CASCADE HEAD
NATIONAL SCENIC AND RESEARCH AREA

At a glance:
Cascade Head NSRA quick facts

Date established: December 22, 1974
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 93-535
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State: Oregon
Associated national forest: Siuslaw
Total Forest Service acres: 7,162
Reasons designated: “to provide present and future generations with the use and enjoyment of certain ocean headlands, rivers, streams, estuaries, and forested areas, to insure the protection and encourage the study of significant areas for research and scientific purposes, and to promote a more sensitive relationship between man and his adjacent environment.” (U.S. Congress, 1974)

DESCRIPTION
The Cascade Head National Scenic and Research Area (NSRA) is located along the north-central coast of western Oregon. It contains both public and private land (total acreage of 9,670) with a variety of land uses including agriculture, rural development, and undeveloped natural systems such as meadows and estuaries. The area features native Sitka spruce and western hemlock forests and a coastal headland that provides important habitat for native prairie grasses, rare wildflowers, and the Oregon silverspot butterfly, among other species. It is home to more than 350 species of wildlife, including four federally listed endangered species. The area also includes the Salmon River estuary which “provides recreational, research, educational, scenic and estuarine resources, which have national significance” (USDA Forest Service, 2019).

BACKGROUND
In 1934, the Cascade Head Experimental Forest was established to represent typical Sitka spruce-western hemlock forests. In the early 1960s, a group of volunteers organized an effort to protect the Cascade Head headland from development. In 1966, The Nature Conservancy purchased the Cascade Head Preserve with donated funds. In 1974, the Cascade Head Recreational Scenic and Research Area was designated under Forest Service management; it was the first non-wilderness land in the United States to be designated by Congress to ensure protection of its scenic, ecological, and scientific values. The area included half of the experimental forest and added headland prairies and the Salmon River Estuary, resulting in a more diverse, coastal-related research program. The designation established a long-term goal of restoring the Salmon River estuary and its associated wetlands to a natural estuarine system. In 1980, the combined area of the Cascade Head Experimental Forest and Scenic-Research Area was recognized as a United Nations Biosphere Reserve. Today, the Forest Service works with the other landowners in the area to ensure the preservation of the values for which it was designated.

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Corvallis, OR; 48 miles
Population within 25 miles: 40,496
Population within 100 miles: 3,489,532
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Siuslaw National Forest, not including the Oregon Dunes NRA: 614,547 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Hiking, nature viewing

Sources used and cited for this text are listed by location starting on page 90
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Iconic places
USDA Forest Service Regions
Urban areas
Interstates

Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Intermountain
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

DESCRIPTION

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) is located in both Washington and Oregon states, encompassing a portion of the western boundary between the states. It includes an 292,500-acre patchwork of public and private lands, making it the largest NSA in the country. It is a spectacular canyon created by the Columbia River as it cuts 80 miles through the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The gorge is nearly 4,000 feet deep in places, as the river winds past steep cliffs, Cascade Volcanoes, agricultural lands, and through temperate rainforest and grasslands. The gorge is home to 75,000 people in thirteen communities and provides a vital transportation corridor with U.S. Highway 84 running through it. It is a hot spot for recreationalists from around the world, as well as locals from nearby Portland, Oregon who visit the Columbia River to bike, hike, raft, kayak, fish, or any number of other activities possible within the Gorge. In addition to its dramatic physical attributes, the planning and management of the Columbia River Gorge makes it one of the most unique National Scenic Areas in the country. Management is overseen through a collaboration between the bi-state Columbia River Gorge Commission and the Forest Service.

BACKGROUND

Over 100 years of various efforts preceded the designation of the Columbia River Gorge as a National Scenic Area. Following the construction of U.S. Highway 84 and worried about urban sprawl into the area, the Friends of the Columbia Gorge organization formed to advocate for its designation as a National Scenic Area. In 1986, President Reagan designated the NSA to protect and enhance these resources and to promote economies within the area in a consistent way.

