



# Having a Safe Hike

## *Minor Hazards to Be Aware of While Hiking Through John Day Fossil Beds National Monument*

### **Trails ...**

We strongly recommend that you stay on established trails and fire roads while hiking about the monument grounds. This will minimize the hazards that may worry you. Always note where the nearest source for emergency help is located.

Please remember that your pets must be on a leash at all times during your hike and are not allowed backcountry (off-trail or off-road), for their safety and the safety of the resource.

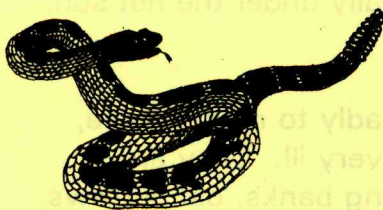
### **Proper Equipment ...**

Depending on the length of your hike the equipment you take will vary. In the heat of summer, we recommend a hat to guard against the hot sun, perhaps sunglasses, plenty of water for you and your pets, and proper hiking shoes. We also recommend a camera and binoculars, as the scenery and wildlife can be inspiring.

**GOOD RULE: WHILE YOU HIKE, NEVER PUT YOUR HAND OR FOOT WHERE YOU CANNOT SEE, AND YOU WILL HAVE A SAFER EXPERIENCE.**

**Bites ...** Should you be bitten by any animal seek immediate first aid.

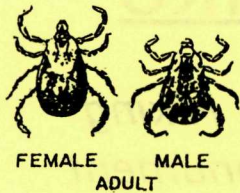
### **Rattlesnakes ...**



First thing to remember, most of the snakes you may see in the monument are not rattlesnakes, but non-poisonous bull snakes and garter snakes. Rattlesnakes are poisonous but rarely deadly (forget the old western films), though emergency first aid after a bite is necessary.

Rattlesnakes will usually try to crawl away or remain hidden unless surprised. They will feel your approach by the vibrations in the ground. They cannot hear sound. Their food consists of principally lizards and small rodents. They will seek shady, cooler areas when the hot summer sun is out. Their strike to bite is about half their body length, and they do not fly or spring out into the air to bite. A disturbed rattlesnake almost always gives a rattle as a warning. (Note: we have a grasshopper that makes a similar sound when it flies)

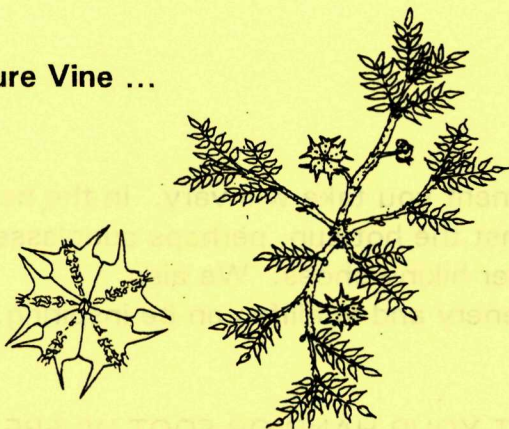
## Ticks ...



Adult ticks rest on grasses and low plants and attach themselves to people or animals that brush against the vegetation. Typically they are no more than 18 inches above the ground while waiting. Once they hitch a ride upon a passing animal or person they can spend up to 2 to 4 hours climbing the victim to find a good site and slowly drilling their mouth-parts into the skin to draw blood. Once imbedded, ticks can spread Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever to humans.

To protect yourself, avoid brushing against low plants. Staying on the trails will make this much easier. You can wear boots and close fitting clothing of tightly woven material. Keep shirts tucked into trousers and trousers tucked into boots. The use of repellent on clothing and exposed areas may help keep ticks off. Make periodic inspections of your clothing and that of your companions. Remove loose ticks and thoroughly wash your hands and contact area. If a tick is imbedded in the skin follow standard first aid procedures for removal.

## Puncture Vine ...



**OUCH !!!!**

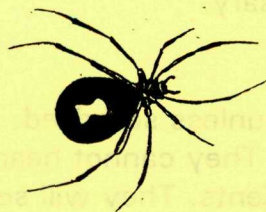
The spiny seed pods of this matted plant will penetrate soft soles of shoes, flatten bike tires, and stab bare feet. Look out for it along roadsides, and around recently disturbed soil areas where it likes to grow. It is not poisonous, but the puncture can get infected.

## Scorpions ...



About 1" to 1.5" in length, on average in this area, the monument scorpions are not considered deadly to most people, though their sting can make you very ill. They are usually found under rocks or bark, in lumber and even in shoes. They are nocturnal and feed on insects. They are rarely seen out in the open, especially under the hot sun.

## Black Widow Spiders ...



Common, not considered deadly to most people, but their bite will make you very ill. They are found in crevices, overhanging banks, old burrows, and many dark areas. Females are medium sized and glossy black with a bright red hourglass-shaped spot on the underside. Can be up to 1.25" in length.

**REMEMBER TO PROTECT OUR PARK INHABITANTS. THIS IS THEIR HOME.**