

CEDAR CREEK TRAIL

Upper interpretive trail ½ mile

Lower interpretive trail ½ mile

Total trail length 3 miles one-way.

We invite you to explore the entire trail in every season!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

Stay on the trail to protect plants and animals.

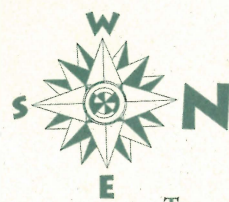
Respect other users on the trail.

Take trash home with you.

Keep pets on a leash.

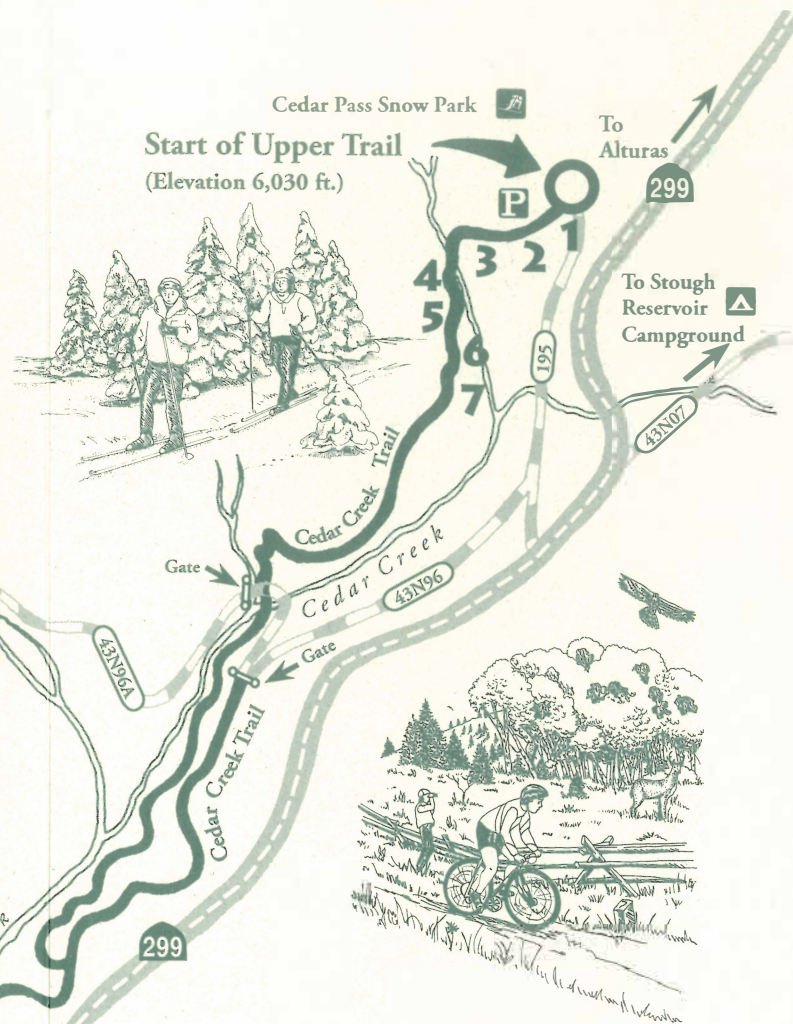
UPPER TRAIL

Get to know the Warner Mountains by exploring one of its vegetation zones —the white fir zone. Although white fir is the most common tree, you will discover a changing landscape that includes meadows and aspen groves. You will also find that the landscape has many moods as the seasons pass.



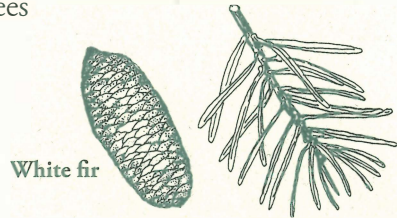
To Cedarville

Start of Lower Trail
(Elevation, 5,240 ft.)



1 WHITE FIR: THE "THIRSTY" CONIFER

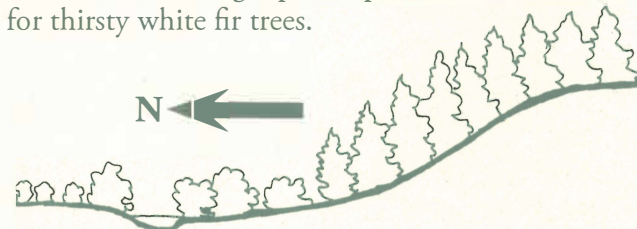
Tiny openings called "stomata" cover each needle of conifer trees. Through stomata, trees "breathe in" carbon dioxide, and "breathe out" oxygen and water vapor. Unlike most conifer trees, the stomata of white fir do not shrink to prevent water loss when conditions are dry. Where do thirsty white fir trees grow best? The next stop will give you a clue.



