



August 16 – Labor Day



Pacific Madrone with peeling bark

Special Events

Ranger Programs

Free Ranger programs will be offered each day. Check the blackboard in the Visitor Center for fascinating topics and times. Candlelight tours that present a unique perspective of the caves will take place on Friday and Saturday evenings. Reservations for the adventurous off-trail tours continue into September.

Join Ranger Suzan Thursday nights for a free evening program: “Caves of the National Park Service.”

Chateau Programs

Entertainment at the Chateau is in full swing. David Hodges brings poetry to life on Wednesdays. Visitors on Sunday afternoons can enjoy the Celtic harpist, Bob Clark. Classical pianist Lindsey Brown plays on August 17, and Ross Welcome performs guitar and vocals on August 28. Inquire at the Chateau’s front desk for the finer details of these hotel events.

Pacific Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*)

Have you noticed the tree with the peeling bark? There’s nothing wrong with it: it’s the Pacific Madrone.

The madrone’s smooth bark peels in summer. Various chemicals in its sap permeate the bark layers, so that each layer takes on a new color, from bright green to a rosy terra cotta. As the tree’s bark peels, a variety of colors delights the eye. Even on hot days, the bark feels cool to the touch. Oval, evergreen leaves resemble those of a rhododendron. Spring’s white flower clusters produce autumn’s bright red berries, which provide food for birds and other wildlife.

The wood is hard and has been used for charcoal and for pipes. Madrone was used for the balusters in the main stairway of the Chateau.

Naturalist John Muir wrote that the tree looks like “some lost wanderer from the magnolia groves of the South,” but instead it calls the Pacific Northwest home. Enjoy these lovely trees, and all the others protected here at Oregon Caves National Monument.

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)

If you hear a wild laugh from the treetops while you’re hiking the trails, don’t be alarmed. Probably it’s the pileated woodpecker. Commonly heard but seldom seen, this shy woodpecker is at home only in mature forests salted with dead trees.

A crow-sized woodpecker with a flaming red crest, the pileated prefers to eat carpenter ants and wood-boring beetle larvae, but also consumes fruit, acorns, nuts, and sap. It drills or drums with its powerful beak, producing large holes in its search for food.

The male excavates the nest. Besides providing a refuge for its own offspring, the pileated is an “ecosystem engineer;” other birds and mammals depend on the cavities it creates for their own survival.

The largest woodpecker in most of North America, this year-round resident is a protected species. Its numbers have risen dramatically since 1900 due to

reforestation and the protection of large expanses of mature forests, like those surrounding you at Oregon Caves National Monument.



Pileated Woodpecker in Oregon

Dave Herr