

AN ACCESSIBLE ADVENTURE ON THE MONUMENT

In Celebration of Newberry National Volcanic Monument



Accessible Adventures: Deschutes National Forest

Click on media above to be prompted to the video. Video Courtesy of USFS

Written by Martha Smolenski

Where can an adventure take you? Well, sometimes it depends simply on the trail. In particular, an accessible trail. The Newberry National Volcanic Monument was established in 1990 to protect and preserve the area surrounding the Newberry Volcano. The 54,000 acre site, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, has accessible trails to explore via a walker, wheelchair, or other walking aid.

To begin a Newberry National Volcanic Monument adventure, start at the Lava Lands Visitor Center just off U.S. Highway 97 near Bend, OR. From the paved parking lot with handicapped signs and non-barrier sidewalks, go directly to the journey's beginning through an accessible entry into the Visitor Center to learn more about the region's rich volcanic history. A movie gives a volcanic timeline, and visitors are introduced to an accessible self-guided tour of interpretive displays, hands on features and a bookstore that is sure to tempt you. Friendly and informative staff and U.S. Forest Service Rangers can answer all your questions.

Outside on the patio are Ranger-led patio talks. Listen to a talk, then follow the ramp to the right of the Patio to start the accessible Trail of Molten Land. There are accessible restrooms in the breezeway of the Visitor Center.

The Trail of Molten Land is an easy to moderate, self-guided, asphalt paved, mile long loop trail out onto the lava fields created by Lava Butte. Along the way there are interpretive signs at points of interest. The first part of the trail is relatively flat and is wheelchair accessible. Beyond, you will come to a "Y" in the trail, where visitors can get an incredible view of the mountains as well as the lava flow. After the turn at the "Y", the trail gets slightly steeper. Although it can still be easily accessed, folks with varying abilities should use discretion in making the best judgement.

The Trail of the Whispering Pines loops around the base of the butte. It takes visitors 0.3 miles through a beautiful forest scene, and is a great trail for folks of all abilities.



A third trail to discover is the moderate 5.5 mile, out-and-back Sun-Lava paved trail from the Visitor Center. Runners, bikers and roving Rangers can be found exploring this path.



From the Lava Lands Visitor Center parking lot, is the paved road to the top Lava Butte - a 7,000 year old cinder cone. It is seasonally accessible by personal car from May to mid-June, and again after Labor Day. From mid-June until Labor Day, there is a

minimal fee shuttle bus that takes visitors to and from the top. The bus is able to accommodate any size wheelchair, and allows service animals to accompany their owners. The short drive up brings you to the paved parking lot at the base of an active fire lookout. Enjoy the view and interpretive signs explaining the panoramic Cascade Range vista 500 feet up from the forest floor. The paved trail up to the fire lookout from the top of the butte, is quite steep. Make sure to plan ahead and review the trail as caution is highly advised. The Lava Butte Rim Trail is gravel and access is from the parking lot down cement steps. The trail is an easy quarter of a mile along the crater's rim. Review of the trail's surface and steps is advised.

Traveling further south down the Lava Lands exit, you will find the turnoff for Lava River Cave. This natural formed lava tube does not have an accessible trail inside the tube. From the paved parking lot, there is an accessible paved trail leading to the interpretive area where a Ranger-led talk describes the lava tube's history, features and inhabitants.

Continue on U.S. Highway 97 South to the Lava Cast Forest exit. The nine mile U.S. Forest Service gravel road leads to the easy, asphalt paved, loop trail just off the gravel

parking lot. Though the trail is less than one mile, be advised that the trail does have dips to consider, and part of the trail may not be accommodating for wheelchairs. Visitors to Lava Cast Forest get an awesome viewing of wildflowers during spring. Visitors might also spot pikas hiding in the igneous rocks of the 6,000-year-old lava flow that created the casts or molds of former trees. The journey can end, or begin, inside the caldera of the Newberry National Volcanic Monument. The entrance is off U.S Highway 97, near the town of La Pine, OR. Along the drive into the Newberry Caldera, stop at Paulina Falls and get up close from the easy, short, accessible paved trail off the paved parking lot. From the falls, keep driving to reach East Lake and Paulina Lake. These two alpine lakes welcome anglers, boaters, campers (both tent and RV) and picnickers. Trails inside the caldera are not accessible due to rough and rocky terrain.



Photo Credit: Lava Butte Crater by Byron Hetrick

When it comes to accessibility, there are still many areas of our public lands that are unreachable for community members with varying abilities. In recent years, Discover Your Forest has partnered with a local company with the support and expertise of the Deschutes National Forest, to create Virtual Reality adventures

highlighting the Newberry National Volcanic Monument. As they become available, we are excited to do our part in creating accessible, adventurous, and inspiring opportunities for people in any place, with any ability, to enjoy what Newberry has to offer. Stay up to date on the pursuit of these goals by following Discover Your Forest on social media, or subscribing to our newsletter. Enjoy the outdoors! “It’s All Yours.”

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