At a glance:

Columbia River Gorge NSA quick facts

Date established: November 17, 1986
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 99-663
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State(s): Oregon and Washington
Associated national forest: Independent administrative unit
Total Forest Service acres: 82,790 (292,610 total acres)
Reasons designated: “(1) to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and (2) to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1).” (U.S. Congress, 1986)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Portland, OR; 42 miles
Population within 25 miles: 2,046,157
Population within 100 miles: 4,548,423
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area: 2,116,556 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Hiking, interpretive tours, stargazing, camping, biking

Sources used and cited for this text are listed by location starting on page 90
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 3: Southwest
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Northern Rockies
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Iconic places:
- Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
- Mt. Hood National Forest
- Mt. St. Helens NVM
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Photo: View of the Columbia River Gorge from Rowena Crest. USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forestservicenw/39697540392/in/album-72157665028630056/.
HELLS CANYON
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Hells Canyon NRA quick facts

**Date established:** December 31, 1975

**Established by:** Congressional designation, Public Law 94-199

**Forest Service region:** administered by Region 6: Pacific Northwest

**States:** Oregon and Idaho

**Associated national forests:** Wallowa-Whitman (administrator), Nez Perce, and Payette

**Total Forest Service acres:** 619,488 (478,415 acres on the Wallowa-Whitman; 117,073 on the Nez Perce; 24,000 acres on the Payette)

**Reasons designated:** “to assure that the natural beauty, and historical and archeological values of the Hells Canyon area... are preserved for this and future generations, and the recreational and ecologic values and public enjoyment of the area are thereby enhanced.” (U.S. Congress, 1975)

People and visitors

**Nearest metropolitan area:** Lewiston, ID; 53 miles

**Population within 25 miles:** 34,196

**Population within 100 miles:** 1,116,222

**Annual visitors estimate and geography:** Wallowa-Whitman National Forest: 246,037 estimated annual visits (2014, NVUM)

**Main recreational uses:** Bicycling, camping, fishing, hiking, horse riding, hunting, nature viewing, OHV riding, outdoor learning, picnicking, motorized and non-motorized boating, cross country skiing and snowshoeing, snowmobiling

DESCRIPTION

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) is located along the border of western Idaho and northeastern Oregon, straddling both sides of the Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam. Access points to the canyon are a one-hour drive from Enterprise, Joseph, Imnaha, Halfway, and Pine Creek in Oregon or Riggins, Grangeville, Whitebird, Council, and Cambridge in Idaho. At 10 miles wide and 7,913-feet deep, Hells Canyon is the deepest river gorge in North America. The Seven Devils mountain range towers above the canyon, peaking at the 9,393-foot tall summit of He Devil Mountain. The canyon has an arid climate, with lower elevations characterized by barren, steep slopes and rim rocks, and upper elevations characterized by grassland benches and canyons sheltering groves of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine.

Hells Canyon offers scenic vistas, world-class whitewater boating, hiking, horseback riding, and climbing. It has numerous boat launches, campgrounds, interpretive sites, and historic ranches. Private and commercial aircraft and powerboats are allowed in the canyon.

BACKGROUND

Human occupation in the area dates back at least 7,100 years ago, with a Clovis point found at the southern end of the canyon suggesting an even longer history of inhabitation. Historically, the Nez Perce peoples occupied the Hells Canyon area, ceding their title to the United States in an 1855 treaty. Early explorers and settlers called the area Box Canyon or Snake River Canyon, but the 1895 edition of “McCurdy’s Marine History of the Pacific Northwest” referred to it as Hells Canyon. By the 1930s people from hiking clubs to Senators were widely referring to the canyon as Hells Canyon.

In 1975, Congress established the National Recreation Area as the Hells Canyon Wilderness and allocated $10 million for the development of recreation facilities in the area. Hells Canyon NRA is located in three different national forests and two regions, but has been administered by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Region 6 since 1982.
USDA Forest Service land

Iconic places

USDA Forest Service Regions

Urban areas

Interstates

Region 1: Northern
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Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 3: Southwest
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Region 1: Northern
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Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Hells Canyon National Recreation Area
Umatilla National Forest
Nez Perce National Forest
Payette National Forest
Clearwater National Forest

