



NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

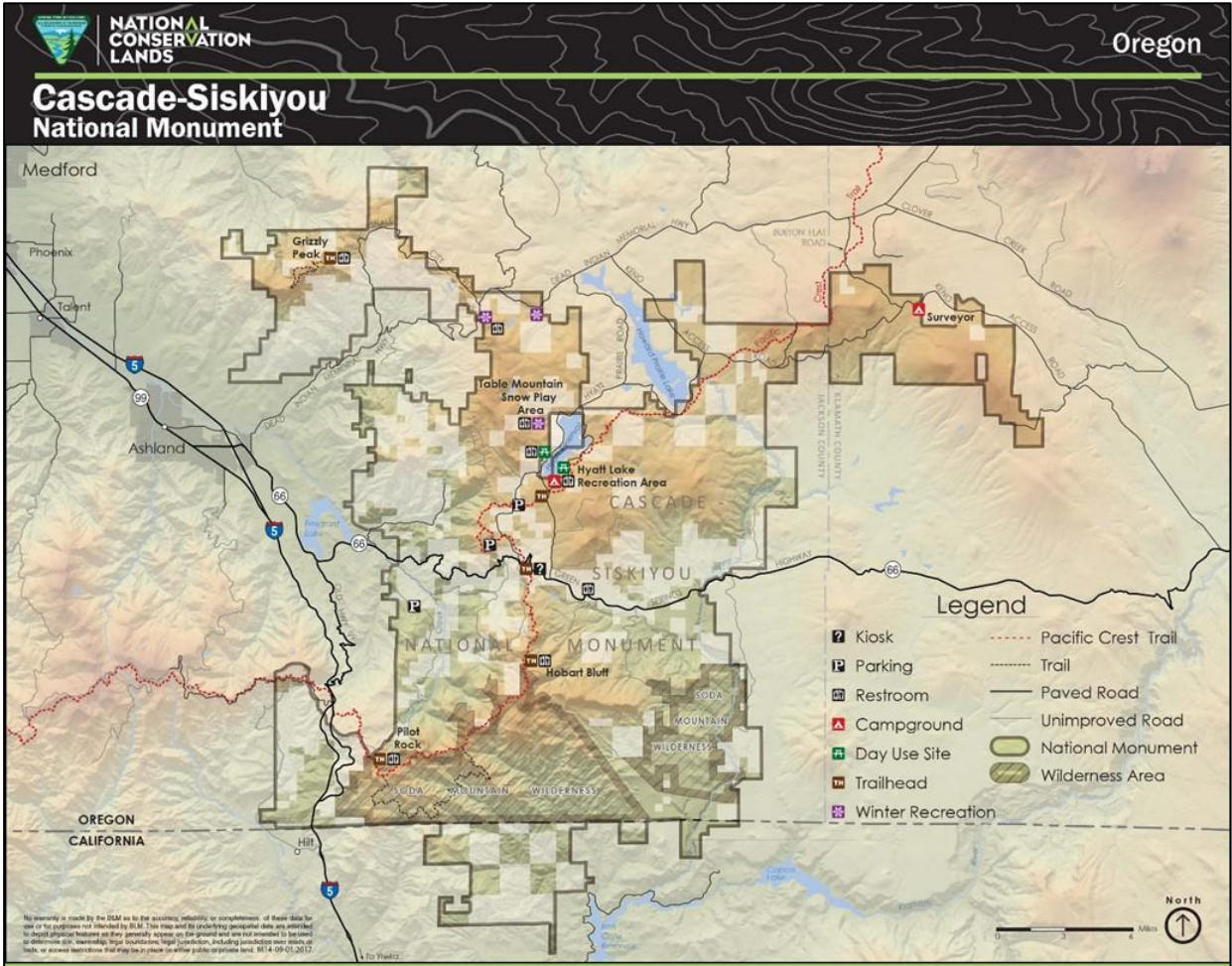
Oregon/Washington
2021: Annual Manager's Report

Cascade-Siskiyou

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) was established in recognition of its remarkable ecology and to protect a diverse range of biological, geological, and historic objects. The richness of the plant community is due to the CSNM’s location at the intersection of the Cascade, Klamath, and Eastern Cascade Slopes ecoregions. Evolution, long-term climatic change, and geological processes all contributed to the high ecological richness of the lands now within the CSNM.

