



Vista House at Crown Point State Scenic Corridor

Crown Point State Scenic Corridor is 25 miles east of Portland along the Historic Columbia River Highway.


EASTBOUND: From Portland, go east on Highway I-84 and take Exit 18 for Lewis and Clark State Park. Turn left onto the Historic Columbia River Highway and proceed 10 miles to Vista House. Or, continue on I-84 to Exit 22 (Corbett). Follow the road up the hill; at the “Y” intersection, turn east (left) onto the Historic Highway and go 3 miles to Vista House.

WESTBOUND: From I-84 near Dodson, take Exit 35 and follow the Historic Columbia River Highway for 12 miles. Or, continue to Exit 22 and take the road up the hill as noted above.



www.oregonstateparks.org

This information is available in alternative formats on request. Write to OPRD, 725 Summer St. NE, Suite C, Salem, OR 97301 or call 1-800-551-6949 (Oregon Relay for the hearing impaired: dial 7-1-1).

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Comfort and Splendor Atop Crown Point

In 1916, construction began on a “comfort station” for motorists traveling the new 75-mile Columbia River Highway—the European-style road that traced a winding path through the perilous Columbia River Gorge to link Portland and The Dalles. Below an open-air viewing deck, the main level would provide drinking fountains and space to stretch the legs; the lower level, ladies’ and gentlemen’s restrooms.

This would be no ordinary roadside rest stop, however. In the words of the *Oregonian*, it was “intended to be the finishing achievement for the greatest highway in America” and to “grace the highest spot on that wonderway.” The spot was Crown Point, a rocky promontory 693 feet above the Columbia River and the site of the highway’s dedication in 1916.

A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

Aware of the building’s potential prominence, architect Edward M. Lazarus seized the opportunity to turn a functional need for facilities into a grand architectural vision. He designed the building to be “a temple to the natural beauty of the Gorge” and a memorial to the settlers who had made their own trek along the Columbia River, venturing westward on the Oregon Trail.

Under the direction of the Columbia River Highway’s roadmaster, John B. Yeon, the structure’s foundation was laid by the same Italian artisans who had

built the highway’s retaining walls and bridges. When construction was completed in May 1918, a 55-foot-high structure of gray sandstone and glazed green tiles sat atop one of Oregon’s most inspiring vantage points, allowing visitors’ eyes to travel from the lights of Portland to a faraway bend in the river 12 miles to the east.

Inside, rare Alaskan marble formed the floors and stairs of the rotunda, where light shone in through amber-green-colored glass onto walls of creamy limestone and stone panels carved with the names of settler families. In the words of highway engineer Samuel Lancaster, the structure gave “shelter and comfort to all who come to look on the splendor of the scene presented here.” It was he who gave it the name Vista House.

By 1926, the Columbia River Highway had joined with other regional highways to become U.S. 30,

the third-longest route in the country. U.S. 30 now stretches coast-to-coast, from Astoria in the west all the way to Atlantic City, New Jersey.

RECOGNITION AND RESTORATION

In honor of its significance to the history of the Columbia Gorge and American road travel, as well as its architectural distinction, Vista House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. In 2001, the need to address years of weathering led the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department along with several partners to undertake an extensive multimillion dollar restoration project. The building’s interior was refurbished, the tile roof and windows were replaced, and an inclined walkway and interior lift were added to increase accessibility. Vista House was rededicated on May 5, 2006, its 88th anniversary, with an antique automobile parade and brass band.

Most recently, Vista House’s lower level was updated to offer visitors some modern comforts and diversions. What was once the ladies’ outer lounge has become an espresso bar, and the gentlemen’s side now houses interpretive displays and a gift shop. Today, the renewed Vista House stands proudly, serving as a beacon for both drivers and cyclists along the Historic Columbia River Highway and inviting them—as it has for nearly a century—to stop, refresh, and take in the view.





Friends of Vista House

Friends of Vista House is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group that since 1982 has worked in partnership with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to preserve this iconic Oregon landmark and share its history with the public. Friends volunteers regularly greet visitors, conduct tours, and operate the gift shop. If you would like to support these efforts, or simply learn more, please visit vistahouse.com or call 503-695-2230.