DESCRIPTION
The Mount Baker National Recreation Area (NRA) is located about 100 miles north of Seattle, just outside of the Mt. Baker Wilderness near Sedro-Woolley, Washington. 10,160-foot Mount Baker, for which the NRA is named, is the most northernmost volcano in the United States’ Cascade Range located just 15 miles south of the Canadian border. The area consists of four large meadows on the south slope of Mount Baker. Schiebers Meadow is the most popular for snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding, and mountain climbing. The area is very scenic, with waist high huckleberry bushes, groves of western hemlocks and Alaska yellow cedar, glacially carved valleys and ridges, natural alpine meadows, and high elevation lakes. A trail through the NRA allows visitors to reach the summit of Mount Baker.

BACKGROUND
The northern Cascade Range has long been admired for its beauty, with John Muir visiting the region in 1888 and describing Mount Baker as “rising solitary over a dark breadth of forest making a glorious show” in his book Steep Trails. The first forest preserves in the north Cascades, later to become national forests throughout the region, were established during the 1890’s as a result of national concern over the loss of forestlands. The following 80 years saw many further protections throughout the northern Cascades and in 1984, the Washington Wilderness Act was passed establishing 18 new wilderness areas as well as the Mount Baker National Recreation Area, designated to accommodate mixed recreation use in Schriever’s Meadow.
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
Mount Baker National Recreation Area

MOUNT HOOD
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Mount Hood NRA quick facts

Date established: March 30, 2009
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 111–11, Sec. 1204
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State: Oregon
Associated national forest: Mt. Hood
Total Forest Service acres: 34,465
Reasons designated: “To provide for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of recreational, ecological, scenic, cultural, watershed, and fish and wildlife values, there is established the Mount Hood National Recreation Area within the Mount Hood National Forest.” (U.S. Congress, 2009)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Portland, OR; 47 miles
Population within 25 miles: 70,757
Population within 100 miles: 3,623,599
Main recreational uses: Hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, skiing, cross country skiing and snowshoeing, horse riding, nature viewing, snowmobiling

DESCRIPTION
The Mount Hood NRA encompasses and protects three non-contiguous units east and south of Mount Hood and in close proximity of the Mount Hood Loop Highway. The Shellrock Unit, the smallest, northernmost unit, and the Fifteenmile Unit, located east of Mount Hood, both feature single-track mountain bike trails and excellent vantage points for viewing Mount Hood. The largest of the three units, the Mount Hood Unit, is located south of the Mount Hood Massif and incorporates three wilderness areas designated alongside the NRA: Twin Lakes, Barlow Ridge, and Bonney Butte wilderness areas. The Mount Hood Unit includes a segment of the Pacific Crest Trail on its western edge, and is popular among skiers, snowmobilers, hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.

Much of the area within the Mount Hood NRA is a blend of ponderosa pine, western larch, and Oregon white oak forest mixed with high desert. The NRA has many viewpoints of Mt. Hood and includes Boulder Lake, an aquamarine alpine lake, and Surveyor’s Ridge, the location of a popular mountain bike trail.

BACKGROUND
The Mount Hood National Recreation Area was designated in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to provide permanent protections to the Shellrock, Fifteenmile, and Mount Hood areas from commercial development, road-building, and large-scale commercial logging while providing new opportunities for recreation, especially mountain biking.
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

MOUNT SAINT HELENS
NATIONAL VOLCANIC MONUMENT

At a glance:
Mount St. Helens NVM quick facts

Date established: August 26, 1989
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 97-243
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State: Washington
Associated national forest: Gifford Pinchot
Total Forest Service acres: 112,864
Reasons designated: “to protect distinctive features and processes for public education, interpretation and recreation, and for research” (U.S. Congress, 1989)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Portland, OR; 35 miles
Population within 25 miles: 104,471
Population within 100 miles: 7,217,535
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument: 183,190 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Mountain biking, camping, mountain climbing, hiking, backpacking, hunting, target shooting

DESCRIPTION
The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (NVM) is located in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in the Cascades Range of southwestern Washington State. Mount St. Helens is widely known for its violent eruption on May 18th, 1980, that irreparably changed the previously forested slopes of Mount St. Helens to a vast, gray landscape. Mount St. Helens remains active, continuing to quietly erupt, slowly forming a lava dome in the crater left behind by the 1980 eruption. The landscape of the NVM incorporates the bulk of Mount St. Helens and its recovering landscape, including lava caves, lakes, alpine ridges, glaciers, and forests. The monument offers visitors a plethora of recreation opportunities, including over 200 miles of trails, as well as educational opportunities for visitors to learn about the biological, geological, and human history of Mount St. Helens.

