



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

Joseph Stewart State Park

Nature Trail Interpretive Guide



Two distinct ecosystems await hikers along the Joseph Stewart Nature Trail—dry, chaparral woodland and dense forest. We invite you to explore the diverse plants, animals, and geological features in the park. The numbers in this guide correspond to the numbered posts along the ¾-mile trail. Please note that the route includes steep hills and may not be suitable for small children.

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www.oregonstateparks.org

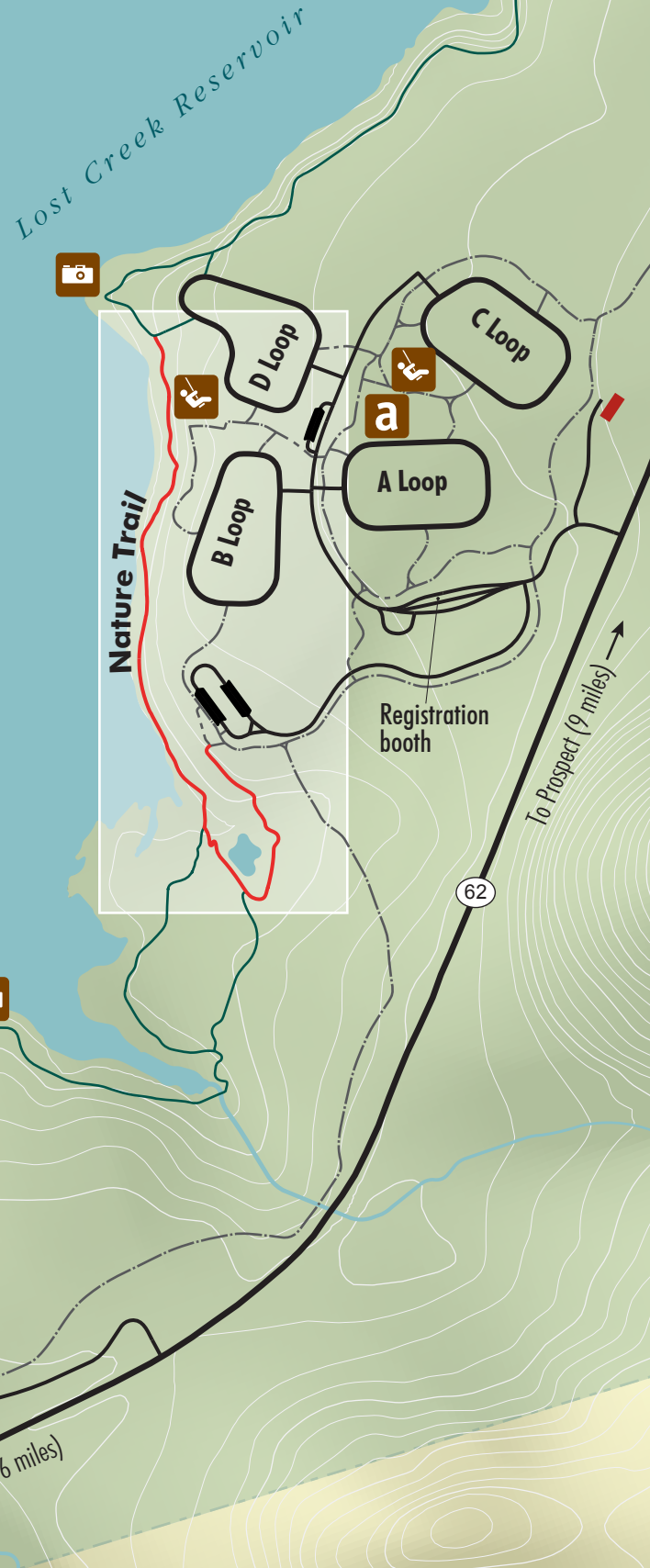
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
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Salem, OR 97301



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- Nature trail
- Hiking trails:
- Hard surface
- Soft surface
- Bicycle path
- Accessible facility
- Flush toilet
- Shower
- Viewpoint
- Amphitheater
- Playground
- Group Camp
- Group picnic area
- Picnic shelter
- Fish cleaning station
- Boat launch
- Parking



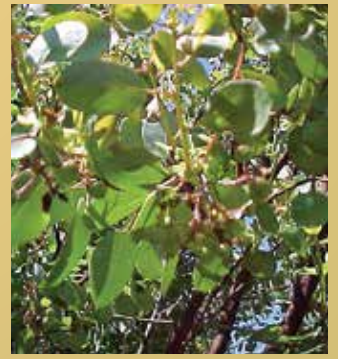
1 Poison-Oak

(Toxicodendron diversilobum)
Leaves of three, let them be! Poison-oak is one of the most widespread and adaptable shrubs of North America. It can look like a small shrub, climb like a vine or crawl along the ground. Poison-oak is easy to spot in spring, summer and fall: look for shiny green, red or yellow leaves in groups of three. Be careful of poison-oak during all seasons. The oil found in the stems, roots and leaves spreads easily and may cause a severe skin rash. If you come in contact with the leaves, ordinary soap won't do the trick. Wash your skin and clothes with dish detergent and water. Your best protection is to learn to recognize poison-oak and avoid the plant altogether.



