Mount St. Helens Reveals Discoveries and Experiences

Do you have a half day? Two days? Or a week? There is lots to do at Mount St. Helens and three areas to explore. The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument can be visited from the West (State Route 504), the South (State Route 503 and Forest Road 90), and from the East (Forest Roads 25 and 99). Each area reveals different aspects of the May 18, 1980 eruption; Mount St. Helens eruptive history; and the recreational opportunities that are available.

On the first few pages learn more about what each area offers, how you can plan your visit, and which side you want to experience next. Take in the views, hike a trail, watch a movie, explore a cave and Mount St. Helens will share her secrets with you.

We would also like to reveal the meanings behind some of our place names. At the bottom of some of the pages, read the questions and discover the answers.

Come experience, discover or learn something new about the fascinating volcano in your backyard.
Dear Mount St. Helens Visitor,

Even after 38 years, Mount St. Helens continues to reveal new scientific discoveries and messages of resilience. The National Volcanic Monument was created by Congress to provide public safety and recreation, allow natural recovery, and promote science and education. The severity and unique nature of the 1980 eruption has attracted scientific researchers from around the world to study the volcano and surrounding areas. This research has enabled us to better understand how nature recovers and mountains rebuild after large-scale change. Our field rangers and visitor center staff are enthusiastic about sharing the information with you through interactions and outdoor programs.

What will the mountain reveal to you? Spend some time with us and find out. Discover something new, or just new to you here at Mount St. Helens, your first National Volcanic Monument. Have fun and stay safe!

Your Monument Manager

Contact Information

Emergency (Police, Medical, and Fire) Dial 911

Forest Service Offices
Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (360) 449-7800 www.fs.usda.gov/giffordpinchot
Johnston Ridge Observatory (360) 274-2140
Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater (360) 274-2114 www.mshsc.org
Cowlitz Valley Ranger Station (Randle) (360) 497-1100
Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters (360) 891-5000 (Vancouver) www.fs.usda.gov/giffordpinchot
Mt. Adams Ranger Station (Trout Lake) (509) 395-3400

Other Resources
Mount St. Helens Visitor Center at Silver Lake (360) 274-0962 http://parks.state.wa.us/245/Mount-St-Helens
National Recreation Reservations (877) 444-6777 (Federal Campgrounds) (360) 813-6666
PacifiCorp www.pacifiCorp.com
Washington State Parks (360) 902-6844 www.parks.wa.gov/parks
Mount St. Helens Institute (360) 449-7883 www.mshinst.org
Discover Your Northwest (360) 274-2152 www.discovernw.org
Mount St. Helens Forest Learning Center (360) 414-3439
Washington Tourism Alliance (800) 544-1800 www.watourismaillance.com
Cowlitz County Tourism (360) 577-3137 www.visithelens.com
Lewis County Tourism (360) 740-1192 www.lewiscountywa.gov/visitors/outdoor-activities

Westside: State Route 504

Mount St. Helens Visitor Center at Silver Lake

Located five miles east of Interstate 5, the center offers: exhibits on the 1980 eruption, ranger talks, a walk-through model volcano, movie, bookstore and a 0.6-mile wetland boardwalk trail. The center, open year-round, is operated by Washington State Parks. For information about fees and hours check online at http://parks.state.wa.us/245/Mount-St-Helens. Evening Jr. Ranger campground programs available during summer weekends at Se亚spect State Park.

Johnston Ridge Observatory

On a clear day, experience fantastic crater views with the lava domes and glacier. Learn how the landscape was reshaped by the 1980 eruption. Spend a couple of hours or most of a day enjoying hourly ranger talks and movies, exhibits that focus on geologic events and volcano monitoring, hikes out the Boundary Trail, a Jr. Ranger program, and a bookstore. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, mid May thru October, closed in the winter. A Monument Pass is required and is available inside the building. Interagency Pases are accepted when presented with photo identification. Pets are not allowed in the Observatory, at the viewpoints, or on the trails.

Coldwater Lake Recreation Area

Visit a lake created by the 1980 eruption. Coldwater Lake offers restrooms, a picnic area, an interpretive boardwalk trail that goes out onto the lake, and a boat launch (electric motors only). WA State fishing license is required for fishing. Access to lake for swimming or wading is at two locations along the Lakes Trail: 1 mile and 2.5 miles down the trail (no swimming or wading from boat launch).

WELCOME to Mount St. Helens

Challenge: Which British explorer named Mount St. Helens?

George Vancouver
**Southside: Forest Road 83**

Forest Road 83 provides access to many recreation opportunities in a unique geologic environment which includes ancient lava flows and stunning waterfalls.