White fir

2 HOW SLOPE DIRECTION AFFECTS WHITE FIR

Compare the south-facing slope across the valley to the north-facing slope where you stand. Here, there is less direct sunlight. The air is cooler in summer, and winter snow lingers longer. This cool, moist, north-facing aspect is perfect for thirsty white fir trees.



3 MOISTURE CREATES THE MEADOW

Meadows are moist habitats where the soil is too damp even for thirsty white fir trees. This meadow gets its moisture from Cedar Creek, snow melt, and a high water table. Grasses and aspen groves thrive in the wettest parts of the meadow. Look for white fir and sage growing along the drier edges.



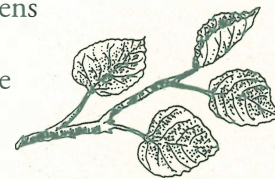
Big sagebrush
(drier edges)



Northern bedstraw
(damp meadow)

4 BRINGING THE ASPEN BACK

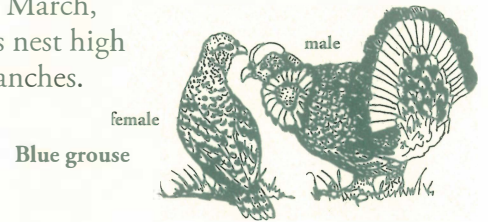
Aspen groves are important wildlife habitat, but as time passes, white fir trees may crowd out aspen trees. Years ago, wildfires renewed aspen groves. After a fire, new aspens sprouted quickly from a spreading root system, while fir trees grew slowly from seed. Here, aspen groves are being renewed through removing fir trees by hand.



Quaking aspen

5 PRESERVING THE WHITE FIR FOREST

Dead and dying white fir trees have been removed from this hillside to reduce the risk of wildfire. White fir trees provide food and homes for many animals. Mule deer feed on buds and needles in winter. Grouse eat seeds that have fallen from cones. In March, goshawks nest high in the branches.



female
male
Blue grouse

6 SPRING AND SUMMER CHANGE THE MEADOW

Each season brings a new story to the meadow. In spring, fawns are born and songbirds arrive to nest among the aspens. Look for western tanagers, robins, and warbling vireos. Goshawks hunt for birds, as well as small mammals like weasels. In summer, butterflies sip nectar from a succession of wildflowers.



7 THE MEADOW IN FALL AND WINTER

In fall, chipmunks scurry by with their cheeks full of seeds. Listen for scolding Douglas squirrels and rustling aspen leaves. When winter arrives, some animals leave tracks in the snow, while mice forage for plants and seeds in tunnels beneath the snow. Come back to see the meadow again as it changes with the seasons.



Least chipmunk

LOWER TRAIL

Get to know the Warner Mountains by exploring one of its vegetation zones —the sage steppe and juniper woodland zone. There's a lot to see because the plant life in each zone is complex and varied. Although juniper dominates dry, south-facing slopes, you will see willow, aspen, and ponderosa pine, too. The open country along the trail is a good place to see how disturbances have sculpted this landscape.

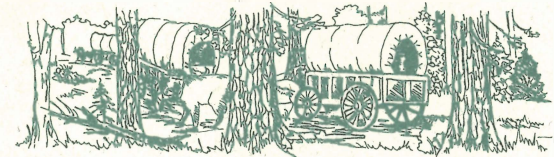
8 FIRE SHAPES HABITAT

Fire has been part of this ecosystem for thousands of years. A lightning strike in August 2001 caused the fire that burned the opposite slope. Unburned patches of forest provide seeds for new vegetation to sprout in the burned area. Watch for deer browsing on tender new sprouts. Listen for woodpeckers foraging for insects in the bark of burned snags.