2 Manzanita

(Arctostaphylos manzanita)
"Manzanita" is Spanish for "little apples," but these fruits aren't for snacking. Manzanita produces inedible berries year-round, which change from white to deep red as summer progresses. Manzanita can grow as a bush like the one growing here or as a tree that can reach 20 feet tall.



3 Tree Callus

In time, wounded trees heal themselves by forming a callus. Trees of all varieties form calluses as a way of recovering from a broken limb or nick in the bark. Within days, a thin layer of cells grows over an open wound, much like a scab. The callus material grows like a collar around the wound, similar to a scar over wounded human skin. Seen here, the bark covered the callus completely before the tree ultimately died, likely from rot and old age.



Walk, Look and Listen

Walk quietly. What sounds do you hear? Look along the sides of the trail. Can you find animals that make their homes here, or signs of the past fire that burned uphill? What smells tickle your nose? Remember them and note how they change later in your walk.

4 Douglas-fir and Woodpeckers

(Pseudotsuga menziesii)
Look for the woodpecker holes in this Douglas-fir tree. Woodpeckers and Douglas-fir benefit from a symbiotic relationship. Woodpeckers dig for insects and insect larvae in the tree trunk and under flakes of bark. This rids the tree of harmful insects and spreads seeds. If the tree becomes diseased or dies, woodpeckers will continue to eat insects in the decay and create larger holes for nests in the tree.





5 Boulder Row

These boulders are remnants of the past, a time when volcanic events battered the Upper Rogue mountains. During an eruption, mountaintop snow melted into a torrent of floodwater, washing tons of rock and soil down hillsides. This happened over and over again between 2 and 7 million years ago, creating a misplaced repository of soil, sediment and basaltic-andesite boulders. Over time, sediments covered the boulders, hiding them from view. Water, wind and human activities—such as when the Army Corps of Engineers built Lost Creek Lake—exposed this outcrop, giving us a peek into the past.

Caution: Steep decline ahead.

6 Western Gray Squirrel

It's hard to miss these noisy, bushy-tailed chatterboxes. That's because during the day they search for plants, fruits and nuts. Squirrels have well-developed jaw muscles and chisel-like front teeth that they sharpen by gnawing on hard objects. The gnawing also helps file the squirrel's other growing teeth. If not filed, the teeth will continue to grow and inhibit eating until the animal starves. Remember, feeding wild animals like squirrels makes them more aggressive at taking people's food.



9 Vine Maple

(Acer circinatum)
Nothing says autumn like the brilliant red and gold leaves of the vine maple. Over time, the twisting and spreading limbs of a single tree can turn an open space into a dense, impassable thicket. The wood was historically used by local tribes for fishing nets, snowshoes and cooking tools.



10 Oregon grape

(Mabonia aquifolium)
Oregon's state flower has a storied past. Native Americans used the bark of the Oregon grape to produce yellow dye. They also used the bark and berries medicinally for liver, gall bladder and eye problems, as well as to treat shellfish poisoning. Today, Oregon grape remains a popular herbal medicine sold in health stores. That's why it's important not to overharvest wild resources. The tart, blue berries aren't pleasant to eat raw, but they can produce delectable jelly and wine!



11 Osprey nest

(Pandion haliaetus)
Look closely to see the home of the "fish hawk." Notice the large stick nest at the top of the snag directly ahead? Osprey—migratory birds that return from South America to Oregon each April—nest in large dead trees or on nesting platforms near lakes and rivers. With long, curved claws, these birds are fishing specialists. They dive feet first from 30-100 feet above the water's surface to catch fish to eat or to feed to their young.



12 Downed tree

Hooray for decay! The lives of many common forest creatures depend on decay of large logs like this one. Insects such as bark beetles, wood borers and termites feed on the decaying wood. Larger animals—such as rodents, woodpeckers and bears—forage in the logs for grubs and adult insects. Eventually insects, fungi, bacteria and weather will recycle the nutrients from this log back into the soil.



13 Diamond Creek Falls

Can you hear the roar of water? You are listening to Diamond Creek Falls. These falls cascade gently down a slope of fallen rocks called talus, partially hidden in the lush vegetation. Underground stream channels and surface water feed the falls. The water continues to flow a short distance downslope until it concludes its surface journey at Diamond Pond.



The trail splits here; stay to the left and continue to group camp area.

14 Western red cedar

(Thuja plicata)
A treasured tree. Native Americans traditionally used western red cedar to make planks for houses, canoes, utensils, clothing, ropes and fishing nets. Western red cedar remains extremely valuable today. Its heartwood resists decay, and it is prized for use in areas exposed to weather. Soft in texture and straight grained with a pleasant aroma, the red cedar is an attractive and useful member of the forest.



