at Rim Village. The Godfrey Glen, Sun Notch, Pinnacles, and Plaikni Falls trails are accessible to all-terrain wheelchair users with assistance (see page 4). Many pullouts on the Rim Drive have wheelchair-accessible wayside exhibits. We are working to improve our level of accessibility for all park visitors. We welcome your comments.



Black Bear Crossing the Pinnacles Road



Trolley Tours

Rim Drive is one of America's most scenic roads, but it's hard to appreciate the views with your eyes on the asphalt. Fortunately, you can leave the driving to someone else—while learning about the park at the same time!

Trolley tours depart hourly from Rim Village, 10 am–3 pm, from late June through September (weather permitting). They last 2 hours and are narrated by a concession guide. They travel clockwise to Skell Head and back (see map on page 5), stopping at a variety of scenic overlooks in both directions.

Tickets can be purchased from 9 am–3 pm daily by calling 541-882-1896 or aboard the trolley parked in the middle of Rim Village. They can also be reserved online at www.craterlaketrolley.net.

The trolleys are wheelchair accessible and seat about 20 passengers. They are owned and operated by park concessioner The Shuttle Inc. of Klamath Falls.



Ranger Programs

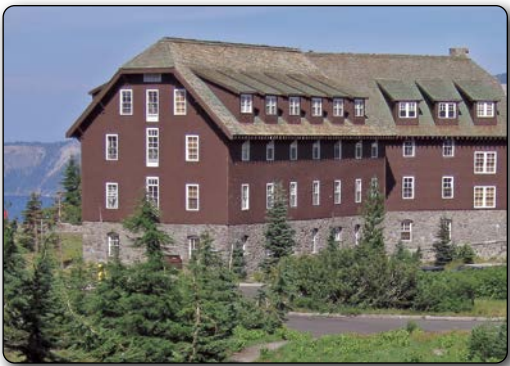
Ranger talks are presented most days in the summer at Rim Village. Guided hikes and other activities may be offered as well. Ask at a visitor center to find out what's on tap during your stay.



Wizard Island



Sinnott Overlook



Crater Lake Lodge

Services & Facilities

Emergencies

Dial 911 to report any emergency.

Phone & Internet

Cell reception in the park is spotty. You may have luck at overlooks on the Rim Drive. An emergency landline can be found outside the “snow tunnel” entrance to the Administration Building at Park Headquarters. WiFi is available at Park Headquarters and inside the concession-run facilities at Rim Village and Mazama Village.

Restrooms

Restrooms with flush toilets and running water are open at Rim Village and Mazama Campground 24 hours a day and at Park Headquarters when the Steel Visitor Center is open. Vault toilets are located near all three park entrances (West, South, and North) and at 5 other places around the park (*see map on page 5*).

Drinking Water

Water fountains can be found outside the Rim Visitor Center, Steel Visitor Center, and Mazama Village Store. You can buy bottled water at the Rim Village Café, Mazama Village Store, and Annie Creek Restaurant.

Food & Dining

The **Rim Village Café**, open year-round, offers grab-and-go sandwiches, salads, and snacks. **Crater Lake Lodge**, also in Rim Village, features gourmet cuisine in a casual atmosphere from mid-May to mid-October. Reservations are recommended for dinner but are not taken for breakfast or lunch. The **Annie Creek Restaurant** in Mazama Village also serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It is open from late spring to early fall. The **Mazama Village Store** sells groceries, snacks, ice cream, grab-and-go sandwiches, souvenirs, camping supplies, and firewood from late spring to early fall. For operating hours, visit www.explorecraterlake.com or inquire at one of the facilities above.

Gasoline & EV Charging

Self-serve, unleaded gasoline is available at the **Mazama Village Store** during business hours from mid-May to mid-October. For electric vehicles, a Level 2 charging station is located in front of the **Annie Creek Gift Shop** in Mazama Village. It has one standard connector and one Tesla connector.



Mazama Campground

Visitor Centers

At the park’s two visitor centers, rangers can help plan your trip. The **Steel Visitor Center** at Park Headquarters is open daily 9 am–5 pm. A 22-minute film is shown every half hour. It explores the park’s significance and the lake’s violent, volcanic past. The **Rim Visitor Center** at Rim Village is open 9:30 am–5 pm daily from late May to late September. The park’s souvenir passport stamp is available at each location. You can purchase postage stamps and send letters at the Steel Visitor Center.

Exhibits

Perched on a rock ledge behind the Rim Visitor Center, the **Sinnott Overlook** has geology exhibits, a relief model, and a spectacular lake view. It’s open daily 9:30 am–5 pm from early June through September and 10 am–4 pm in October (weather permitting). The overlook is located down a steep, historic walkway with stairs and, unfortunately, is not accessible to people with limited mobility. At **Crater Lake Lodge**, exhibits on tourism and the history of the Lodge can be found on the ground floor, west of the lobby.

Gifts & Books

The nonprofit Crater Lake Natural History Association sells books, maps, postcards, and souvenirs inside the park’s two visitor centers (*see hours above*). Park concessioner Explor Crater Lake also offers a range of merchandise at the **Rim Village Gift Shop**, the **Annie Creek Gift Shop** in Mazama Village, and the **Mazama Village Store**. For operating hours, visit www.explorecraterlake.com or ask at one of the park’s concession-run facilities.

Lodging

The park has two options, both operated by park concessioner Explor Crater Lake. **Crater Lake Lodge**, which first opened in 1915, overlooks the lake at Rim Village. It has 71 rooms and is open mid-May to mid-October. The **Cabins at Mazama Village** have 40 units and are open mid-May to early October. For both facilities, advance reservations are highly recommended: visit www.explorecraterlake.com or call 866-292-6720. For a list of options outside the park, visit go.nps.gov/sleep.

Campgrounds

Mazama Campground has a total of 214 sites for tents and RVs. It is open from late spring to early fall. Early in the season, before the campground fully opens, sites may be available a first-come, first-served basis only. Most of the summer, 75% of sites are reservable in advance at www.recreation.gov, while the other 25% are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Mazama Village Store. Senior Pass and Access Pass holders are entitled to a 50% discount on campsites. The campground has drinking water, flush toilets, showers, and a dump station. Each site has a picnic table and bear-resistant food locker. Food must be stored in a locker or in your vehicle. Each site also has a fire ring, but wood and charcoal fires are prohibited during times of high fire danger when a fire ban is in effect.

The park’s other campground, **Lost Creek Campground**, is closed this year. For a list of campgrounds outside the park, visit go.nps.gov/sleep.

Download the NPS App!

Navigate the park with your phone using the free NPS app!