**Ape Cave**

Explore the dark passages of the third longest lava tube (13,042 feet/3976 meters) in North America. Ape Cave was formed about two millennia ago and marks an unusual period in Mount St. Helens 300,000 year eruptive history in that it is the only known basaltic eruption of the volcano.

Inside the cave expect uneven terrain, pitch black conditions and a temperature of 42 degrees F (6 degrees C). Warm clothes, sturdy shoes and a least two sources of light per person are recommended. Allow one hour to hike the lower cave and 2.5 hours for the more difficult, upper cave. Mid-June through the end of September a bookstore, lantern rentals, and Rangers are available on site.

Heavy visitation of the cave during the peak hours of 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekends creates a less than desirable experience and parking issues. Please plan your visit around these peak-visitation times and days for a more positive caving experience.

**Lava Canyon**

Travel along the Lava Canyon Trail and explore a mudflow-scoured canyon revealed by the May 18th, 1980 eruption. Spectacular views of waterfalls plunging over an ancient lava flow that spilled down the flanks of Mount St. Helens nearly 2,000 years ago leaving behind three-dimensional imprints of trees in the old lava beds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUTHSIDE TRAILS (Forest Road 83)</th>
<th>Round Trip</th>
<th>Elevation Change</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail of Two Forests #233 Forest Road 8303, 0.5 mile east of Ape Cave.</td>
<td>0.25 mile</td>
<td>1860 feet to 1885 feet</td>
<td>Boardwalk trail that leads you across a 1,900 year old lava flow and lets you explore tree casts that record an ancient forest consumed by lava.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June Lake Trail #216B Forest Road 83. Trailhead is seven miles north of junction with Forest Road 90.</td>
<td>3.2 miles</td>
<td>2700 feet to 3400 feet</td>
<td>Trail climbs along rushing stream before reaching a lake nestled between basalt cliff and a 1,900 year-old lava flow. Lake offers an ideal lunch stop before continuing ½ mile to junction with Loowit Trail 216.</td>
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**Eastside: Forest Road 99**

**Blown-down Forest, Spirit Lake Viewpoints and Cascade Peaks Information Station**

Experience the full impact of the 1980 lateral blast and 38 years of natural recovery as you drive through miles of standing-dead and blown-down forests. Forest Road 99 is generally accessible after snow melts (late June through October; closed in winter) and offers the only drive-up viewpionts of Spirit Lake and its immense log mat. Vistas, trails, lakes, wildlife and the amazing power of nature abound. Rangers provide Eruption Talks at Windy Ridge and other viewpionts during July and August. A valid Recreation Pass is required for each vehicle and can be purchased at various locations (see page 7) including the Cascade Peaks Information Station. Cascade Peaks is operated by Discover Your Northwest, with the help of volunteers, in cooperation with the US Forest Service. Souvenirs, snacks and water are available for purchase. Hours of operation are Thursday thru Monday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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<tr>
<th>EASTSIDE TRAILS (Forest Road 99)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meta Lake Trail #210 Forest Road 99, 0.1 miles west of junction of Road 99 with Road 26.</td>
<td>0.6 mile</td>
<td>620 feet to 640 feet</td>
<td>Paved trail explores blowdown forest and sparkling lake. View forest that survived eruption under thick snowpack.</td>
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<td>Windy Ridge Sand Ladder North end of the Windy Ridge Viewpoint Parking Lot.</td>
<td>0.5 mile</td>
<td>4070 feet to 4270 feet</td>
<td>Climb 368 steps to hilltop view of Spirit Lake and crater. Use caution as loose pumice can make for unstable footing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmony Trail #224 Forest Road 99, 2.5 miles north of Windy Ridge Viewpoint. Off-trail travel, pets and bikes are prohibited.</td>
<td>2 miles</td>
<td>4100 feet to 5400 feet</td>
<td>Trail descends steeply to Spirit Lake (this is only trail to shoreline). View the effects of lateral blast and “tidal wave” formed as landslide slammed into lake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truman Trail #207 and Willow Springs Trail #207A Forest Road 99, trailhead at south end of Windy Ridge parking lot. Off-trail travel, pets and bicycles prohibited.</td>
<td>1.5 miles</td>
<td>4200 feet to 5600 feet</td>
<td>Trail follows old road into Spirit Lake basin. Wooden posts mark path across boulder-filled floodplain. Willow Springs Trail (0.8 mile) connects with Loowit Trail 216 and other loop opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundary Trail #1 to Norway Pass Norway Pass trailhead, Forest Road 26. 1 mile north of 99/26 road 1st.</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
<td>3700 feet to 4400 feet</td>
<td>Trail climbs out of Green River Valley, with views of Mt. Adams to the east, Mt. Rainier to the north and spectacular view of Spirit Lake and Mt. St. Helens at Norway Pass.</td>
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**Climbing Mount St. Helens**

At 8,328 feet high, the summit of Mount St. Helens offers breathtaking views of areas affected by the 1980 eruption as well as neighboring volcanic mountain peaks. Although strenuous, this non-technical climb is suitable for people in good physical condition who are comfortable scrambling on steep, rugged terrain. Most climbers complete the round trip in seven to twelve hours.