15 Diamond Pond

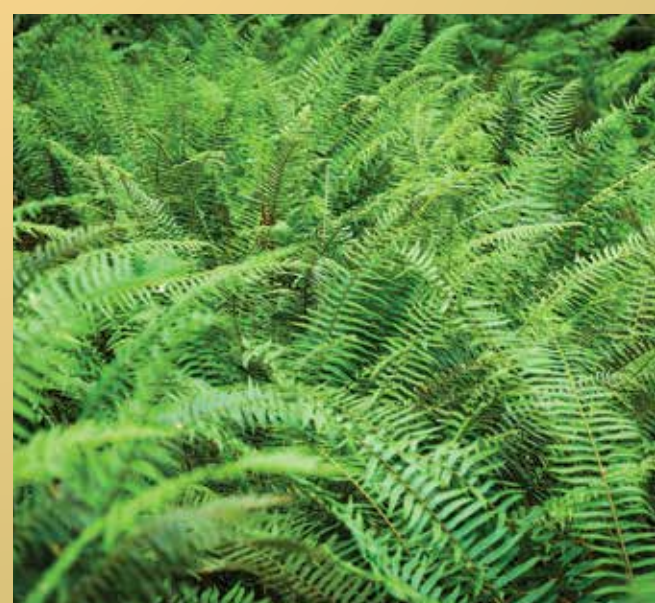
Can you solve this disappearing water mystery? Fed by Diamond Creek, this pond stays small due to its unusual flow pattern. Water does not flow out the typical way—via a stream or other waterway. Instead, water seeps into the ground from the pond, likely adding to the water in Lost Creek Lake.



Caution: Steep incline ahead.

16 Western sword fern

(Polystichum munitum)
Fronde decorate the forest floor. The sword fern boasts 75-100 fronds that can reach three feet in length. Turn over a frond to see rows of brownish-orange dots—spores used by the fern for reproduction. Native Americans used the fronds to line berry baskets and make steaming pits. In lean times, they ate the underground stems, called rhizomes.



17 Nursery of Trees

A competition for survival. These young Douglas-fir, vine maple and western red cedar trees are all competing for soil nutrients, water and sunlight. Over time, the healthiest and strongest trees prevail and help sustain the forest. Can you tell which tree is winning the competition today, compared to 2005 when this photo was taken?



Trail forks; stay to the left.

18 A protective shield



Just as skin protects people, bark protects trees. The bark of a tree is formed from dead, hardened tree cells and serves as a protective armor. For many tree species, it also is a distinguishable physical characteristic. Remember the red cedar and Douglas-fir you saw earlier? Look ahead. Based upon the bark, can you tell which tree is which?

19 Pacific Madrone

(Arbutus menziesii)
A smooth, greenish-brown trunk and peeling outer bark are hallmarks of the Pacific Madrone, a tree prized for its many uses. The twisty branches make excellent nesting sites for birds, which also find the berries to be a delicious meal. Native Americans also ate the berries and used the leaves as an ointment for cuts. They boiled the bark to make a medicinal tea to soothe stomachaches. Pacific Madrone is also prized for use in exotic flooring, furniture, cabinetry and other decorative pieces.



7 Lost Creek Lake

A lake built with a purpose. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built Lost Creek Lake in 1977 to reduce flooding downstream and control water quality and temperature, as well as to provide water for irrigation, recreation and power. Engineers allow the reservoir to fill in the spring and winter and draw the water level down each summer. The water level behind the dam fluctuates more than 100 feet throughout the year, from a high of 1,872 feet to a low of 1,751 feet. Look carefully at the shoreline—can you see the high water mark?



8 Orange Honeysuckle

(Lonicera ciliosa)
A tasty treat for birds and bees. The large orange, trumpet-shaped flowers of the honeysuckle are favorites of hummingbirds and bees. In late summer, orange berries replace the flowers. Native Americans used the year-round vines for weaving, binding and lashing.



20 Diamond Creek

An ambling journey. Groundwater gushes from a natural spring and flows into Diamond Creek, then travels a short distance further and pools in a small grass meadow. The water's path continues several hundred feet to Diamond Creek Falls. Its flow slows at Diamond Pond, where it seeps underground and likely makes its way into Lost Creek Lake.



Thank you for enjoying our Nature Trail!
We invite you to explore our other biking trails: one to the Lost Creek Marina and one to the cycle loop at Taggart's Creek Bridge. In addition, six miles of cycling trails wind through the park.

Hiking tips

- This trail is designated for hikers only. It is not ADA accessible and may not be suitable for small children.
- For your safety, please watch for poison-oak, low hanging branches and uneven terrain.
- Keep to the trail to help prevent erosion and damage to native vegetation.
- Pack it in; pack it out. Thank you for keeping our park litter-free.
- No smoking on the trail.

To help conserve our natural resources, you may return this brochure to the information booth at the end of your journey.