- See where you are in the park
- Find trailheads and park features
- Get trail descriptions
- No cell service required once installed
- Works in every national park
- Scan this QR code to download—



Welcome!

Welcome to Crater Lake National Park! I hope you find this remarkable place as inspiring as countless visitors do each year, and as I do every day. There truly is no other destination like it, and after your visit, you’ll be able to confirm to anyone who asks that yes, it really is that blue!

Our dedicated park staff are here to help make your visit informative, enjoyable, and memorable. If you have any questions or need assistance, don’t hesitate to ask. As you explore, our concession partners offer a range of services and amenities to meet your needs.

Please take note of the updates in this newspaper about ongoing projects that may lead to temporary closures of certain areas or activities. We apologize for any inconvenience they may cause, but these



improvements will enhance the park’s infrastructure and provide even better experiences for future visitors. To help ensure a safe and pleasant stay for everyone, please follow park rules and regulations (*see page 2*). This not only protects you and fellow guests, but also preserves the park for those who will visit after you.

Enjoy your national park, and Happy 250th Birthday to the USA!

Searching for Signs of the Next Eruption

Twenty years ago, many visitors to the park arrived in a state of concern. The US Geological Survey (USGS) had just named Crater Lake one of the most dangerous volcanoes in America. For some, concern turned to worry when they learned that the park was not equipped to monitor volcanic activity. “Is it safe to spend the night at Crater Lake Lodge?” they asked.

The USGS is tasked with warning the American public about volcanic hazards. In a 2005 report, it ranked the country’s 161 potentially active volcanoes according to the threat they pose to human life and property. Crater Lake was one of 18 volcanoes placed in the most dangerous—“Very High Threat”—category. Its ranking was not the result of any new rumblings, but because of the magnitude of its past eruptions, their relative recency, and the park’s proximity to population centers.

Geologists estimate that there’s roughly a 1-in-10,000 chance of an eruption occurring in Crater Lake National Park in any given year. The odds may be slim, but they are not insignificant. You are approximately 120 times more likely to witness a volcanic eruption in the park than you are to be struck by lightning here. So, is there anything we can do to protect ourselves, or to predict when and where the next eruption will occur?

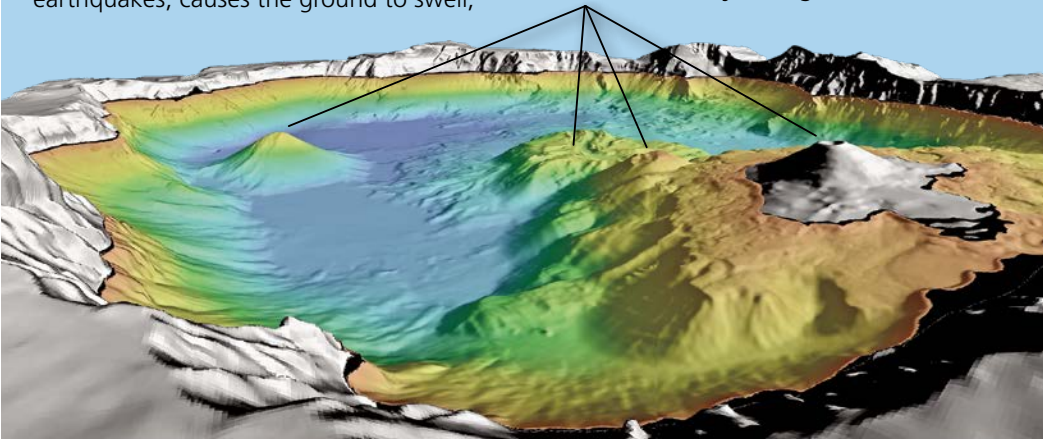
Thankfully, volcanoes typically give off signals days to weeks in advance of an eruption. As magma approaches the surface, it triggers swarms of small earthquakes, causes the ground to swell,

and leads to an increase in volcanic gas emissions. Detecting these signals, however, requires that sensitive instruments be in place on the ground nearby. For that reason, a team of USGS geophysicists traveled to Crater Lake in the summer of 2009 and installed, for the first time, an array of seismometers in the park. They also installed four GPS (global positioning system) units, which can detect even just a few millimeters of ground deformation.

The eruption that formed Crater Lake 7,700 years ago was powerful and devastating. Not only did it cause the collapse of a towering peak, it annihilated all life within a 20-mile (32-km) radius and suffocated much of the Pacific Northwest under a thick layer of ash. So, as a park visitor in 2026, should you be concerned for your safety? Fortunately, another big eruption is unlikely to occur here for thousands of years. The magma reservoir beneath Crater Lake has not had sufficient time to recharge itself. Small eruptions, however, are possible, as evidenced by the lava dome that grew to within 95 feet (29 meters) of the lake’s surface 4,800 years ago near Wizard Island.

Since that event, though, all indications are that the park’s volcanoes have been in a deep sleep. While tremors—too small to feel—occur regularly, the park’s GPS units have not detected ground swelling or the upwelling of large volumes of magma. Hopefully, you’ll be able to sleep deeply tonight at Crater Lake Lodge—or wherever you are staying—knowing that scientists now have instruments in place to give us early warning of the next eruption.

The present tranquility of Crater Lake belies its violent past—and its likely violent future. A map of the lake floor reveals four volcanoes, including Wizard Island, that have erupted inside the caldera since the collapse of Mount Mazama 7,700 years ago.

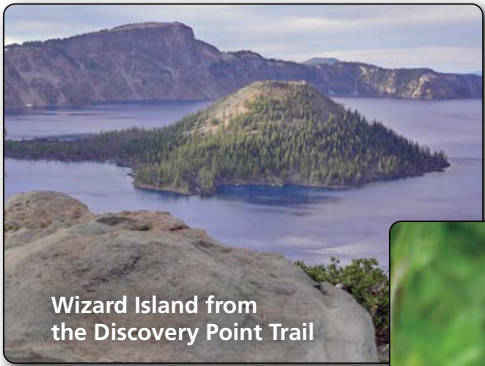




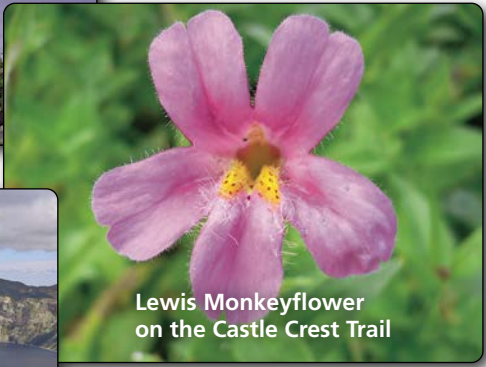
Let's Go for a Hike!