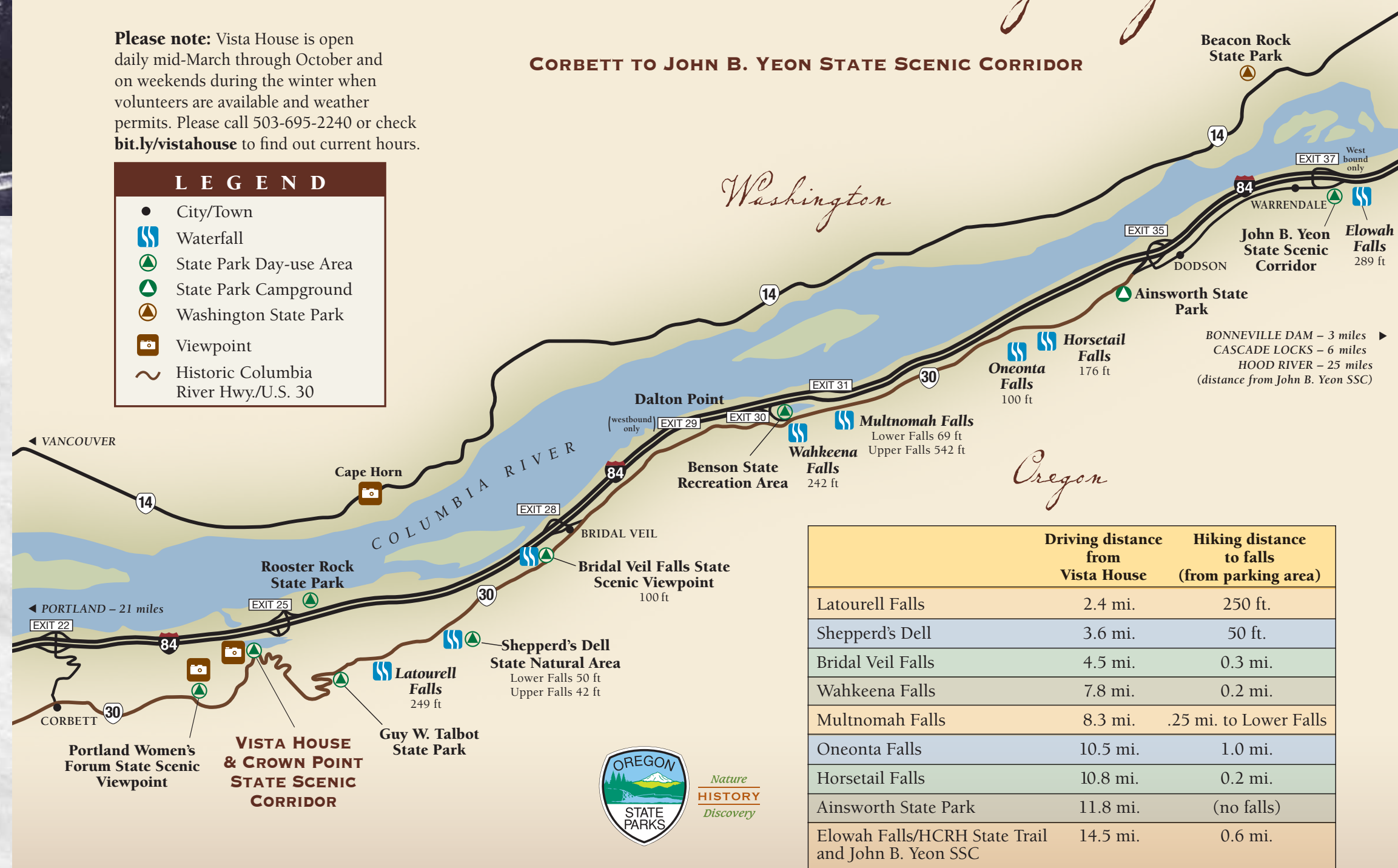
Historic Columbia River Highway

Please note: Vista House is open daily mid-March through October and on weekends during the winter when volunteers are available and weather permits. Please call 503-695-2240 or check bit.ly/vistahouse to find out current hours.

LEGEND

- City/Town
- SS Waterfall
- ▲ State Park Day-use Area
- ▲ State Park Campground
- ▲ Washington State Park
- 📷 Viewpoint
- ~ Historic Columbia River Hwy./U.S. 30

CORBETT TO JOHN B. YEON STATE SCENIC CORRIDOR



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery



Once known as Thor's Heights, Crown Point was shaped by the same floods, winds, and volcanic lava flows that created the Gorge.

