

# THE SCENE



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NEWS & UPDATES FROM COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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[www.fs.usda.gov/crgnsa](http://www.fs.usda.gov/crgnsa)

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## Updates from the Field

Multnomah Falls and Historic Lodge is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Oregon. These falls are the highest in the state and is a convenient short drive from Portland. Over the years the demand has dramatically outgrown our parking capacity and this has led to safety concerns in both the I-84 and Hwy 30 parking areas. We recently partnered with the [Oregon Department of Transportation](#) and [Columbia Area Transit](#) to find the best solution possible to address immediate safety concerns.

It's not perfect, but **we have implemented a Timed Reservation Ticket system** to be used during the summer months, when visitation is at the highest. Reservations are free, however, there is a \$1 administration fee per ticket and reservations can only be made by going to [Recreation.gov](#). Early birds or early evening visitors don't need to worry about making reservations as they are only required between 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily. The site is open without reservations outside of this time frame. **Those who opt to travel via public transit or bicycle are exempt from the reservation requirement.**

Once you've arrived, you may stay as long as you'd like. We hope visitors take every opportunity to hike the trail (at least to the Benson Bridge) and take in the iconic views of this gorgeous waterfall. There is a fun gift shop and an amazing restaurant that serves delicious food!

Visiting in the winter months or early spring is special because that's when the water flow is at its greatest. Whether you are coming from near or far, we hope you take the time to experience this beautiful waterfall. **After September 19th, reservations are no longer required.**

## An Evening with a Ranger

Campers at the Wyeth and Eagle Creek Campgrounds were treated to a special surprise last month, as Field Rangers resumed their evening ranger programs after a long hiatus due to the Coronavirus. With topics from wildfire to wildlife, Rangers Ron and Steven shared environmental information to inspire and educate campers to tread gently on the land to support its many inhabitants.



Would you like the Field Rangers to present at your organization's event or gathering?

**Contact: Jay Horita, Lead Field Ranger at [jay.horita@usda.gov](mailto:jay.horita@usda.gov)**

We request a minimum one-week notice

# trail tales

## A SEASON IN REFLECTION

In the Spring, leaders from the **Northwest Youth Corps (NYC)** were in a flurry - they gathered trail tools, brushed up on leadership skills, purchased mountains of trail mix, and after weeks of preparation, were ready to receive their twelve teenage crew members. These high schoolers, having the option to stay home and relax all summer, chose instead to volunteer on an NYC Conservation Crew. What came next differed for each crew, but the constants among their experiences were hard trail work, place-based learning, teamwork & leadership development, nature education, and a marked departure from the virtual blur of the pandemic to a reality as tangible as the trail itself. In the CRGNSA, crews completed essential work on many trails still recovering from the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire.

September brings the conclusion of these crews' services. Months of hard work (and fun!) across the Pacific Northwest are now suddenly, behind them - no doubt a sentiment shared by many outdoor enthusiasts in the outdoor realm. As the Scenic Area staff bid them a **thank you and farewell**, the crews conclude their transition from complete strangers to crewmates on the trail, and finally, friends for life.



## BATS ARE OUR BUSINESS, AND BUSINESS IS GOOD!



In 2010, the entire process took four years to repurpose an historic farmhouse into a bat maternity colony - from discovering and identifying the bats to drafting a **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** review, architects choosing the right roofing material and finally restoring the house to improve basic foundational integrity. We continue to support bat population surveys across the region in hopes of creating more bat habitat and from that, a healthier and more resilient Pacific Northwest.

For over a decade, our biologists have converted unused and dilapidated structures into bat houses with the help of volunteers and partners.

Last month, USFS biologists and rangers helped with ongoing bat surveys in the CRGNSA and surrounding areas. The evening of bat surveying (pictured left) yielded **48 confirmed bat sightings**, an assuring sign that a larger colony may one day find itself a permanent home in the unoccupied buildings.



## Did you know?

- ✓ Hanging upside down gives bats the perfect angle to take off for flight!
  - ✓ Bats eat roughly 1,000 insects every hour!
- ✓ They fly at speeds from 20 - 30 mph!

# Fire Season Update



Nationally we are in Preparedness Level 5 (the highest level of wildland fire activity). Northern California tops the list and the Pacific Northwest region is close behind with a total of **938,403 acres**. Scenic area staff have responded to **57 fires** in and around the gorge with both state and local cooperators. With many uncontained fires and extreme drought conditions across most of the western states, available resources are few and far between.

Still today, **people cause 99% of fires** in the Scenic Area. Most of these fires originate through hot metal from vehicles and trains, powerlines, escaped debris burns, improperly extinguished campfires, and other human-related causes.

To conserve the mental and physical health of our firefighters, we ask for your help in preventing wildfires.

Scan the QR code to watch our new Virtual Ranger Video for tips on how to prepare your home for wildfires and please consider sharing these resources to your staff, volunteers, and other audiences.

## Our Seasonal Rock Stars



Ensure Mission Success!