

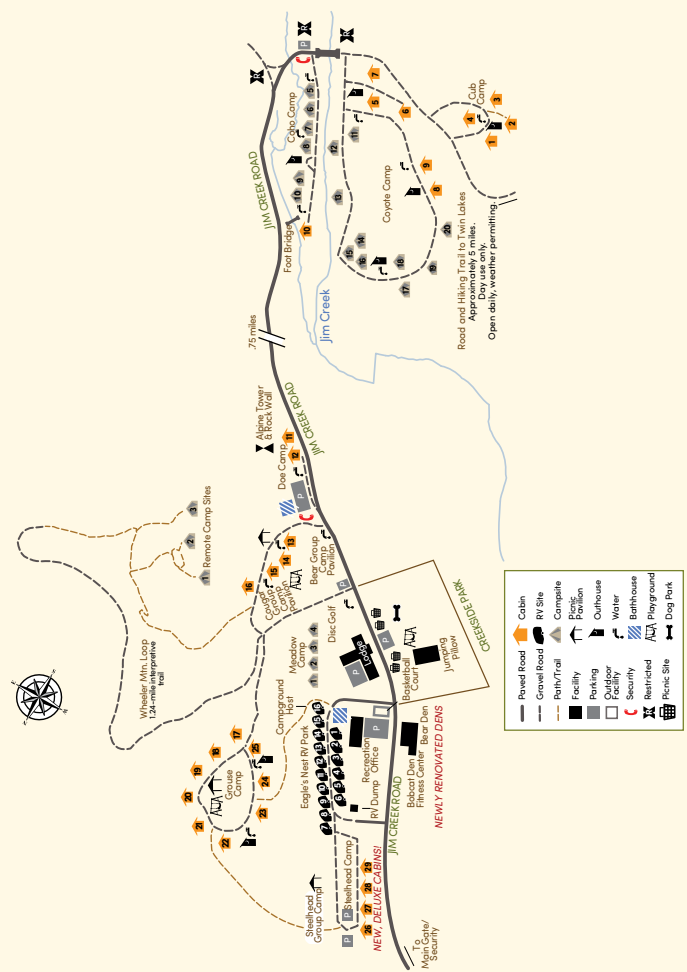
Feel Free to Touch (But Do Not Pick).

Run your hand over a soft patch of moss. How does it feel? Lift up a rock and peer underneath. What do you see? Explore with all your senses.

The forest here provides a place for you to learn about the world around you. On Wheeler Mountain, all the forces of nature are at work—including you.



Jim Creek Navy Community Recreation Area



WELCOME TO THE
WHEELER MOUNTAIN LOOP INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

Jim Creek Navy Community Recreation Area
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Take a Leisurely Walk Among the Trees of the Northwest Forest.

The Wheeler Mountain Loop Interpretive Trail provides access to a beautiful area of second-growth forests at Jim Creek Community Recreation Area. The first leg of the trail will take you into a forest dominated by Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar and Hemlock trees. Commonly seen are large tree stumps, evidence of the former forests. The trees you see now will someday be as large as these stumps.

Next, you will enter a moist forest dominated by Red Alder trees. Native Americans in the area once used pigments from the tree to make their fish nets invisible to fish. Today, the Red Alder provides coals for smoking salmon.

This forest was logged prior to 1949 by the Soundview Pulp Company. It has grown back on its own and is now preserved by the United States Navy.

Stop For a Moment. Enjoy the Solitude the Forest Provides You. Look Up.

Every tree is a spire in this natural cathedral. The leaves, branches, and trunks provide a maze of life. It is hard for us to tell when we look up from the ground, but there is life up there that knows the area well and may never come down to the forest floor. There are birds, tree frogs, insects, and voles that spend their entire life up in the forest canopy. They share their world with an abundance of mosses, lichens, and ferns.

Lichen is a fungi that has established a relationship with an algae. The fungi provides structural support for the algae and, in return, the algae provides food for the fungi.



Lichen



Douglas Fir

Enjoy Each Step. This Trail Has Been Created as an Access for Us to Enter the Woods. Walk Softly.

Beneath you is the life-blood of the forest. This soil contains valuable nutrients that supply food for the plants and animals. The intertwined roots beneath you are the homes of burrowing animals.

The soils and the life under your feet are sensitive to acid rain, garbage, as well as the soles of your shoes. You can help life in the soil by staying on the trail.

The Red Alder trees at the end of the trail have bacteria on the roots that supply scarce nitrogen to the soil. This improves the forest soils.

The Western Red Cedar has a natural fungicide that preserves the wood long after the tree has died. This has led to its use in furniture and roofs.

In 1900, Captain Voss bought a 38 ft., dug-out cedar canoe from Northwest Native Americans and sailed around the world in it!

Take Your Time to Stop and Look Around You. The Forest is Full of Life. Look Down.

Nothing here is dead, but as things are dying, they provide food, shelter, and a habitat for new life.

Every fallen tree or snag is alive with bacteria, fungi, and insects. They, in turn, provide food for voles, woodpeckers, and chipmunks, which then feed owls, foxes, cougars, and coyotes.

A bear may find shelter in a hollow tree, and may share that tree with a bird.

The Pileated Woodpecker is the largest woodpecker in North America. Its diet consists of carpenter ants living in dead trees, roots, and stumps. The woodpecker makes cavities with its hard beak and then scoops out the insects with its long, sticky tongue.



Pileated Woodpecker