We have 90 miles (145 km) of trails here at Crater Lake. Our most popular day hikes are listed here. If you are visiting in June, be aware that some trails might still be closed by snow. Please help us protect this special place by following a few important rules:

- No hiking or climbing inside the caldera! The walls are dangerously steep and unstable. The Cleetwood Cove Trail (the only legal access to the lake shore) is closed (*see page 7*).
- Leave all rocks, plants, animals, and artifacts undisturbed for the enjoyment of future hikers.
- Pets are allowed on the Godfrey Glen Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, Lady of the Woods Trail, and Grayback Road. Pets must be leashed; only one pet per hiker is allowed (*see page 2*).
- Overnight backpacking requires a permit, available at the Ranger Station at Park Head-Headquarters. Some areas are not open to backcountry camping (*see page 2*).
- To protect vegetation and prevent erosion, please stay on the trails.



Wizard Island from the Discovery Point Trail



Lewis Monkeyflower on the Castle Crest Trail



Hiker atop Garfield Peak

Castle Crest	Lady of the Woods	Sun Notch	Trail	The Pinnacles	Godfrey Glen	Plaikni Falls
0.5 miles (0.8 km) loop trail	0.7 miles (1.1 km) loop trail	0.8 miles (1.3 km) loop trail	Roundtrip	0.8 miles (1.3 km)	1.1 miles (1.8 km) loop trail	2.0 miles (3.2 km)
100 feet (30 meters)	120 feet (37 meters)	150 feet (46 meters)	Elevation Gain	10 feet (3 meters)	50 feet (15 meters)	100 feet (30 meters)
20 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	Time	30 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour
Flowers, Meadow, Creek	Historic Architecture	Views of Phantom Ship	Highlight	Volcanic Spires	Peaceful Forest	Waterfall, Flowers
Loop trail through a lush meadow. Abundant wildflowers from mid-June to early August. The trail is rocky and slippery in places. Self-guiding brochures are available at the trailhead.	Loop trail around Park Headquarters. Self-guiding brochures, available at the trailhead, describe how early park architects integrated their designs with the natural landscape.	Short uphill walk through a meadow to the rim of Crater Lake. Great views of the Phantom Ship. CLOSED this summer due to road construction but may reopen in the fall (<i>see page 1</i>).	Description	Easy walk along the rim of Pinnacle Valley to the park boundary. Great views of volcanic spires. Use caution near cliffs. Accessible to all-terrain wheelchair users with assistance.	Easy stroll through an old-growth forest, with some canyon views. Accessible to all-terrain wheelchair users with assistance. Self-guiding brochures are available at the trailhead.	Easy walk through an old-growth forest to a waterfall. Many mid-summer flowers. The first $\frac{3}{4}$ is accessible to all-terrain wheelchair users with assistance, but the final $\frac{1}{4}$ might be too steep.
Due to road closure (<i>see page 1</i>), reach trailhead by taking 0.4-mile (0.6-km) spur trail from Park Headquarters.	Behind the Steel Visitor Center, on the south side of the building.	East Rim Drive, 4.4 miles (7.1 km) east of Park Headquarters.	Trailhead Location	End of the Pinnacles Road, 6 miles (9.7 km) southeast of Phantom Ship Overlook.	2.4 miles (3.9 km) south of Park Headquarters.	Pinnacles Road, 1.2 miles (1.9 km) southeast of Phantom Ship Overlook.
The flowers here are nourished by springs emerging from the hillside.	The trail's name refers to a sculpture of a woman carved into a boulder along the trail.	This U-shaped valley was carved by glaciers that once flowed down Mt. Mazama.	Nature Note	The Pinnacles are chimneys formed when hot ash cooled after the big eruption.	Trail is named after William Godfrey, a ranger who died in a blizzard here in 1930.	Snowmelt, not Crater Lake, is the source of Plaikni Falls' water.
Easy				Easy		



Trail	Discovery Point	Watchman Peak	Annie Creek
Roundtrip	2.0 miles (3.2 km)	1.6 miles (2.6 km)	1.7 miles (2.7 km) loop trail
Elevation Gain	100 feet (30 meters)	420 feet (128 meters)	200 feet (61 meters)
Time	1 hour	1 hour	1½ hours
Highlight	Lake Views	Panoramic Views	Creek, Canyon, Flowers
Description	The first mile of a 6-mile (9.7-km) trail along the West Rim of Crater Lake, through a pretty, old-growth forest. Great views of the lake and Wizard Island. Use caution near cliff edges.	Moderate ascent to a fire lookout above Wizard Island. Spectacular views in all directions. Great place to watch the sunset. Trail may be closed until July due to snow.	Moderately strenuous hike through a deep, stream-cut canyon. Lots of water, wildflowers, and sometimes wildlife. Self-guiding brochures are available at the trailhead.
Trailhead Location	West end of Rim Village, where the paved walk becomes a dirt path. Can also start from Discovery Point.	Watchman Overlook, 3.8 miles (6.1 km) northwest of Rim Village on the West Rim Drive.	Mazama Campground, behind the amphitheater (between loops D and E). Limited parking in Loop E.
Nature Note	Gold prospector John Wesley Hillman first spotted Crater Lake near this point in 1853.	Built in 1932, the peak's historic fire lookout is no longer staffed today.	The canyon is carved into a layer of ash—200 feet (60 m) thick—from the big eruption.
	Moderate		

