



Juvenile owl perched in a tree in the Ochoco NF.
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OREGON'S *National Forests*

by Tamara Muldoon

Even national forests span the breadth of Oregon's diverse landscape, providing opportunities for every outdoor recreation enthusiast. They offer picnicking, camping, hiking, biking, boating, fishing, horseback riding, off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding and winter sports. Even those who are not athletically inclined can enjoy Oregon's national forests by traveling scenic highways and visiting roadside attractions.

OREGON COAST

Siuslaw National Forest (fs.usda.gov/siuslaw) stretches along Oregon's central coast between Newport and Reedsport. Numerous sites afford beach access, but there's more here than surf and sand, such as outstanding day hikes and spectacular viewpoints. Visit 4,098-foot Mary's Peak for panoramic views—the highest point in the Coast Range.

You'll find hiking and biking trails, tidepools and photo-worthy features like Devil's Churn and Spouting Horn at Cape Perpetua Scenic Area. Sweet Creek Falls and Drift Creek Falls trails offer family-friendly hiking to waterfalls through lush coastal forest. While you're here, don't miss the adjacent Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area.

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou) encompasses Oregon's rugged southern coastal mountains where recreation is about woods and water. The Wild and Scenic Lower Rogue River is a whitewater rafting dream. Jerry's Rogue Jets runs seasonal jet boat excursions from Gold Beach, an exhilarating ride upriver for wildlife viewing and spectacular scenery.

Backpackers rave about Rogue River National Recreation Trail which parallels that river and traverses the Wild Rogue Wilderness area. Cyclists enjoy the Glendale-Powers Bicycle Recreation Area, a 74-mile ride on paved roads along the Coquille River, and the Wild River Coast Scenic Bikeway, a 60-mile ride featuring coastal views, lush forest and the Wild and Scenic Elk River.



photo by USFS ©

On the dunes in Siuslaw NF.



Gooseneck barnacles and sea stars at Cape Perpetua, Siuslaw NF

photo by USFS ©

Devils Churn in Siuslaw NF



Lodging Near Oregon's National Forests (NF)

Siuslaw NF: Best Western Pier Point Inn, Florence, bwpierpointinn.com

Rogue River-Siskiyou NF (West): Pacific Reef Hotel, Gold Beach, pacificreefhotel.com

Rogue River-Siskiyou NF (East): Lithia Springs Resort, Ashland, lithiaspringsresort.com

Mt. Hood NF: Mt. Hood Oregon Resort, Welches, mthood-resort.com

Willamette NF: Westfir Lodge & Mountain Market, Oakridge, westfirlodge.com

Ochoco NF: SCP Redmond Hotel, Redmond, scphotel.com/Redmond

Deschutes NF: Sunriver Resort, Sunriver, sunriverresort.com

Umpqua NP: Steamboat Inn, Idleyld Park, thesteamboatinn.com

Fremont-Winema NF: Running Y Ranch Resort, Klamath Falls, runningy.com

Umatilla NF: Wildhorse Resort & Casino, Pendleton, wildhorseresort.com

Wallowa-Whitman NF: The Jennings Hotel, Joseph, jenningshotel.com

Malheur NF: Silvies Valley Ranch, Seneca, silvies.us

CASCADE RANGE

Mt. Hood National Forest's

(fs.usda.gov/mthood) more than one million acres includes such stunning jewels as the Columbia River Gorge and Mt. Hood. Three spectacular driving routes traverse this region: the Historic Columbia River Highway, Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway and West Cascades National Scenic Byway, which is also a portion of the Cascading Rivers Scenic Bikeway route.

There are around 1,000 miles of hiking trails, some open to mountain biking, horseback riding and Nordic skiing. More than 150 lakes and 14 Wild and Scenic Rivers offer nearly endless water-based activities. OHV fans will

Impressive landscapes are everywhere. Portions of seven Scenic Byways crisscross Willamette National Forest. There are numerous lakes, rivers, streams and waterfalls, Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area and seven snow-capped volcanic peaks. Hoodoo Ski area on Santiam Pass, Willamette Pass Ski Area and more than a dozen Sno-Parks provide ample locations for fun in the snow.

CENTRAL

Ochoco National Forest

(fs.usda.gov/ochoco) sprawls across Central Oregon between Prineville and Burns. Among its many hiking trails are two standouts: Lookout Mountain, offering views of the Blue

On the Coast you'll find hiking and biking trails, tidepools and photo-worthy features.

find three designated use areas. Five ski resorts plus nearly two dozen Sno-Parks make the Mt. Hood area an ideal winter sports destination.

Willamette National Forest

(fs.usda.gov/willamette), in Oregon's central Cascades, is ideal for hiking and backpacking along nearly 1,700 miles of trails, some within its eight wilderness areas. Five lower-elevation trails are designated National Recreation Trails. It's outstanding for cycling with two Scenic Bikeways and numerous mountain biking routes including the McKenzie River Trail and Alpine Trail.

Mountains and Cascades; and Stein's Pillar, an easy hike through forest to a 350-foot volcanic monolith. A number of trails are designated for mountain biking and horseback riding. Bandit Springs and Walton Lake Sno-Parks feature a variety of trails for hiking, mountain biking, Nordic skiing and snowmobiling.

