

# The Fen Trail

## Kangaroo Lake Botanical Area

### Scott River Ranger District

### Klamath National Forest



#### Welcome!

The Scott River Ranger District welcomes you to the Kangaroo Lake Botanical Area. This area above Kangaroo Lake contains a large number of some unique and interesting flora that occur in a small area with an incredible diversity of dry and wet habitats and unique geology. The elements of glaciations, geographic location, rock and soil types, high elevation, and water have combined to produce a unique environment for plants.

#### Trail Description

This is a self-guided, one-way trail (you'll come back the same way) of moderate to easy difficulty. The trail starts at the edge of the road just before the campground and ends at the top of the ridge on the Pacific Crest Trail. Mileage one-way is one mile, with an elevation gain of 600 feet. Allow an hour to complete the trail at a leisurely pace. This trail is not wheelchair accessible.

#### Resource Protection

The plants and habitats accessed by this trail are fragile! Please stay on the trail. Leave the flowers and plants for others to enjoy in their native setting.

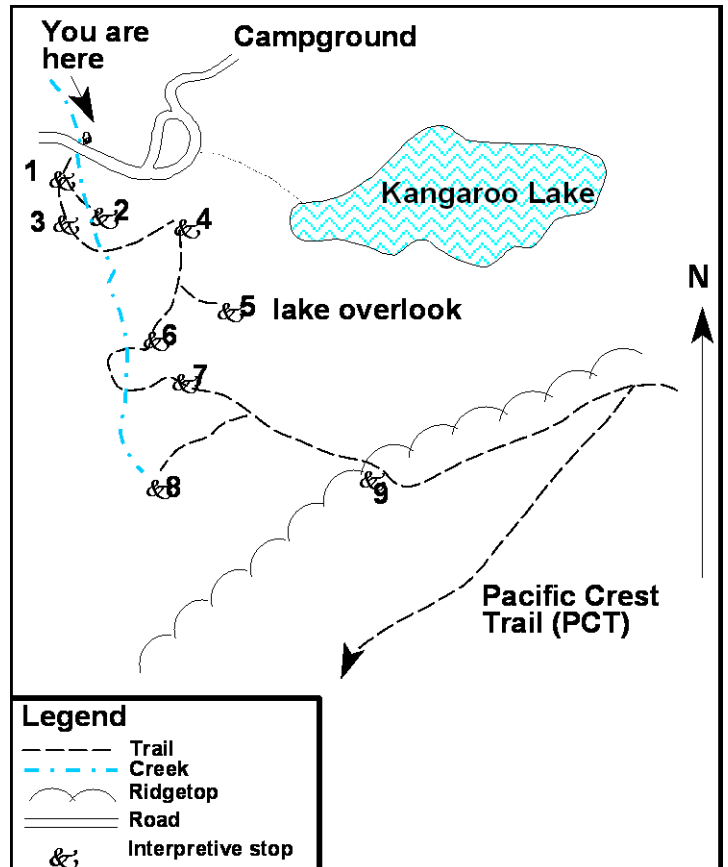
#### What You'll See

##### #1. Trinity Phacelia

This species of Phacelia only occurs here at Kangaroo Lake and just over the ridge in Trinity County. It blooms in June or July. The flower is white with small purple markings in the center.

##### #2. "Bog" or "Fen"?

Most people refer to this wet area as a bog, but botanists classify it as a "fen". A bog is an area where the water is stationary, whereas a fen is an area where the water is moving. Bogs typically have sphagnum moss whereas fens do not. The



fens in this area that are formed on serpentine soils have developed some unique plants.

##### Plant That Eats Insects!

The large plant in the fens that looks like a green hood is the California Pitcher Plant, or Cobra Lily, *Darlingtonia californica*. It is a carnivorous plant with leaves adapted for attracting and catching insects! The translucent dots on the hood attract insects, who walk down the inside of the hood where they are trapped by stiff, downward-pointing hairs. The insects eventually fall to the bottom of the leaf where they are digested by bacterial action, providing the plant with needed nutrients. Habitat requirements for this species are complex. In addition to moving water, the



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water must be cool and clean. This species occurs only in southwestern Oregon and northern California on areas of Ultramafic bedrock.

### **#3. Beargrass**

The bushy grass-like plant is actually in the Lily family. It resembles the yucca, and only blooms every 7-10 years. It grows predominantly on the ultramafic rocks. Native Americans used the fresh shoots to weave baskets. They would burn areas of beargrass to generate fresh shoots the next season.

### **#4. Panoramic View of the China Mountain Landscape**

From this vista point you have an excellent view of the surrounding landscape including the Marble Mountains, Scott Valley, Shasta Valley, and China Mountain.

### **#5. Overview of Kangaroo Lake**

Kangaroo Lake rests in a glacial cirque - a basin carved out of solid rock by glaciations during the last Ice Age.

### **#6. Geologic Contact**

To this point you have been walking on granitic rocks. You are now standing on the geologic contact between granitic rocks and ultramafic rocks, which occur up the slope from here.

The dark colored rock with a red exterior is an "ultramafic" rock. Ultramafic rock is an igneous rock, very basic in composition, which is formed deep in the center of the earth. It is high in iron content so the surface weathers to a red color. Visible also on this rock are glacial striations - grooves scraped into the bedrock by glacial ice dragging boulders across the surface of the rock.

### **#7. Fen**

The large fen on your right is fed by snowmelt water and groundwater seeping out of the bedrock. Solid bedrock lies 1'-2' below the surface, holding the water on the surface. Surprisingly, the small area between here and the top of the ridge stores enough ground water from melted snow to feed this wet fen and creek all summer. The water source for the campground - horizontal well - is located in the springs that feed this fen.

### **#8. Avalanche Path**

The open area upslope with the trees sheared off is an avalanche path, created by snow slides in the winter. In many years there is still a snowdrift here in July! The melt water from the large accumulation of snow here percolates into the rock and then re-emerges to form the wet fen below.

### **#9. Scott/Trinity Divide**

This ridge is the drainage divide between the Scott and Trinity Rivers. Note the difference in vegetation on the slopes with different aspects.

## **Plant Checklist**

Below is a checklist of species of plants that have been labeled along the trail. See how many you can find. Good luck!

#### **Trees:**

- Shasta Red Fir
- Lodgepole Pine
- Western White Pine
- Jeffrey Pine
- Mountain Hemlock

#### **Shrubs:**

- Huckleberry Oak
- Twinberry
- Pinemat Manzanita
- Curl Leaf Mtn. Mahogany
- Bush Cinquefoil
- Mahala Mats

#### **Forbs:**

- Beargrass
- Trinity Phacelia
- California Pitcher Plant

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