

www.oregonstateparks.org
 Valley of the Rogue State Park
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10 Wildlife/Salmon Viewing Deck (seasonal May 15-November 15)

This site offers pleasant river viewing. The deck is in place when water levels are below flood stage. There are several runs of anadromous (fish that go to sea and return to spawn) fish, including steelhead, silver, and Chinook and Coho salmon. After spawning, the fish's journey ends. Other animals seen from the site include ducks, geese, turtles, and songbirds.

11 Black and White

Two common trees in Oregon are the Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) and the California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*). It is extraordinary that we happen to have both species growing so close together along the trail. The Oregon white oak has a light grayish bark with scales that come off when rubbed. The acorns have a cap almost like a beret sitting atop a Frenchman's head. The Northwest Indians made flour from the acorns after soaking them to leach out the bitter tannins. It is also a favorite food for the many resident deer and squirrels.

The bark of California black oak is much darker, with a tight, smooth texture. The leaves come to small, sharp points at the end of each lobe. See if you can find leaves from both trees to compare.

12 Fires

Fires are especially common in southern Oregon during the warm, dry summers. Thousands of acres burn every year. Most fires are started by lightning strikes; however, some fires result from human error. Notice the burned, charred trees and shrubs in this vicinity. In July 2001 a human-caused fire raced through the area, fed by dry grasses. Fortunately, the local fire department gained control before the fire could do serious damage to the riparian zone along the river. The distant mountains to the north have also suffered

from fires caused by people. This is an excellent site to watch the natural recovery of plants and grasses from the damaging effects of fire.

13 More Tree Identification

There are several ways to tell one tree from another, but the most common distinguishing features are the leaves and fruiting bodies (berries, acorns, cones). If the leaves remain on the tree year-round, it is an evergreen. Trees with leaves that drop off in autumn are deciduous. This large deciduous tree is a big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*).

The leaves resemble a human hand with fingers outspread. Look up to the top of the tree, or crown, to see how the limbs are arranged to collect maximum sunlight. The paired, winged seeds known as samaras descend like little helicopters, and disperse far and wide on the wind. Big leaf maples provide a huge crop of seeds, making food for squirrels, birds and other creatures that live in the park.

You don't need to stop here; the trail continues further along the river and offers some very interesting sights, including a nesting platform on a tall pole, which was designed to attract a pair of nesting osprey.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk along the river's edge. We've covered just a few of the species and phenomena that make the Rogue River such a special place.

The environment around us is rich with wonder, intrigue, and lessons about nature's order. We at Valley of the Rogue State Park are happy you have taken the time to explore the area. If you've found the information interesting, please continue to expand your understanding of our environment through our other interpretive programs and materials.



Valley of the Rogue State Park

Interpretive Trail Guide



Welcome to the River's Edge Interpretive Trail. This self-guided trail allows you to experience and learn about the plant and animal life along the Rogue River. There are 13 stations located along the one mile trail. The map on the back of this brochure will help you locate trailheads and stations. An additional mile of trail extends beyond the interpretive trail.

The interpretive trail walk can take from thirty minutes to an hour, depending on how long you spend at each station. If you don't need this brochure after your walk, leave it at the nearest trailhead brochure box. Pets must be leashed. Thank you, and have fun!

1 Kissing Mistletoe

Large oak trees, like this black oak, are heavily infected with the parasitic plant oak mistletoe. The large evergreen clumps are very noticeable in the winter. The plant's white seeds are very sticky, and are pressed into new places to germinate by birds who rub their beaks against branches to get rid of the sticky substance. The plant grows roots into the oak's limbs and steals water and minerals, thus giving it the nickname "tree-thief." Mistletoe is often hung in doorways during the Christmas holidays and used as an excuse to kiss.

2 Bird Boxes

Nest boxes have been placed in trees along the river for wood ducks. Unlike most ducks, which nest on or near water, wood ducks make their nests of down in a natural tree cavity or a manufactured nest box. Considered by many the most beautiful of all ducks, they were pushed to near-extinction by hunting and habitat destruction. Now they are recovering well, thanks to nest-box programs throughout the United States. The nesting boxes and the smaller songbird boxes on this trail were built and are maintained by a local Boy Scout troop.

3 Snags

Dead trees are called snags. Years ago, they were cut down because they were considered hazardous and contributed to the spread of wildfires. Today, snags are preserved as valuable wildlife habitat. Dead trees provide food (such as bugs living in decaying wood) and shelter for birds nesting and raising their young.

4 Poison Hemlock

This lacy, carrot-like plant, is a member of the parsley family, (*Conium maculatum*). The stalk is hollow and in good locations you'll find plants six feet tall. Take a close look at the lower part of the stem. See the purple color? This helps identify the plant.