BACKGROUND
Following its 1980 eruption, thousands of people began to visit Mount St. Helens and the surrounding area. Spurred by the increase in visitors, President Reagan designated the 110,000-acres surrounding the volcano as the first National Volcanic Monument managed by the Forest Service. The monument today continues to preserve the site for scientific study, education, and recreation while monitoring the volcano to ensure the safety of the monument’s scientists and visitors.
USDA Forest Service land

Iconic places

USDA Forest Service Regions

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Region 1: Northern
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Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Photo: Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mt. St. Helens NVM blast zone, from Mt Margaret. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forestservicenw/37175421105/in/album-72157662485451442/).
NEWBERRY
NATIONAL VOLCANIC MONUMENT

At a glance:
Newberry NVM quick facts

**Date established:** November 5, 1990

**Established by:** Congressional designation, Public Law 101-522

**Forest Service region:** 6, Pacific Northwest

**State:** Oregon

**Associated national forest:** Deschutes

**Total Forest Service acres:** 56,563

**Reasons designated:** “to preserve and protect for present and future generations its remarkable geologic landforms and for the purposes of providing for the conservation, protection, interpretation, and enhancement of its ecological, botanical, scientific, scenic, recreational, cultural, and fish and wildlife resources.” (U.S. Congress, 1990)

People and visitors

**Nearest metropolitan area:** Bend, OR; 12 miles

**Population within 25 miles:** 161,086

**Population within 100 miles:** 840,951

**Annual visitors estimate and geography:** Deschutes National Forest: 1,376,373 estimated annual visits (2013, NVUM)

**Main recreational uses:** Bicycling, camping, fishing, hiking, backpacking, horse riding, nature viewing, outdoor learning, picnicking, motorized and non-motorized boating, swimming, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing, snowmobiling

DESCRIPTION

The Newberry National Volcanic Monument (NVM) is located south of Bend, Oregon on the Deschutes National Forest. It includes Newberry Volcano, the largest volcano in the Cascade’s volcanic arc, and over 54,000 acres of lakes, lava flows, and geologic features in Central Oregon. The highest point in the NVM is the 7,985-foot summit of Paulina Peak, overlooking the High Desert and showcasing views of the Cascades and Newberry Caldera. The NVM also includes a mile-long lava tube, several cinder cone volcanoes, and the youngest lava flow in Oregon. Unlike many of the familiar conical-shaped Cascades Volcanoes, Newberry Volcano takes the form of a broad shield covering an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. The volcano last erupted around 1,300 years ago and it remains active, with present-day hot springs, a shallow magma body that heats lakes within the Newberry Caldera from below ground, and geologically young and mostly treeless lava flows.

BACKGROUND

The Forest Service first designated 5,120 acres in the region surrounding Newberry Volcano in 1942 as the Lava Cast Forest Geological Area and began promoting tourism to the area alongside the Bend Chamber of Commerce. By the mid-1940s, the volcanic sites were being visited by thousands of tourists annually. NASA developed interest in the lava fields in 1963 as a potential training location for the first moon landing due its assumed resemblance to the moon’s surface. At least 46 astronauts trained for lunar missions in the area between 1964 and 1966 causing tourism of the area to skyrocket. To accommodate this increased tourism, the Lava Lands Visitor Center was completed in 1975 and in 1990, the area was designated as the Newberry NVM to provide a unique opportunity to view the lava lands of Oregon.