Boundary Springs	Garfield Peak	Mount Scott	Trail	Crater Peak	Union Peak	Pacific Crest
5.0 miles (8.0 km)	3.6 miles (5.8 km)	4.4 miles (7.1 km)	Roundtrip	6.5 miles (10.5 km)	9.8 miles (15.8 km)	2,650 mi (4,265 km) 1-way
400 feet (122 meters)	1,010 feet (308 meters)	1,250 feet (381 meters)	Elevation Gain	765 feet (233 meters)	1,600 feet (448 meters)	489,000 feet (149,000 m)
3 hours	2 to 3 hours	3 hours	Time	3½ hours	5 to 6 hours	5 months
Springs, Stream, Flowers	Panoramic Views	Panoramic Views	Highlight	Forest, Views, Solitude	Panoramic Views	Adventure, Achievement
Moderate hike to the headwaters of the Rogue River. Can feel strenuous due to lack of shade. Trail starts outside the park's NW corner and is shown on the map in the official park brochure.	Rocky climb to a high peak. Spectacular views along the way and at the top. Diverse plant life, many wildflowers. May be closed until late June due to snow. Use caution near cliff edges.	Gradual ascent of the park's tallest peak. Great views in all directions. Best in the morning, when the light is ideal for lake viewing. May be closed until late June due to snow.	Description	Moderate-to-strenuous hike to the summit of a small volcano. No lake views, but fine views of the Klamath Basin to the southeast. A peaceful walk through forests and meadows.	Long forest walk followed by a very steep climb. Great views from the top and interesting geology, but no view of Crater Lake. Top section may be impassable until late June due to snow.	In a typical year, several thousand PCT hikers pass through the park on their way from Mexico to Canada (or vice-versa). To walk in their footsteps, visit one of the park's two trailheads.
Pullout on Highway 230 near milepost 19, 5 miles (8 km) west of the junction with Highway 138.	East end of Rim Village. Follow the paved promenade behind Crater Lake Lodge.	East Rim Drive, 14 miles (22.5 km) east of Park Headquarters.	Trailhead Location	Vidae Falls Picnic Area. Not easily reachable this summer due to road construction (<i>see page 1</i>).	Highway 62 at the Pacific Crest Trailhead, 1 mile (1.6 km) west of the Crater Lake road junction.	The Pacific Crest Trail makes two road crossings in the park. Each has a parking lot. See the map to the right.
The trail passes through a forest blackened by wildfires in 2015 and 2024.	Rocky slopes along the trail are home to American pikas and yellow-bellied marmots.	Mount Scott is the park's tallest peak—8,929 feet (2,721 meters) in elevation.	Nature Note	Upper Klamath Lake is the largest in Oregon, but its average depth is only 14 feet.	Union Peak is the core of an old volcano eroded by ice-age glaciers.	To see Crater Lake, most PCT hikers leave the official trail and walk along the West Rim.
Strenuous				Strenuous		



Highlights of the Rim Drive

Rim Drive is a 33-mile (53-km) road that circles Crater Lake. It is one of America’s most scenic byways, with spectacular views in all directions. The full loop is typically open from mid-July to late October. This summer, however, a section of road will be closed for construction (*see page 1 and the map above*). When fully open, the road can be driven, without stopping, in about an hour, but most people take at least 2 to 3 hours to enjoy the varied sights. The road is narrow, so buses and RVs should use caution, and all motorists should watch for bicyclists, pedestrians, and wildlife. There are more than 30 scenic pullouts along the route, many of which have roadside exhibits. Be sure to visit these 7 “top stops.”

Discovery Point
Imagine seeing Crater Lake by accident. Near this spot, on the back of a mule in 1853, gold prospector John Hillman became the first European-American to stumble across what he called “Deep Blue Lake.”

Watchman Overlook
This pullout offers an unmatched view of Wizard Island, a cinder cone that erupted out of Crater Lake approximately 7,300 years ago. To find it, drive 3.8 miles (6.1 km) west of Rim Village and look for a viewpoint lined with wooden fences.

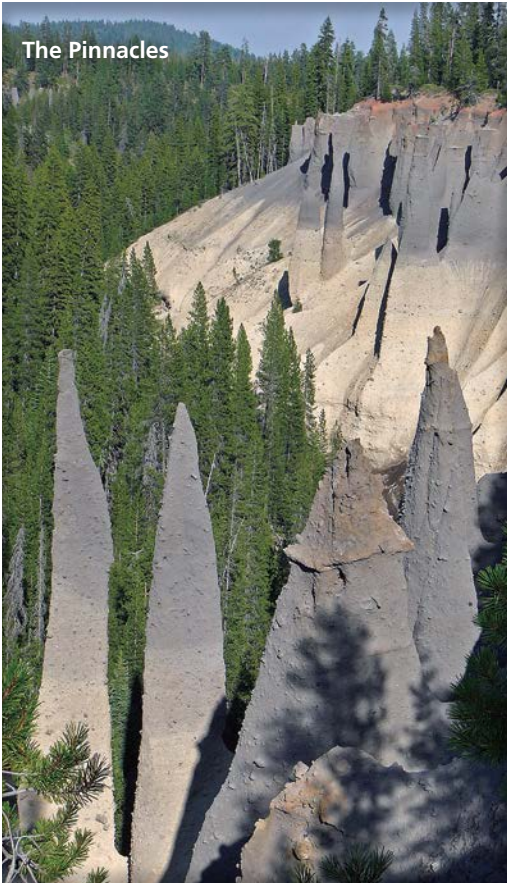
Cloudcap Overlook
This overlook sits at the end of a 1-mile (1.6-km) spur road, the highest paved road in Oregon. Whitebark pines cling for survival here, dwarfed and contorted by the harsh winds.

Pumice Castle Overlook
Stop here to see one of the park’s most colorful features: a layer of orange pumice rock that has been eroded into the shape of a medieval castle. Watch carefully for this unmarked viewpoint, located 1.1 miles (1.8 km) west of the Cloudcap Overlook road junction and 2.4 miles (3.9 km) east of the Phantom Ship Overlook.

Phantom Ship Overlook
Nestled against the shore, Crater Lake’s “other island” escapes detection by many park visitors. Though it resembles a small sailboat, the Phantom Ship is as tall as a 16-story building. It’s made of 400,000-year-old lava—the oldest exposed rock within the caldera.

Pinnacles Overlook
This viewpoint is well worth the 6-mile (10-km) detour from Rim Drive. Colorful spires, 100 feet (30 meters) tall, are being eroded from the canyon wall. The Pinnacles are “fossil fumaroles,” formed during the cooling of an ash deposit from the eruption that birthed Crater Lake.

Vidae Falls
This spring-fed, roadside waterfall tumbles over a glacier-carved cliff and drops 100 feet (30 meters) down a rocky slope. Unfortunately, it will not be reachable this summer due to road construction (*see page 1*).



How Did Crater Lake Get Its Name?

“Crater Lake” might seem like an obvious moniker, but it was hardly the first name to be applied to this park’s largest body of water. In fact, over the years, it has proven to be somewhat controversial. Does it accurately reflect the lake’s true origins? And to which crater does the name actually refer? This year marks the 157th anniversary of the expedition that bestowed the title. Let’s recount the events that led to the christening and attempt to shed light on these longstanding questions.

The first party of European Americans to stumble across the lake, in 1853, dubbed it “Deep Blue Lake.” The second, in 1862, simply called it “Blue Lake.” Over the next few years, it would be hailed by other visiting groups as “Great Sunken Lake,” “Hole-in-the-Ground,” and “Lake Majesty.” The Klamath Tribes, whose ancestors witnessed the lake’s formation, know it as “Giwasi.” (Unfortunately, the meaning of that word has been lost to time.)