The CSNM continued to provide high quality recreation opportunities in 2021. Hunting, snowmobiling, mountain biking, riding horses, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, birdwatching, and wildlife viewing are popular activities throughout the CSNM. Hiking opportunities include 41 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Grizzly

Peak Trail, and the Lone Pilot Trail. The Hyatt Lake Recreation Area provides camping, hiking, fishing, and boating opportunities.

For the fifth year, the CSNM participated in the BLM's Artist in Residence Program. Julie Hutslar (pictured below) traveled from Montana to create watercolor paintings within the CSNM for her residency. Susan Roudebush created quilted panels of key species in different ecological zones within the CSNM.

In 2021, the BLM used deferred maintenance funding to replace all the failing culverts on Soda Mountain Road, one of the most-travelled roads in the CSNM. Additional work to finish grading and re-rocking this road will take place in fiscal year (FY) 2022.



Challenges

Since its 2017 expansion, the CSNM now spans two states, three districts, and three field offices. There are currently three line officers who make decisions for their respective portions of the CSNM and an Assistant Monument Manager who supervises staff and manages the budget for the Medford District portion. These administrative divisions create challenges for cohesive management.

The water and wastewater systems at the Hyatt Lake Campground date to 1969. While the water system was mostly operational in 2021, leaks were a regular occurrence and the BLM intends to replace the lines in FY 2023.

The Medford District encompasses over 870,000 acres of BLM-administered land, and three BLM law enforcement rangers, two full-time contract deputies, and a seasonal deputy are responsible for patrolling this land base. The CSNM continues to receive numerous reports of poaching, trash dumping, vandalism, and motorized incursions into the wilderness.

Approximately 50 feral horses now seasonally occupy the CSNM's Agate Flats area near the California border. These horses are creating trails and causing ecological impacts. Staff are seeking ways to fund construction of fencing at the California border to help address these issues.



Visitors

With an estimated 170,454 visitor days in FY 2021, the CSNM continues to see an increase in visitation. Many of these visitors enjoy the CSNM while driving and stopping at waysides. Hiking and winter recreation activities, such as sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling, have also shown significant increases.

The Hyatt Lake Recreation Area offers the only developed camping opportunities in the CSNM and had an estimated 7,666 visitor days in 2021. Visitation in this area was down in 2020; many potential visitors cancelled campground reservations due to the low water level in Hyatt Lake and wildfire smoke in August. Most visitors to the Hyatt Lake Recreation Area are from the local communities of the Rogue Valley. Recently, however, visitation from travelers along Interstate 5 has increased. The Hyatt Lake

Recreation Area is only 20 miles from Interstate 5, and travelers find it to be a pleasant respite from the summer heat of the valley and a beautiful place to camp.

The CSNM is also well-regarded for black-tailed deer hunting, which has made the fall hunting season a popular time of year. In the fall, hunters occupy many of the dispersed camping areas and the roads are busy with hunters looking to fill their tags.



Partnerships

The CSNM maintains an active partnership with the Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Several CSNM staff members are advisors to this organization and attend monthly board meetings. In 2021, COVID-19 safety concerns caused a reduction in the interpretive programs, guided hikes and talks, and other offerings on which the BLM and the Friends group typically partner.

The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) is an active partner and helps to maintain the 41 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail in the CSNM. The PCTA offers an annual trail skills workshop at Hyatt Lake Campground. In 2021, a reduced number of participants gained skills in trail maintenance, basic saw use, and drainage feature construction.