9 PEOPLE SHAPE THE PATH

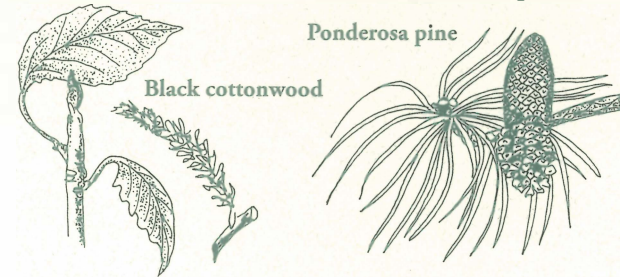
The route before you was a traditional pathway for Northern Paiute Indian bands, who traveled between their winter home in Surprise Valley to the east and their summer home near Cedar Pass. Euro-Americans built a rough wagon road in 1869. Improvements were made over the years. In 1950 the highway was rerouted above here and the old route became a trail once again.



For more information contact:
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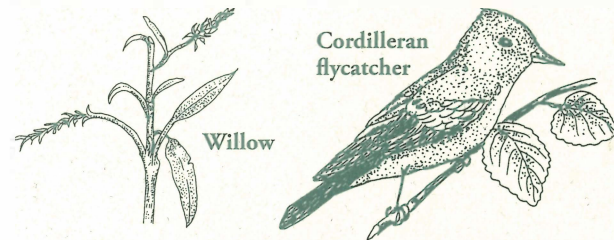
10 FLOODS BRING CHANGE

On January 1, 1997, a rare winter rain melted mountain snows. Cedar Creek was a torrent that scoured the stream banks and washed away part of the old roadbed. The creek deposited gravel in the small floodplain and around the trunks of some ponderosa pine trees downstream. Although new sediment killed several big pines, it opened a way for new willow and cottonwood trees to sprout.



11 THE RIPARIAN AREA ATTRACTS WILDLIFE

Aspens, willows, and cottonwoods flourish in the damp soil of the riparian area along Cedar Creek. Birds nest in the dense foliage, and use the branches as hunting perches. In summer, watch for cordilleran flycatchers darting from the branches to catch insects in midair. Many kinds of animals are attracted to the riparian area, where dense vegetation creates an environment that is cooler in summer and warmer in winter.



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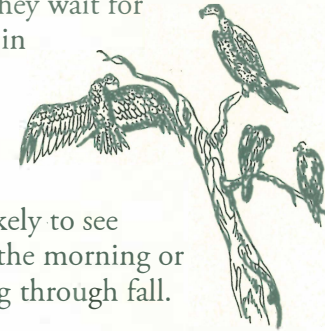
12 ANCIENT VOLCANOES SCULPTED THE LAND

Lava from ancient volcanoes created the rock formations along this section of the trail. Now, these old volcanic flows are fracturing and eroding. Notice the large rock below the trail. Do you think it could have sheared off the rock wall above?



13 VULTURES ROOST ON THE RIDGES

Look for a snag atop the nearest ridge across Cedar Creek. Vultures use ridge-top snags as morning roosts. There, they wait for warm air to begin rising in thermals that help them soar high and glide far and wide looking for their food: dead animals. You are most likely to see vultures on the snags in the morning or early evening from spring through fall.



14 A TRANSITION IN THE FOREST

You are passing between the sage steppe and juniper woodland zone and the ponderosa pine zone. Scientists use forest zones to describe how plant patterns change as climate and elevation change. But forest zones only tell part of the story of this complex landscape. You will find surprises like aspen and white fir growing in damp places along the trail.



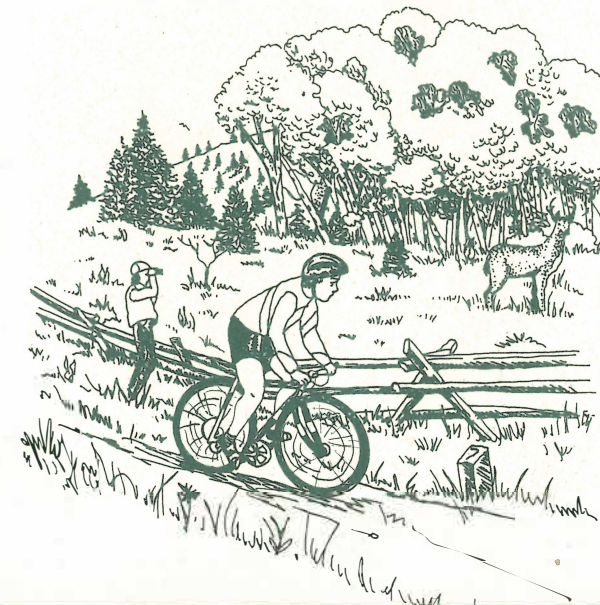
Western juniper

USDA



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
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WELCOME TO CEDAR CREEK TRAIL



Modoc National Forest