Picturesque drives include Big Summit Prairie, especially during wildflower season, and Paulina District Scabland Driving Tour. Big Summit Wild Horse Territory offers a new twist on wildlife watching—searching for wild horse herds.



photo by USFS ©

Deschutes National Forest

(fs.usda.gov/deschutes) covers the Cascades' eastern slopes from Warm Springs Reservation to Crater Lake National Park. With such a playground at its back door, it's no wonder outdoor recreation lovers flock to Central Oregon. Its extraordinary topography varies from below 2,000 feet to more than 10,000 feet in elevation, includes

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five wilderness areas, three Scenic Byways, and the amazing Newberry National Volcanic Monument.

Hiking, mountain biking, backpacking, camping, whitewater rafting, boating and fishing are all popular activities here. The region's volcanic past created unusual features to explore, including Lava Butte, Lava Cast Forest and Newberry Caldera. Take a self-guided tour of Lava River Cave or Boyd Cave, both underground lava tubes. Mt. Bachelor Ski Area and numerous Sno-Parks offer a range of winter activities.

SOUTHERN

Umpqua National Forest

(fs.usda.gov/umpqua) hugs the western slopes of the Cascades near Roseburg. Water is among its defining features in the form of mountain lakes, wild rivers and waterfalls.

Camping and hiking opportunities abound here, but its claim-to-fame are some of the country's best mountain-biking trails. The 71-mile North Umpqua Trail made the IMBA's EPICS list. For more sedate entertainment, drive the Rogue-Umpqua National Scenic Byway along the Wild and Scenic Upper Rogue

and North Umpqua Rivers, or the Myrtle Creek-Canyonville Tour Route. Diamond Lake Ranger District offers many options for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

A second section of **Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest** (fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou) extends from Crater Lake National Park south to Ashland. Among its stellar hiking options are the

Pacific Crest Trail and the Upper Rogue River Trail which parallels its Wild and Scenic namesake. The Ashland Municipal Watershed has many miles of multi-use trails for shorter outings.

For a spectacular cycling experience, try the Cascade Siskiyou Scenic Bikeway, a challenging 55-mile loop through various elevations and ecosystems. Mt. Ashland Ski Area along with Sno-Parks and other forest trails provide options for winter sports.

Fremont-Winema National Forest

(fs.usda.gov/fremont-winema) spans more than two million acres of southern Oregon, with environments ranging from forested mountain peaks to open sage-dotted plains. This is bird watching territory, lying along the Pacific Flyway and bordering prime waterfowl habitat like Klamath, Summer and Silver Lakes.

This Forest offers an amazing number of trails for day hiking or backpacking, including the Pacific Crest Trail. Many trails are suited for mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. A wealth of waterways provides many locations for boating and fishing.



Hikers at Lake Creek, Glacier Pass in Wallowa-Whitman NF





Upper Klamath River rafting

© Momentum River Excursions



Wild horse yearling in Ochoco NF

EASTERN

Umatilla National Forest (fs.usda.gov/main/umatilla) surrounds Oregon's Blue Mountains, an ever-changing landscape of high grassland plateaus, forested slopes, river valleys and prominent basalt outcrops.

Extensive trail systems lend themselves to hiking, biking, horseback riding, Nordic skiing and snowmobiling. The Wild and Scenic Grande Ronde and North Fork John Day Rivers draw whitewater rafters from afar, while anglers fish its lakes and rivers.

Get acquainted by driving the 130-mile Blue Mountain Scenic Byway, stopping at historic sites and viewpoints along the way. Intrepid

cyclists might tackle the 108-mile Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway loop between Heppner and Ukiah.

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman), in Northeastern Oregon, elevations range from around 1,000 to nearly 10,000 feet across its two-million-plus acres of incredibly varied landscapes. It abuts Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and Wild and Scenic Snake River, spectacular attractions in their own right.

With three Scenic Byways plus the Grande Ronde Tour Route, you could experience the region just by driving. But more than 2,700 miles of trails beg you to experience nature up close with everything from easy family hikes to multi-day backpacking treks, five of which hold National Recreation Trail status. Horseback and OHV riding is allowed on many trails.

The 134-mile Grande Tour Scenic Bikeway and numerous mountain bike trails will entice cyclists. Fishing and boating are also common pursuits. Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort accommodates snowboarding, downhill and Nordic skiers, and Sno-Parks provide access to trails for skiing or snowmobiling.

The high-elevation uplands of **Malheur National Forest** (fs.usda.gov/malheur) include sections of the Blue Mountains, Strawberry Mountains and Monument Rock Wilderness areas. Expect to see desert grasslands, juniper and pine forests, jewel-like mountain lakes and wildflower meadows.

Designated sightseeing roads like Strawberry Mountain Loop, Four Corners Loop, North Fork Malheur River Road and Murderers Creek Loop allow easy exploration. The North Fork Malheur River Trail will thrill mountain bikers. Other recreation options include hiking, horseback and OHV riding, fishing, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. 🐾

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