The CSNM partners with the Southern Oregon Nordic Club to maintain the Buck Prairie Winter Trail System, which has over 32 miles of trails for skiers, snowmobilers, and snowshoers. This partner donates hundreds of hours grooming and maintaining trails and provides outings and workshops to skiers of all ages and abilities.

In 2021, the CSNM renewed a partnership with the Klamath Basin Snowdrifters, a nonprofit snowmobile/grooming club that grooms 360 miles of multi-use winter recreation trails in the Lake of the Woods/Fish Lake/Hyatt Lake area. The Snowdrifters recently got approval to groom across a section of private property, allowing for a 40-mile network of winter trails from Lake of the Woods to Hyatt Lake.

The Siskiyou Mountain Club's mission is to maintain wilderness trails in southwestern Oregon. The club partners with the BLM to maintain the CSNM portion of the Pacific Crest Trail as well as the 17-mile Lone Pilot Trail inside the Soda Mountain Wilderness.



Science

In 2021, the CSNM saw the continuation of numerous projects with a diverse array of researchers. There were studies in geologic mapping (University of Oregon), mollusk surveys (Xerces Society), native bees and butterfly surveys (Oregon State University), Oregon spotted frog ecology (Southern Oregon University), fungi inventory and use in restoration (Southern Oregon University), Brewer oak responses to wildfire (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), riparian restoration (The Beaver Coalition), vesper sparrow ecology (Klamath Bird Observatory), grassland treatment experiments (The Understory Initiative), and rare plant monitoring protocol development (The Understory Initiative).

Of particular interest to CSNM staff, is a study on the effectiveness of methods to transition non-native dominated grasslands back to ecologically healthy native

grasslands. Native grasslands are becoming very rare in southwest Oregon due to a history of overgrazing and agricultural development. The CSNM staff are working with a regional consortium of botanists and The Understory Initiative on this project. In 2020, project participants set up 20 permanent study plots throughout CSNM grasslands. In 2021, participants applied treatments to study plots and developed protocols for measuring post-treatment species cover and richness. Treatments included burning with a propane hand torch (as in the photo below), covering with a tarp, and mechanical removal using a line trimmer. After treatments, participants planted all plots with a native plant seed mix. Project participants will continue to monitor these plots and make adjustments as new data are collected and analyzed.



Climate Impacts

The CSNM staff and partners have recently established long-term monitoring programs to assess trends and eventual impacts of climate change. An ongoing partnership with the Klamath Bird Observatory has so far resulted in 2 years of annual bird surveys at over 20 permanently placed transects within the CSNM. The CSNM staff are also working closely with the National Park Service to establish 25 vegetation plots that will be monitored every 3 years.

Through an ongoing partnership with the Xerces Society and the Invertebrate Lab at Oregon State University, the BLM is developing and implementing monitoring protocols for butterflies and native bees in the CSNM. Participants have completed several bee surveys in the CSNM and are developing monitoring protocols. They also recently completed a 2019-2021 CSNM butterfly monitoring report.

In 2019, CSNM staff established a long-term water quantity monitoring program covering over 25 sites within the CSNM. Staff and volunteers collect monthly water flow data at these sites to assess natural seasonal variation and long-term trends.

These monitoring programs encourage engagement by CSNM neighbors and volunteer community scientists. In 2021, numerous volunteers participated in water quantity and butterfly monitoring. The CSNM staff have helped adjacent landowners establish butterfly, bird, and water quantity monitoring sites on their properties. The CSNM staff are working with the Vesper Meadow and Sampson Creek preserves on a number of these monitoring projects to better assess climate impacts on a landscape scale.