A climbing permit is required year-round for each person travelling above 4,800 ft. on Mount St. Helens and must be displayed. The permit system was implemented in 1987 and helps to protect the volcano’s physical and biological features and processes by reducing crowding and overuse. Between April 1st and October 31st permits cost $22.00 and are available February 1st for purchase on a first-come/first-served basis through the Mount St. Helens Institute (www.mshinstitute.org). Climbers will need to print their permits at home and sign in at the climbing register located at the trailhead. Visit the Mount St. Helens Climbing website for detailed information on current conditions, volcanic hazards, and required equipment: https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/giffordpinchot/recreation/climbing/recarea/recid-81369. Purchase your climbing permit at the following website: http://www.mshinstitute.org/explore/climbing-permits/purchasing-your-permits.html
**Bats Matter at Ape Cave**

White-nose syndrome has killed over 7 million bats in the U.S. and Canada since 2006 and is considered the most devastating disease ever reported for wildlife in North America. The disease, named because of the white, fuzzy growth on the nose, ears, and wings of some affected bats, is caused by a cold-loving fungus that thrives in bat hibernation sites such as caves and mines. Affected bats wake up more often during hibernation, causing them to use crucial fat reserves, leading to possible starvation and death.

The disease has spread rapidly since it was first documented in New York State in 2006 and is now confirmed in 32 states and 5 Canadian provinces. In March 2016, Washington’s first case of white-nose syndrome was confirmed near North Bend, 30 miles east of Seattle. In February of 2018, the fungus was detected a mere 50 miles from Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument at Mount Rainier National Park.

White-nose syndrome is spread primarily through bat-to-bat and bat-to-cave contact, but scientists have also demonstrated that it may be possible for humans to inadvertently carry white-nose syndrome spores on their clothing and equipment. YOU CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD! For the latest information on this disease and decontamination procedures visit [www.whitenoisesyndrome.org](http://www.whitenoisesyndrome.org).

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument has instituted a screening procedure at Ape Cave to help prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome. If you have been in any cave or mine, no item worn or used in that cave or mine will be allowed in Ape Cave. Visitors will need to either change their boots, clothing or gear or return another time after decontaminating their items.

**Mount Margaret Backcountry**

Explore the pinnacle-studded ridges, sapphire lakes, flowered mountain slopes and amazing vistas of the Mount Margaret Backcountry. This rugged and spectacular area offers hikers a unique opportunity to explore and discover the dramatic effects of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens. To protect natural features, pets, pack stock, and campfires are prohibited in the Mount Margaret Backcountry.

Trails in the Mount Margaret Backcountry have narrow tread, are steep in places and can climb over 2,000 feet in elevation. Portions of trails are often covered by snow until mid-summer.

Nighttime camping is only allowed at designated sites in the backcountry and requires a permit. Each campsite has a level, wood-framed, earth-filled tent pad; a grey water sump for waste water from washing and cooking; and a solar composting toilet. Permits are only available through advance online reservations at Recreation.gov or by toll free telephone (1-877-444-6777), or TDD (1-877-TDD-6777). Permits go on sale March 1 each year and there is a non-refundable reservation fee of $10.00.

For backcountry updates and condition reports please visit: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/giffordpinchot/recreation/recarea/?recid=41618](https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/giffordpinchot/recreation/recarea/?recid=41618)

**Plan Your Visit**

**FAMILY CAMP**

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**Attn: Teachers, Parents and Kids**

School Group Registration

Schools and youth groups, extend your stay at Mount St. Helens with hands-on science and adventure during a day or overnight Volcano Outdoor School program. Mount St. Helens Institute will work with you to design and lead activities for your students. Can’t visit Mount St. Helens? We will bring volcano lessons to the classroom for free. Learn more and register online at [mshinstitute.org/learn](http://mshinstitute.org/learn).

4th grade students! Earn a free pass that will get you and 3 family members into National Forests, National Parks and other federal lands free! Please visit [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov) for more information.