James McCall Sutton was a resident of Jacksonville, Oregon, a gold-rush town 60 miles (97 km) southwest of the lake. Sutton had met some of the lake’s early visitors, and had read stories about it in *The Oregon Sentinel*, the

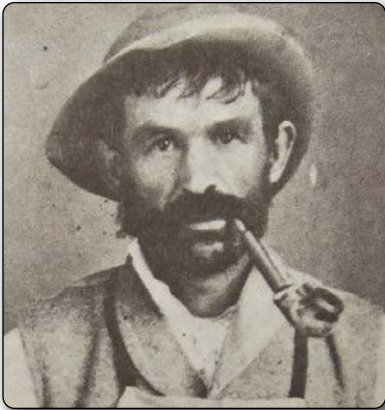
local newspaper at which he was a writer and editor. Determined to see the ballyhooed wonder for himself, he organized a midsummer excursion in 1869 for a group of five men, five women, and six children.

The excursion was, more accurately, an expedition. The party traveled slowly in three horse-drawn wagons on a primitive road blazed four years earlier by the US Army (a route now followed by Highway 62). They endured lightning storms, yellowjacket swarms, wildfire smoke, creek crossings, and a rough and rocky road punctuated with tree stumps. They reached the lake on August 3rd, after an eight-day journey, maneuvering their wagons off-road to climb the last three miles to the rim.

“To say that this wonderful lake is grand, beyond description, is to give no idea of its magnificence,” Sutton reported, in an article he penned later that month for *The Oregon Sentinel*. “Everyone gazes at it for the first time in almost tearful astonishment.” The silence of his party, however, was soon broken by exclamations of maternal concern: “Look out for the children! Stand back Cora! Look out for Zetta! Come back Jimmy! Come back Peter!”

None of the kids went over the brink, but before long, the men did, intentionally. In their wagons, they’d brought along a supply of wooden planks, nails, and tar. Wrote Sutton: “Each man now shouldered up a portion of our boat material, and after a few timid glances down the fearful incline, started boldly over the loose, crumbling bank, starting beavies of loose boulders at every step, at the eminent danger of any one who dared venture ahead of the party.” They spent the afternoon assembling their rowboat at the shore.

The next day, they launched the vessel into a stiff headwind and rowed for an hour to reach the lake’s conical island, two miles distant. “This island is but a loose pile of cinders,” lamented Sutton, though they succeeded in scrambling to its summit. There, they discovered a “basin-like crater,” 90 feet (27 meters) deep, with a snowbank at the bottom, and they proclaimed themselves the first humans ever to set foot on the isle. They scrawled their names on a scrap of paper, which they placed in a glass bottle and left inside the crater.



Historians credit James Sutton (1830-1878) with giving Crater Lake its present name. His 1869 article in *The Oregon Sentinel* marked the first time the name was seen in print. Born in Illinois, Sutton traveled to Oregon at the age of 20 in search of gold. Later he ran a drugstore, served as a postmaster, and worked as a writer and newspaper editor.

Sutton had hoped to circumnavigate the lake and measure its depth at different points, but “owing to the frail nature of our boat, and strong wind,” the party chose to forgo that objective. Still, they did take one sounding, half a mile from the island, and determined the water to be 550 feet (168 m) deep. “Could we have reached the deepest part, no doubt we would have found it 1,500 or 2,000 feet deep.” Sutton’s prediction would be confirmed in 1886 when the lake was plumbed by scientists from the US Geological Survey.

The adventurers returned to Jacksonville in mid-August. When Sutton’s two-part story about (*continued on page 8*)



James Sutton’s party may have been the first to launch a boat on Crater Lake, cross to Wizard Island, and reach the island’s summit. There, they discovered a crater 90 feet (27 meters) deep and 470 feet (143 m) across. The island is a cinder-cone volcano that emerged from the lake around 7,300 years ago.

OREGON’S GREAT CURIOSITY

Several of our citizens returned last week from a visit to the Great Sunken Lake. It is thought to average 2,000 feet down to the water all round. The walls are almost perpendicular, running down into the water and leaving no beach. No living man ever has, and probably never will, be able to reach the water’s edge. It lies silent, still, and mysterious in the bosom of the hills, like a huge well scraped out by the hands of the giant genii of the mountains. The lake is certainly a most remarkable curiosity.

In the 1860s, newspapers began trumpeting the existence of a mysterious lake at the crest of the Cascade Mountains. Vivid language was their only tool; the lake wouldn’t be photographed until 1874. This passage comes from an 1865 story in *The Oregon Sentinel*.



Trees are few and far between in the Pumice Desert RNA, but lodgepole pines are slowly encroaching. Given more time—perhaps a few thousand years—the forest will likely recover.



The round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) lures insects with sugary drops of sticky fluid. It is one of 5 carnivorous plants found in the Sphagnum Bog RNA.



The Sphagnum Bog RNA is a botanist’s delight, with more than 170 plant species. But watch your step, or you’ll sink waist-deep into the mire.



Llao Rock is a vertical cliff capped by pumice from the caldera-forming eruption. To protect the fragile plants that grow here, summer hiking in the Llao Rock RNA is prohibited.

Meet the Park’s Research Natural Areas

While Crater Lake may be the scenic and scientific centerpiece of the park that bears its name, it’s not the only feature of national importance to be found here. The park is also home to four Research Natural Areas (RNAs). RNAs are federal lands that have been singled out because they represent prime examples of particular habitats. In Oregon, there are more than 160 such sites, on lands managed by the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Defense. Each one safeguards a different type of environment in a relatively undisturbed state.

RNAs are selected administratively, rather than established legislatively. Ours were designated in 1994 by the park’s superintendent. They are managed to preserve natural features and processes, protect genetic diversity (including rare species), and promote non-manipulative scientific research (i.e. research that

observes, but does not alter, existing conditions). Roads, trails, and camping are not allowed. At a few sites, public entry is excluded altogether, where recreational pursuits could have negative impacts. Otherwise, off-trail exploration is permitted—and can be of great interest to someone with a background in botany or ecology.