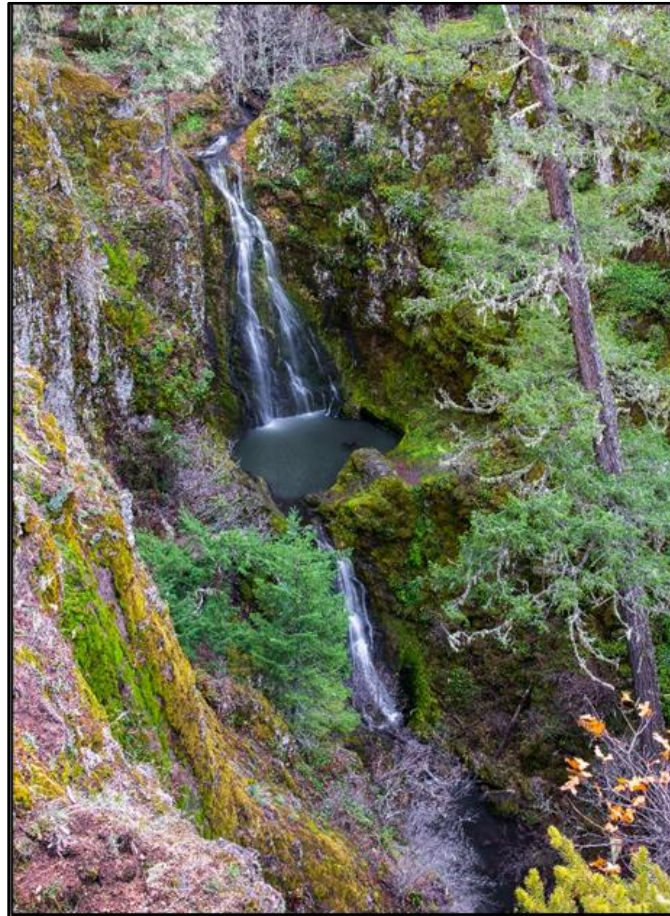


Climate Resiliency

In 2021, the CSNM staff worked with the Beaver Coalition, a local non-profit group of riparian experts, to build climate resiliency in the CNSM. The goal of the project was to document and assess the condition of all riparian areas within the CSNM and to prioritize areas for restoration work. The prioritization was based on the likely effectiveness of projects to bring a floodplain to a hydrologically functioning level that increases stored water and enhances the surrounding area's ability to mitigate wildfire threats through increased wetness and wetland vegetation.

Beavers are already experts at this work but were extirpated from many areas within the CSNM due to hunting and trapping activities over the past 150 years. The CSNM and collaborating scientists have constructed structures within stream channels to increase water and food sources for beaver to entice them to resettle in the CSNM. Once

beavers have re-established at additional locations within the CSNM, they are likely to continue enhancing the ecological health of these areas. This important project work will continue in FY 2022.



Social and Environmental Justice

Each fall, the CSNM staff provide curriculum-based education programming for area students. This 7-week program is called “Fall in the Field.” The Fall in the Field program is a collaboration with the Southern Oregon University’s Environmental Education Graduate Program and is the capstone project for the program’s master’s degree candidates. In FY 2021, approximately 450 students from 3rd through 8th grade classrooms participated in the program. Lessons focused on biodiversity, adaptation, fire ecology, migration, climatology, and wildlife tracking. Of the 11 schools participating in the “Fall in the Field” program, 64 percent were Title 1 schools.

Scheduling challenges due to wildfire smoke and COVID-19 led to 25 cancelled programs, 13 rescheduled programs, and 5 programs changed to a virtual format. There was one hybrid 3-day program hosted between Willow-Witt Ranch and the CSNM,

and there were 14 programs delivered in the CSNM on the Green Springs and Hobart Bluff Trails.