Schools/youth groups serving low-income and under-resourced students may apply for transportation funding and Volcano Outdoor School participation online: [mshinstitute.org/learn](http://mshinstitute.org/learn).

Jr. Ranger Activity – Kids of all ages can earn a JR Ranger badge at Mount St. Helens. Booklets and worksheets are always available, or there might be a ranger-led program on the day you visit. Check with the information desk at Johnston Ridge Observatory for information.

**BOY SCOUTS**

**SUMMER ON THE MOUNTAIN**

The 2018 Summer on the Mountain Series has something for everyone! Events are held at the Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center unless otherwise noted. Some events require advanced registration, learn more online at [www.mshslc.org](http://www.mshslc.org).

**MAY 19.................................................................. IT’S A BLAST**

- This event marks the 38th anniversary of the 1980 eruption with special hands-on activities and prizes, in addition to normal visitor center programs.

**JUNE 29-JULY 1 ... ART BLAST WITH ART-ADVENTURES.COM**

- Includes art instruction, meals, shared lodging, yoga, and more!

**JUNE 30.............................................. MUSIC ON THE MOUNTAIN**

Live music at Johnston Ridge Observatory by Northwest Groove.

**JULY 14-15.................................................. FAMILY CAMP**

- A family adventure with activities, meals, and lodging.

**AUGUST 4-5........................................... SKY AND STAR PARTY**

- Dinner, music, guest speakers, hands-on activities, camping, and sky and star viewing (weather permitting).

**AUGUST 11-12.............................................. FAMILY CAMP**

- A family adventure with activities, meals, and lodging.

**OCTOBER 6............................................... CARNIVAL OF COLORS**

- Family-friendly carnival with professional face painting, crafts, carnival games, prizes, food, and more!
Learning from Our Volcano

Mount St. Helens is a living laboratory for all – a source of new scientific discoveries and an authentic science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning environment. Mount St. Helens Institute believes in the power of science to help solve problems, inspire critical thinking, and make the world a better place. We believe that the natural world and public lands around us are an irreplaceable resource to be respected, loved, understood, and cared for. Our youth need the skills to become the next generation of land managers, innovators, engineers and scientists to steward public land, keep our communities safe from natural hazards and develop the technologies to better understand the inner workings of the Earth. Mount St. Helens is a public resource to inspire the next generation.

In school classrooms and in the dynamic, awe-inspiring outdoor classroom of Mount St. Helens, Mount St. Helens Institute supports teachers with Next Generation Science Standards and cultivates 21st Century career skills in youth. Through personalized learning experiences, students express their curiosity, develop their connection to the outdoors, discover a myriad of careers and are empowered to make a difference in our communities and on our public lands.

Science and art summer camps for youth and families, day and overnight field trips for schools and youth groups, classroom visits, and resources for teachers give youth of all ages the opportunity to explore the landscape and discover their potential. We believe that everyone, regardless of their background, physical ability, or economic status, can learn from and be inspired by the volcano in our backyard.

Learn more at: http://www.mshinstitute.org/learn

Volunteer with the Mount St. Helens Institute

Mount St. Helens Institute volunteers have helped visitors from all over the world explore and learn about Mount St. Helens for over 25 years. Volunteers build the connection between people and place by engaging with all ages to ensure everyone enjoys and appreciates this spectacular volcanic landscape.

Volunteers serve in a variety of roles on and off the mountain. Volunteers provide support for Volcanic Monument visitor centers and Forest Service rangers, perform trail maintenance and increase access to our public lands, teach youth on the mountain and in the classroom, and support community events on the volcano and throughout southwest Washington. If you’d like to support your community and the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and share your passion, find a volunteer role that serves both your interests and the needs of the volcano with the Mount St. Helens Institute.

Learn more about current service opportunities and complete a volunteer application online at: www.mshinstitute.org/volunteer.

Have fun, explore the outdoors, share nature with others, and become a volunteer!

Mount St. Helens Institute, Help Us Share the Wonder

The Mount St. Helens Institute advances the understanding and stewardship of the Earth through science, education, and exploration of volcanic landscapes.

The Mount St. Helens Institute, founded in 1992, connects people of all ages to Mount St. Helens and our natural world through educational programming designed to enrich visitors’ appreciation and understanding of the Pacific Northwest’s youngest and most active volcano.

We provide engaging science education, meaningful volunteer opportunities and expert-led guided programs. Our exceptional science and outdoor education programs provide meaningful experiences and career skills that inspire students and encourage them to become informed citizens and critical thinkers. The Mount St. Helens Institute works closely with the U.S. Forest Service’s Gifford Pinchot National Forest to steward our public lands and share the wonders of the volcano in our backyard with visitors.