The park’s largest RNA can actually be seen from the road—no hiking required! The Pumice Desert RNA abuts the North Entrance Road and covers 2,950 acres (1,190 hectares). It’s an outstanding example of a subalpine pumice field, a treeless plain that has yet to recover from the eruption of Mount Mazama 7,700 years ago. The collapse of the mountain filled this valley with a fiery flow of ash and pumice that’s estimated to be 200 feet (60 meters) thick. Today, researchers come here to study plant succession and adaptation. Only 15 plant species are managing to

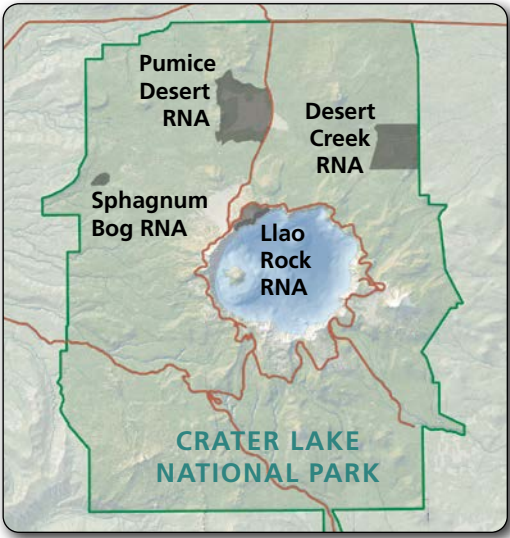
tolerate the Pumice Desert’s infertile soil, short growing season, temperature extremes, and voracious pocket gophers.

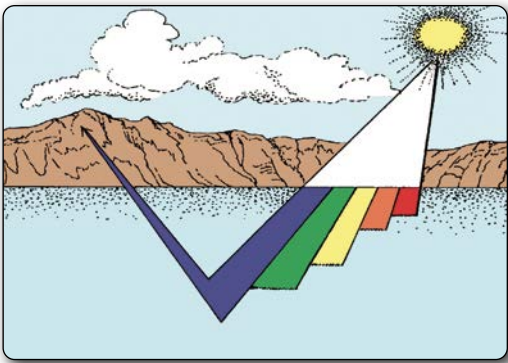
A greater variety of plants can be found 5 miles (8 km) to the west, in the much smaller Sphagnum Bog RNA. At least 170 species have been identified in this 160-acre (65-hectare) wetland, including carnivorous sundews and bladderworts. The bog, fed by springs, is a complex mosaic of habitats: 8 distinct plant communities, 2 forest types, and 3 aquatic environments are represented. It’s also an easy place to get lost—and a guaranteed place to get your feet soaked—so prospective visitors should be cautious. Atop its foundation of Mazama pumice, a layer of spongy peat, 3 to 6 feet (1-2 meters) deep, has developed over the past 3,000 to 4,000 years.

Setting foot in the Llao Rock RNA won’t get you wet, but it will get you fined: this 435-acre (175-hectare) RNA has been off-limits to summer hiking since 2013 to protect several rare and sensitive plant species. Llao Rock is a prominent peak that towers almost 1,900 feet (580 meters) above the northwest shore of the lake. It’s capped by a layer (*continued on page 8*)



Pumice moonworts are 2-inch-tall ferns that live on Llao Rock. They are also known as “grapeferns”—their reproductive spores are held in capsules that resemble green grapes.





Ask the Ranger

How deep is Crater Lake?

Crater Lake is 1,943 feet (592 meters) deep. It's the deepest lake in the USA—300 feet (91 m) deeper than Lake Tahoe, which ranks second. It's also the deepest lake in the world formed by volcanic activity.

Where does the water come from?

About 83% of the water comes from rain and snow falling directly on the surface. The rest is runoff from precipitation landing on the slopes above the lake.

Does the water level vary?

The level of Crater Lake fluctuates just a few feet each year. Winter storms make it rise a little; dry summers cause it to fall. The lake experiences about twice as much precipitation as evaporation, but the surface remains far below the rim because water continuously seeps out through a porous layer of rock along the north shore. Crater Lake is just like your bathtub—halfway up the side, there's a drain! Water leaks from the lake at a rate of 2 million

gallons (7.6 million liters) every hour. It goes deep underground and is not believed to feed any nearby rivers or springs.

Does Crater Lake freeze?

Ice rarely forms on the lake, except during the coldest of winters. The lake contains a tremendous amount of water—5 trillion gallons (19 trillion liters)—but it has a relatively small surface area of 21 square miles (54 km²). The lake has not frozen over completely since 1949.

How clean & clear is the lake?

Since there are no inlets carrying sediment or pollution into Crater Lake, its water is very clean: cleaner than the water that comes out of your faucet at home! When an 8-inch-wide (20-cm) instrument called a Secchi disk is lowered into the lake, the average depth at which it disappears is 103 feet (31 meters). Some days, readings exceed 130 feet (40 m).

Why is the water so blue?

The lake appears blue because it is very clean and very deep. When sunlight enters the lake, most of the light waves (the red, orange, yellow, and green ones) are absorbed by the lake and converted into heat. The blue light waves are not absorbed; they are scattered by the water molecules in all directions. Some are scattered out of the lake and into our eyes. If the water in

Crater Lake was dirtier (or shallower), light waves of other colors would be returned to our eyes, too. They would be scattered by particles (or reflected off the bottom) before being absorbed.

How did Crater Lake form?

Crater Lake occupies the shell of Mount Mazama, a collapsed volcano. The volcano once stood 12,000 feet (3,700 m) tall, but its summit imploded after a major eruption 7,700 years ago. The eruption was 100 times the magnitude of the 1980 blast at Mount St. Helens. In just a few days, vast quantities of ash and pumice—approximately 24 cubic miles (100 km³)—were ejected from the magma chamber, which, as a result, could no longer support the weight of the mountain above it. Ash from the eruption traveled all the way around the world; a layer has been found in ice cores in Greenland.

How do we know the eruption happened 7,700 years ago?

The eruption produced pyroclastic flows of ash and pumice that flattened the forests growing on the mountain's slopes. The age of the eruption has been determined by carbon-dating tree remains buried in the ash deposits.

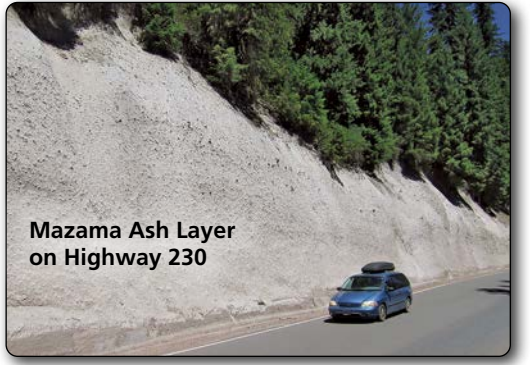
Does anything live in the lake?

Crater Lake is home to a variety of insects, worms, snails, crustaceans, and amphibians, including a type of salamander found nowhere else in the world—the Mazama

newt, a subspecies of the rough-skinned newt. Most of the lake's biomass, however, is plant-based: aquatic moss thrives on the lake floor at depths of 80 to 460 feet (24 to 140 meters). Nowhere else in the world does moss grow so deep underwater, a testament to Crater Lake's clarity and transparency to sunlight.