Events

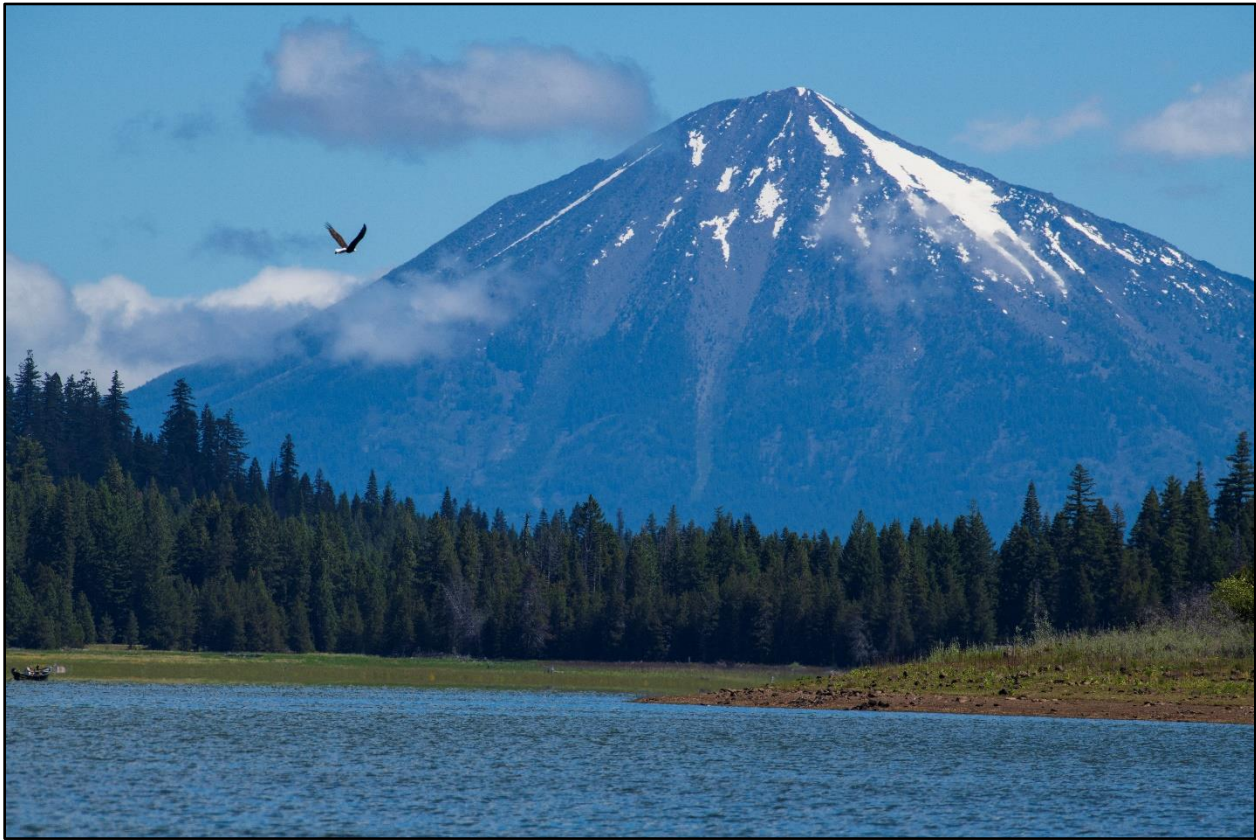
The CSNM resource management plan allows the BLM to authorize commercial recreational uses through special recreation permits (SRP) that are consistent with the plan's objectives. The BLM established specific SRP evaluation criteria for the CSNM in 2014. These criteria include potential permit availability, thresholds, and adherence to the resource management plan.

In 2021, the BLM issued two SRPs in the CSNM. The first SRP was for the Siskiyou Field Institute to conduct a 1-day field course to observe butterflies and moths in the CSNM. This course was titled "Introduction to Siskiyou & Cascade Butterflies and Diurnal Moths." The second SRP was for the Pacific Crest Endurance Ride, a 35-, 55-, and 75-mile endurance horse riding event held over the course of 2 days.



Words from the staff

The staff of the CSNM are keenly aware of the very important role of the many motivated and creative partners, volunteers, and supporters of the monument. We recognize that, moving forward, we will need to continue to work together to accomplish our shared goals within the CSNM. We cannot thank these volunteers and supporters enough for their tireless service to the CSNM's unique and varied resources and values.



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Cascade-Siskiyou

National Monument

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