As a traditional non-profit organization, we operate through financial support from several sources including foundation and grant funding, program income, fundraising events, and donations and memberships from people like you. Support stewardship and education on Mount St. Helens, become a member of the Mount St. Helens Institute today: http://www.mshinstitute.org/give.

The Mount St. Helens Institute is proud to operate under a special use permit from the US Forest Service and is an equal opportunity provider.

The Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater

The Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater (SLC) is a multifunctional facility that features amazing views, 27 beds, a full kitchen, large meeting rooms, and 11,000 plus square feet of space. During the summer, the SLC is home to youth education programs, rentals, and the “Summer on the Mountain” public event series. The SLC is available to rent for education events, retreats, conferences, weddings, parties, and more! During the winter, while the Johnston Ridge Observatory is closed, the SLC is open on weekends for visitors from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

For information on education programs, rentals, events, or visitor portal hours please visit www.mshslc.org or contact Kori Quatermass, Science and Learning Center Director, at rent@mshinstitute.org or (360)274-2114.
About Your Monument

Your Fees Help Support the Monument

Interpretive services and facilities on the Westside of Mount St. Helens are supported by your purchase of a Monument Pass. Passes are $8 per adult (youth 15 and younger are free). Passes are required at the Johnston Ridge Observatory, adjacent trails and at the Coldwater Lake Recreation Area. Monument Passes can be purchased at Johnston Ridge Observatory. On the Eastside and Southside of the Monument a Northwest Forest pass is required at designated sites. The cost is $5 per vehicle per day. Annual passes are $30. Passes are sold at Forest Service offices and at self-service pay stations around the Monument. Details at: www.fs.usda.gov/main/giffordpinchot/passes-permits.

Purchase Your Interagency Annual Pass at Mount St. Helens

Your Fees Help Support the Monument

Fees from pass sales are used to provide the services and facilities that you enjoy during your visit. An Interagency Annual Pass is available for $80. At per person fee sites it allows the pass holder and up to three additional visitors. Interagency Annual, Senior, and Access passes are available at Forest Service offices and at self-service pay stations around the Monument. Details at: www.fs.fed.us/passespermits/rec-fee.shtml.

The standard amenity fees. Information about the interagency annual pass program is available at: www.fs.fed.us/passespermits/rec-fee.shtml.

Partnerships Are the New Normal

The fundamental mission of the U.S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The challenges to this mission have gotten significantly more complex and require a new way of working.

Partnerships are now at the very core of how the U.S. Forest Service does business. Engaging partners is a critical form of public involvement and helps leverage private investment and in-kind contributions to get things done.

Nearly all visitors to Mount St. Helens will appreciate the bookstores managed by Discover Your Northwest and benefit from the funding they generate for interpretive programs and materials. When visiting you may meet Mount St Helens Institute volunteers who help visitors plan and enjoy their visits, lead hikes, assist climbers and deliver education programs. You may explore trails that have been improved or maintained by Washington Trails Association, Back Country Horsemen of Washington, Northwest Trail Alliance, Mount St. Helens Club and Trak Riders. Clean Forest Friends, Old Guys Who Build Stuff and individual volunteers help with maintaining and hosting recreation structures and sites.

Partnerships extend the reach of the Forest Service and provide vital support for recreational and land management activities. Partners and volunteers who get involved gain awareness of conservation issues and feel a great sense of pride in the work we do together.

Please acknowledge and thank our volunteers and partners, and consider joining us by volunteering or partnering at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

Take Care of Your Pet, Protect the Monument

To protect plant and animal life and provide for visitor safety, pets are prohibited at all recreation sites and trails within the Monument’s restricted area (see yellow shaded section of map on page 7). Pets are permitted only in designated pet areas and must be on a leash. Lack of shade and summer heat can endanger pets left in cars. For the safety and comfort of your pet, please arrange to leave your pet at home. Contact any Forest Service office for information on where it is safe to take your pet.

Help Protect the Monument

In 1982, Congress established the 110,300 acre Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument to provide for scientific research, education and recreation.

- Share the trails.
- Do not feed the animals.
- Stay on paved areas and designated hiking trails.
- Do not disturb or remove any natural features.
- Keep pets on a leash and in designated pet areas.

Driving Times (Hours: Minutes)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apes Cave</th>
<th>Bland Canyon</th>
<th>PCC Information Station</th>
<th>Windy Ridge</th>
<th>Randle</th>
<th>Mount St. Helens Visitor Center</th>
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* Reservations are required: Call (503) 813-6666. ** Reservations are accepted: Call (877) 444-6777. *** Reservations are accepted: Call (888) 226-7688.