

THE SCENE



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A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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www.fs.usda.gov/crgnsa

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As the summer season winds down, Field Rangers remain full of energy and enthusiasm as they lead **final campground programs of the year**. Last Saturday, Field Rangers gathered at Wyeth Campground to demonstrate how the rain shadow effect influences habitat composition and wildlife in the Gorge. Visitors are invited to join upcoming programs at **Eagle Creek Campground on September 13th** and **Skamania Lodge on September 20th**. See details below.

As summer comes to a close, the start preparing for autumn by gearing up for cooler weather!

AUTUMN CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS

Join Forest Service Rangers for evening talks on upcoming Fridays at locations below to **learn about the natural wonders of the Columbia River Gorge!**

SKAMANIA LODGE

September 20 | 6:00PM

Wild & Scenic History of the Gorge

EAGLE CREEK CAMPGROUND

September 13 | 6:30PM

Wildland Fire Ecology

Campground programs are free and open to the public.



TRAIL OPENINGS BY THE NUMBERS

In recognition of the second anniversary of the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire, the Gorge looks forward to the recovery and renewal of its landscape. We applaud the hard work of our resilient trail crews and volunteers. Check out some recent statistics on trail recovery in the Gorge!



107 TRAILS REOPENED

152 ORIGINALLY CLOSED BY EAGLE CREEK FIRE

81 / 122

US FOREST SERVICE TRAIL MILES REOPENED

26 / 30

STATE PARK TRAIL MILES REOPENED

31 / 34

STATE UNITS OPEN



Installing a new gabion box

trail tales

UPDATES & ANECDOTES

Last week the trail crew worked on closed sections of **Eagle Creek Trail** and **Horsetail Falls Trail**. On Eagle Creek, they installed a new **gabion box** to support a section of trail that washed away in **burned-area debris flows**. On Horsetail, they cleared the **troublesome switchbacks** that descend to **Oneonta Creek**, though **extensive stonework is still needed** to support the trail. Additionally on Horsetail, the crew flagged a **new trail alignment** that will avoid a **catastrophic landslide** that occurred shortly after the Eagle Creek Fire, **wiping out a forty foot section** of trail.



Clearing switchbacks on Horsetail

USDA Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos

PRODUCTOS ESSENCIALES PARA ESTAR EN LA NATURALEZA

¡Antes de viajar, prepárese e infórmese!

- calzado apropiado
- mapa impreso
- agua y comida extra
- ropa adicional
- artículos de emergencia
- botiquín de primeros auxilios
- cuchillo o herramienta de multiuso
- mochila
- sombrero para el sol, protector solar y gafas de sol

Para obtener más información sobre la seguridad y cómo estar en el campo, visite www.fs.usda.gov o llame al 1-800-453-3346.

Servicio Forestal del USDA Región noroeste del Pacífico

SPANISH WEBPAGE LAUNCHED!

The Forest Service is making strides towards creating more resources for residents and visitors who speak **community languages** other than English. We recently launched a new trip planning page in **Spanish**. Find it at www.fs.usda.gov/crgnsa by looking for the **Planifica Tu Viaje** link!

Last weekend, we also tested out some newly translated materials in **Russian** at the **Slavic Festival** in Portland. We hope to launch a Russian trip planning page soon.

FIRE ECOLOGY IN THE GORGE

THE POST-FIRE REGENERATION OF THE FOREST

Unlike the labor and investments required to reopen human-created infrastructure, the forest has its own mechanisms for rebuilding itself after a forest fire. Two years after Eagle Creek Fire, here are some patterns of forest rebirth visible on the landscape. First, regrowth mirrors the **burn mosaic**, the variation in the burn severity of trees, under-story plants, and soil. The mosaic creates **habitat variation** with stands of differing ages and composition through the forest as it grows back, supporting greater **biodiversity**.

In most areas, **understory vegetation is greening back up** so the forest floor is markedly different that last year, when **bare rocks were exposed** even in the lightly burned areas. **Wildflowers** are among the first to emerge, to the benefit of **birds** and **pollinators**. Altitude is another factor that affects how quickly burned areas regenerate, with higher altitudes greening up more slowly.

As you hike through burned areas, look for trees with **weeping sap**. Called "**pitching out**", this is a mechanism trees use to compartmentalize damage in order to survive. Surprisingly, the amount of **black char on tree trunks** isn't the only predictor of tree survival. Factors such as the root damage, size of tree, condition of the crown, and species help determine whether a tree will survive. For example, **Douglas firs** are generally more resilient than **Western Hemlock**. Even **burned trees that don't ultimately survive can drop viable cones** that aid in the emergence of new seedlings.

What to expect: Severely burned areas will grow back more slowly, as seen in the standing dead trees on the ridge lines. Over the next **5-10 years, dead trees will fall** and larger dead trees will **fragment**, losing their crowns. This leaves a **dead snag** that produces habitat and **food for birds and mammals**, as **insects burrow** into decaying wood. Meanwhile saplings and berries emerge at ground level, providing easy forage for deer and elk.

Seen this year in a severely burned area:

- Maples sprouting new branches, Douglas Fir and Cherry seedlings
- Native St. Johns Wort, elderberry, snowberry, thimbleberry, and of course fireweed!