Are there fish in the lake?

Crater Lake had no fish until it was stocked for fishing between 1888 and 1941. Six species were introduced, but only two have survived: rainbow trout and kokanee salmon. In 1915, crayfish were also added to the lake (as trout food). Recently, their population has exploded: crayfish now dominate 95% of the shoreline, and they have been found living at depths of up to 800 feet (244 m). Like miniature vacuum cleaners, they eat everything in their path, reducing the abundance and diversity of native organisms. Sadly, crayfish are pushing the lake's native newts toward extinction.



Cleetwood Cove Trail is Closed for Improvements

3-Year Project to Include Pier & New Dock

Work is now underway on a project that will bring critical improvements to the park's most heavily used hiking trail. The Cleetwood Cove Trail provides the only legal access to the shore of Crater Lake. On a typical summer day, more than 700 people descend its steep switchbacks in order to swim, fish, relax by the water, or take a boat tour. Unfortunately, the trail is badly in need of repair. Most of its 57 retaining walls, for example, are in poor condition, are failing to do their job, and do not conform to modern design and construction standards. To provide safer access to the lake shore for future park visitors, the Cleetwood Cove Trail will be closed in 2026, 2027, and 2028 while a contractor undertakes its reconstruction.

Year 1 of the project—which, because of the park's snowy climate, will be limited to just 4 months—will focus on stabilizing slopes along the trail and reducing rockfall

hazards. The trail traverses two cliffs and a crumbling hillside that is inclined at a steep angle (30 to 50 degrees) toward the lake. The hillside consists of fractured lava flows, unstable glacial deposits, loose pumice, and volcanic ash. A variety of techniques will be used to stabilize and reinforce the layers along the trail that are most susceptible to erosion and rockfall. To catch rocks that do fall, wire mesh and fencing will be installed above the trail at high-risk locations.

In Year 2, attention will shift toward improving the infrastructure and visitor experience down at the lake shore. The existing bulkhead, destroyed a decade ago by winter waves, will be replaced with a floating dock system that is better equipped to handle adverse conditions. Nearby, a 60-foot-long (18-meter) elevated pier will extend out over the water, giving visitors an opportunity to gaze down into the lake without needing to negotiate the rocky

shoreline. Additionally, new restrooms will replace the outdated and undersized composting toilets at trail's end.

Also in Year 2—and continuing through Year 3—work will take place to repair, rebuild, and/or replace most of the trail's 57 retaining walls. Some of the walls support the trail from below, others protect it from above, and some, on the corners of switchbacks, serve a dual purpose. Ranging in length from 15 to 600 feet (5 to 183 m), they vary in construction from dry-stacked stone to mortared stone to wooden crib (as in the photo to the right). Most are over 50 years old and have been undermined by erosion, damaged by falling rocks, and weakened by tree roots. Finally, Year 3 will also see the installation of a new trail surface, made of 6-inch-thick (15-cm) compacted aggregate. The trail will be more durable, and much less dusty, than before.

While the route of the trail will remain unchanged—it will still be a strenuous hike—the experience of visiting the shore of Crater Lake will soon be a safer, more enjoyable one for the 60,000 to 70,000 people who venture to Cleetwood Cove in a typical year. In the meantime, we appreciate your patience and understanding as we undertake these important enhancements.



What is the Cleetwood Cove Trail?

The Cleetwood Cove Trail is the only legal means of reaching the shore of Crater Lake. It is currently closed for construction, as described in the article to the left. The trail is steep and strenuous: in 1.1 miles (1.7 km) it drops 650 feet (250 meters) in elevation. Walking back up is equivalent to climbing 60 flights of stairs! The trail consists of 9 switchbacks and has an average grade of 12.3%. It was built between 1958 and 1962 to replace an even steeper trail that once existed below Rim Village. The trail is typically open from mid-June to late October, depending on snow conditions.



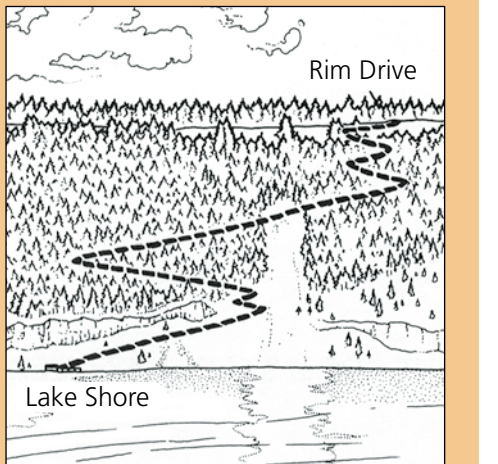
Boat tours have operated on Crater Lake for more than 100 years. They typically run from late June to mid-September. Tours will resume in 2029 when the trail reopens.



At the bottom of the Cleetwood Cove Trail is a short stretch of rocky shoreline. Swimming and fishing will continue to be allowed in Crater Lake when the trail reopens.



A falling rock can cross the Cleetwood Cove Trail up to 5 times as it tumbles downslope. Wire mesh and fencing will be installed to capture and redirect rocks away from hikers.





Park visitor Kari Bertram spotted this red fox in Mazama Village. Red foxes are not always red—most at Crater Lake are silver to black.



Support Your Park—

Volunteer Your Time

Looking for a hands-on way to help the park? Consider sharing your time and talents as a Crater Lake VIP (Volunteer-In-Parks). Full-time volunteers are needed to help staff visitor centers, present interpretive programs, and perform PSAR (preventive search and rescue). Opportunities are advertised several times each year at www.volunteer.gov. Volunteers are provided free housing in exchange for 3 months of service. To volunteer periodically, join The Friends of Crater Lake, a nonprofit whose members help with special events, greet visitors at viewpoints, and operate a winter information desk at Rim Village. Learn more at www.friendsofcraterlake.org.

Report Your Wildlife Sightings

If you spot any interesting animals during your visit or witness unusual behavior, please let us know! Your observations will help us learn which animals live in the park and how they use it. Species reported recently include the sooty grouse, western skink, northern saw-whet owl, police-car moth, short-tailed weasel, black-tailed bumble bee, elk, bobcat, and mountain lion. To share your sighting, email craterlake@nps.gov. Let us know the date and location of your encounter, a detailed description of what you saw, and your name and contact info, in case we have follow-up questions. And if you captured any photos, send them along—ideally with permission for us to use them in reports and publications. Photographic evidence can be very important in confirming the identity of some species. Just remember that approaching, feeding, or disturbing wildlife is prohibited—so please keep your distance. Thanks for your help!