Sources used and cited for this text are listed by location starting on page 90
Photo: View of Paulina Lake in winter in the Newberry Crater NVM. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forest-service-nw/23848648221/in/album-7215767187/0012723/.
The Opal Creek National Scenic Recreation Area (NSRA) is located in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon, north of Santiam Canyon and east of Salem. Alongside the neighboring Bull of the Woods Wilderness, the overall area comprises the largest contiguous expanse of low-elevation old growth forest remaining in Oregon. The area is steep, rugged, and forested with Douglas fir, Pacific silver fir, and Western hemlock. Huckleberry may be found during late summer months and various bird species, deer, black bear, cougars, and elk inhabit the area.

The Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area shares a boundary with the Opal Creek Wilderness to its north, and numerous trails connect the two. The Little North Santiam River and Elkhorn Creek, a designated wild and scenic river, flow through the area. The Three Pools Day Use Area on the North Fork of the Santiam River is one of the most visited swimming locations in Oregon, featuring a series of emerald pools, waterfalls, cliffs, and grottoes.

BACKGROUND
In 1989, the Friends of Opal Creek organized to secure permanent protections for the old growth forest and to increase public awareness of the area. In October of 1996, the efforts of the organization culminated with the congressional designation of the Opal Creek National Scenic Recreation Area, Opal Creek Wilderness, and the Wild and Scenic River designation of Elkhorn Creek.

At a glance:
Opal Creek NSRA quick facts

Date established: November 12, 1996
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 104-333
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State: Oregon
Associated national forest: Willamette
Total Forest Service acres: 13,666
Reasons designated: “(1) to establish a wilderness and scenic recreation area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources; (2) to protect and support the economy of the communities of the Santiam Canyon; and (3) to provide increased protection for an important drinking water source for communities served by the North Santiam River.” (U.S. Congress, 1996)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Portland, OR; 32 miles
Population within 25 miles: 60,769
Population within 100 miles: 3,723,392
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Willamette National Forest: 1,074,057 estimated annual visits (2017, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Hiking, backpacking, gold panning, nature viewing, swimming
Photo: Small Cascade at Three Pools on the Willamette National Forest near Opal Creek Wilderness. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forestservicenw/29491734443
OREGON DUNES
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Oregon Dunes NRA quick facts

Date established: March 23, 1972
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 92-260
Forest Service region: 6, Pacific Northwest
State: Oregon
Associated national forest: Siuslaw
Total Forest Service acres: 30,230
Reasons designated: “to provide for the public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of certain ocean shorelines and dunes, forested areas, fresh water lakes, and recreational facilities in the State of Oregon by present and future generations and the conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters.” (U.S. Congress, 1972)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Eugene, OR; 64 miles
Population within 25 miles: 78,741
Population within 100 miles: 1,369,578
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Oregon Dunes NRA: 381,755 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Beachcombing, sand play, mountain biking, camping, fishing, hiking, backpacking, horse riding, nature viewing, off-highway vehicle riding, outdoor learning, picnicking, motorized and non-motorized boating, surfing

DESCRIPTION
The Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (NRA) is located within the Siuslaw National Forest, extending for 40 miles along the Oregon Coast from Florence to Coos Bay. It is one of the largest spans of coastal sand dunes globally and the only part of the Oregon Coast covered by extensive sand dunes; this unique landscape is characterized by tree islands, open dunes, wetlands, and beaches. Over 400 wildlife species call the area home, including the threatened Western Snowy Plover, a small shorebird that breeds and raises its young on the flat, sandy beaches and vegetated dunes of the Oregon Dunes NRA. The NRA is a popular location for off-highway vehicle riding and about half of the area comprising the NRA is open to motorized vehicles.

BACKGROUND
In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated a large portion of the dunes area and coastal forests to the north as part of the Siuslaw National Forest. The Oregon Dunes were first considered for National Recreation Area status in 1959, however the bill introduced in the Senate failed to build support in Congress. In March of 1972, the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area was officially designated by Congress and recognized for its unique landscape. Due to the rapid spread of invasive species, grasses in particular, the dunes have begun to disappear, causing the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative to be formed in 2014 in an effort to develop a strategy for dune restoration.

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Region 1: Northern
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Region 3: Southwest
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Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Southern
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Photo: Oregon Dunes NRA. Public domain. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forestservicenw/30708190570/in/album-72157664507355910/.