Poison hemlock was originally introduced from Europe and has become a common weed. A drink made from this plant was responsible for the death of the famous Greek philosopher Socrates. It is as deadly now as in 400 BC.

5 Feathered Friends

The trail travels through a riparian zone, the natural habitat near a stream or river. Lush vegetation provides abundant shelter and food for many birds and animals. The water-loving vegetation near the river is different from that of the surrounding hillsides. Mallards, wood ducks, and common mergansers are prevalent. As you scan the shoreline, watch for the prehistoric-looking blue herons and elusive green-backed herons. Listen and look for many more birds throughout the park, including quail, osprey, killdeer, goldfinches, tree swallows, and western bluebirds.

6 Sedges and Rushes

Sedges (family *Cyperaceae*) and rushes (family *Juncaceae*) resemble grasses with their long, narrow, parallel-veined leaves. Both grow and spread from sturdy rhizomes, underground stems that hold food reserves. They grow in moist, sandy areas. Northwest

Indians used sedges and rushes as the foundation material for some of their baskets.

An easy way to differentiate the two is by the saying "Sedges have edges and rushes are round." Both provide important forage and habitat for a variety of wildlife.

7 The Rogue River and its People

The Rogue River's story is about people who have sought its wealth, isolation and beauty for at least 8,000 years. The Takelma Indians are the most recent tribe to occupy this river valley. These people lived in homes dug into the river bank to a depth of 18' with a wooden upper structure.

Staple food sources were acorns and camas, as well as root crops, manzanita berries, pine nuts, wild plum and sunflowers. Salmon, deer and elk, as well as a variety of small mammals, added protein to the Takelma diet.

Early 1800's conflicts between fur trappers and traders set the tone for future problems between the two cultures. By 1850, the number of settlers looking for free land was growing, and after gold was discovered, in 1853, war broke out. Indians who survived were moved to the Siletz Indian Reservation near Newport, Oregon after the last battle in 1856. Some of the few remaining Takelma descendants have returned to the Rogue Valley in recent years.*

Take a moment to look around. You may be walking where a Takelma hunter or gatherer was 150 years ago.

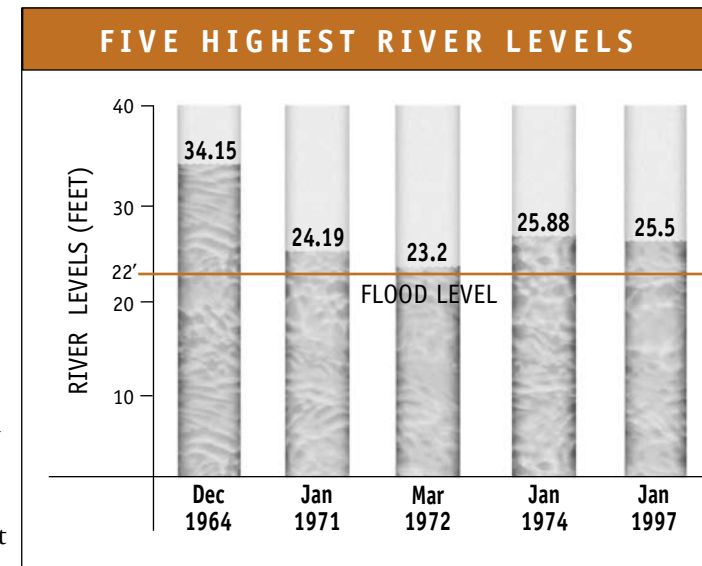
8 High Water

Visit this spot at different times of the year and you will see the water level change dramatically. In summer, the river is low because of the large demand for irrigation; in winter, floods occur. Heavy rains and rapid snow melt have been responsible for flooding the Rogue River more than once. During the 1964 flood, the Rogue River crested at 34.15 feet (12.15 feet above flood level), touching the bottom of the bridge in the city of Rogue River. More recently, the New Year's Day flood of 1997 crested at 25.5 feet (3.5 feet over flood stage). Flood line markers are

attached to the tree in front of you. Can you imagine the river raging through the park at this level? You would be standing 12 to 15 feet underwater.

9 Himalayan Blackberry

The thorn-covered Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) found along the trail is not native to Oregon, but was introduced from India via England. The blackberry has both a deep, tough root system and efficient seed dispersal. Birds prize the berries, and spread the seeds far and wide. The dense brambles are good cover for birds like the California quail. The abundant berry crop is a big favorite with berry-pickers and is a staple of blackberry festivals throughout the Pacific Northwest. Close your eyes and imagine warm blackberry pie and ice cream . . . yum!!



*Kay Atwood, Dennis Grey. People and the River: A History of the Human Occupation of the Middle Course of the Rogue River of Southwestern Oregon, Volume I.