Buy Crater Lake License Plates

If you live in Oregon, consider choosing Crater Lake license plates for your vehicle. For a one-time charge of \$30, you can outfit your car with these beautiful plates while supporting park projects. You can purchase them at any time, not just when buying a new vehicle or renewing your registration. Visit any DMV office or www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv for details. Proceeds go into an endowment that funds the operation of the park’s Science and Learning Center, a facility that provides living and working space for visiting scientists, teachers, and artists. For more information, visit go.nps.gov/slc.

Contribute to the Crater Lake Trust

The nonprofit Crater Lake National Park Trust raises private funds to support park projects and connect the park with surrounding communities. Most years, for example, it helps fund field trips to the park for more than 5,000 students. In a program called “Classroom at Crater Lake,” kids engage in hands-on science and learn about wildlife, old-growth forests, and winter ecology. Learn more at www.craterlaketrust.org. Share your love of the park by making a tax-deductible gift.



Shop at the Park Stores

When you shop at the Rim Visitor Center or Steel Visitor Center, all proceeds from your purchase are invested back into the park. The stores are operated by the Crater Lake Natural History Association, a nonprofit partner of the National Park Service that supports the park’s educational and scientific programs. Many important projects are funded by the Crater Lake NHA, including the printing of this visitor guide! The stores offer a wide range of books and gifts, as well as Junior Ranger products for kids. You can also shop online at www.craterlakeoregon.org.



Share Your Comments

Whether you have a compliment, concern, or suggestion, we’d like to hear from you! This is your park, and we value your input on how to manage it. To provide feedback, send an email or letter to the park’s superintendent (*see addresses on page 2*).

—Thank You!

Naming of Crater Lake

(continued from page 6)

the expedition, “Trip to Crater Lake,” ran in the August 21st and 28th editions of *The Oregon Sentinel*, it marked the first time the name “Crater Lake” had appeared in print. Sutton was thus credited with naming the lake, although it’s not clear he ever claimed that distinction. Either way, his entertaining account seems to have cemented the name in the public consciousness.

So, what inspired the moniker? Well, that’s been a persistent mystery. In his article, Sutton offers no explanation, which has led some observers to conclude that the “crater” in the title refers not to the basin in which the lake rests but to the cavity the men found at the summit of the island.

Two pieces of evidence support this theory. First, while Sutton’s article twice refers to the island’s “crater,” it not once uses the term to describe the larger gulf. Second, a contemporary of Sutton’s, Orson Stearns, recalled in an 1896 memoir that Sutton had “renamed the lake after the crater discovered in the top of Wizard Island.”

Still, it seems more likely that the crater on Sutton’s mind was indeed the one occupied by the lake. His lack of commentary on the subject suggests that the more obvious explanation is the correct one. And, while he may not have labeled it a “crater,” he clearly recognized the lake’s volcanic setting, noting that the water was “entirely surrounded by walls of light-colored basalt, scoria, and almost every conceivable variety of volcanic productions.” Further, Sutton refers to the island as “Crater Lake Island,” implying that he named the lake prior to naming the cone. (It would not acquire the name “Wizard Island” until 1885.)

The other enduring controversy about the Sutton expedition relates to the meaning of the word “crater.” In modern geologic parlance, a “crater” is a vent (like the one on Wizard Island) formed from the ejection of volcanic material. The lake, properly speaking, sits inside a “caldera,” a depression formed from the collapse of a volcanic peak. So, some would argue, shouldn’t we call it “Caldera Lake”? Perhaps, but in the 19th century, the term “caldera” was not commonly used, even among geologists. It had been added to the lexicon by a German geologist in 1825 but was not yet widespread. It’s hard to fault Sutton’s word choice, especially since geologists had yet to visit the lake and come to understand that it was the legacy of a catastrophic implosion.

James Sutton died at the age of 48 and is buried in Ashland, Oregon. We may never know for sure how Crater Lake got its name, but thanks to Sutton’s colorful report, we know much about the thrills and travails experienced by the members of his expedition 157 years ago.

Research Natural Areas

(continued from page 6)

of beige pumice, which is home to a natural garden of miniature plants that somehow survive in this windswept location. One species of concern is the Crater Lake rockcress (*Boechera horizontalis*), a flower found almost exclusively in Crater Lake National Park. Another is the pumice moonwort (*Botrychium pumicola*), a fragile fern that is vulnerable to trampling.

Last but not least, the 1,830-acre (740-hectare) Desert Creek RNA protects two habitats that are rarely found in such

pristine condition. First is a spectacular, old-growth ponderosa pine forest. Unlike most ponderosa stands in the Cascades, this one was never logged, owing to the park’s early establishment in 1902. Second is a dry grassland dominated by bitterbrush shrubs. Bitterbrush grasslands were once common along the eastern slope of the Cascades but have been decimated due to livestock grazing and fire suppression.

By saving remnant biological communities like these—and encouraging scientific investigation—the nationwide network of Research Natural Areas plays an important role in protecting our natural heritage.



Pronghorn antelope are sometimes spotted in the Desert Creek RNA, browsing on bitterbrush. The shrub’s trident-shaped leaves taste bitter to humans but are favored by wildlife.



Ponderosa pines need fire to keep rival species at bay. At Desert Creek, the park manages fire—both prescribed and natural—to mimic the burns that occurred here historically every 10-30 years.

Climate Chart

Most days in July, August, and September are warm and sunny. In May, June, and October, clear days alternate with periods of rain and snow. Winters are long. Storms from the Pacific Ocean dump an average of 42 feet (13 meters) of snow at Park Headquarters! The park’s tremendous snowfall is a result of its position at the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

FAHRENHEIT	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Daily High (°F)	34	35	37	42	50	58	69	69	63	52	40	34
Average Daily Low (°F)	18	18	19	23	29	34	41	41	37	31	24	19
Average Snowfall (inches)	100	81	83	45	19	4	0.2	0.1	3	21	61	93
Avg. Snow Depth (inches)	78	100	115	110	75	23	1	0	0	2	16	47
Avg. Lake Surface Temp. (°F)	39	38	37	38	40	47	57	60	57	51	44	40

CELSIUS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Daily High (°C)	1	2	3	6	10	15	21	21	17	11	4	1
Average Daily Low (°C)	-8	-8	-7	-5	-2	1	5	5	3	-1	-5	-7
Average Snowfall (cm)	254	206	211	115	49	9	0.5	0.3	7	53	155	237
Avg. Snow Depth (cm)	199	254	291	280	191	59	3	0	1	6	42	119
Avg. Lake Surface Temp. (°C)	4	3	3	3	4	8	14	16	14	10	7	5

Water temps are from 1965-2019. Other averages are from Park Headquarters, 1931-2019.