

THE SCENE



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A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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Painting the roof on the Eagle Creek Community Kitchen

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

RECREATION UPDATES

This week, our developed recreation crews -- the folks who work hard to maintain visitor facilities -- painted the **Community Kitchen** structure at **Eagle Creek Picnic Area**. The site's history as a developed Forest Service recreation site dates back to 1916, when it was part of the larger, original campground. Today's structure was built during the **Civilian Conservation Corps era**. In 2018, while the area was still closed, we received funding through the **Preserving Oregon** grant program, which is administered by **Oregon Parks and Recreation Department**, to repair the picnic shelter and replace the roof.

Eagle Creek Picnic Area, Campground, and Eagle Creek Overlook Campground have been **open** all season, however the "main attraction" of Eagle Creek Trail remains closed due to remaining hazards. We are working with volunteers and Mt. Hood National Forest crews to clear, repair, and rebuild damaged sections of the trail and replace burned bridges.

We recently awarded the contract to rebuild **Fern Creek Bridge** and **High Bridge**, and work is expected to begin around September/October 2019. For those who are curious, another bridge along the trail that we replaced in early 2017 -- **Tish Creek Bridge** -- survived the fire intact as designed.

We will not be able to reopen the trail, for safety reasons, until its full length is complete and both bridges are installed. While there is **no timeline for reopening yet**, we are grateful to the many volunteers helping us get ready!

"There is no poop fairy"

- Every Forest Service employee and volunteer, ever, as we pick up trailside poop

HELP YOUR BEST FRIEND LEAVE NO TRACE

Even the smallest action can have an outsized impact in a place where millions visit each year. Please remember your dog needs your help leaving no trace. Bring a bag so you can help pack out all their poop!



Rangers Mike and Sienna pose at Multnomah Falls with what may be the world's tiniest dog.

trail tales

UPDATES & ANECDOTES

Larch Mountain Trail, which runs **6.8 miles** from Larch Mountain down to the paved trail at **Multnomah Falls**, is getting some attention on its **remote central section**. Crews are brushing and improving the trail's treadwork, redoing gabions as needed, and generally "polishing up" the stretch of trail between **Basin Road** and the new **Larch Mountain Bridge**.

Last year, while the area was closed, we replaced the **61-foot bridge**, which had been battered by natural events. First, a Douglas fir tree fell and **damaged the steel trusses** during a 2012 winter storm, making it only safe for one person to cross at a time. Then, in 2017, Eagle Creek Fire completely **burned the decking** so the bridge was replaced as part of the trail recovery. Funds were provided in part **thanks to recreation fees**.



Larch Mountain Bridge immediately post-fire (inset) and after its 2018 replacement

Powerline Rebuild

OUR ELECTRIFYING PARTNERSHIP WITH BPA

You may have seen **helicopters** at work recently in the central Gorge. For many, this the most visible sign of **BPA's work to rebuild 24 miles of end-of-service transmission line** between **Bonneville Dam** and **Hood River**. In addition to replacing transmission structures and conductors, the work will improve access roads and select trails, and remove hazard trees. The **three year project** has an estimated completion in **November 2021**.

For public safety, workers will at times temporarily close trail sections or delay hikers -- including the **Pacific Crest Trail**. Area campgrounds will remain open.

If you see a temporary closure sign, please follow instructions and give workers the space they need, for their safety as well as yours.

The Columbia River Gorge is a natural path through the Cascades, making it an ideal and incredibly important **regional power corridor**. The Forest Service and BPA developed an **interagency agreement** that sets the stage for a strong partnership, and greater benefits for powering the region into the future!



Helicopter removing an old transmission tower



Come wish **Smokey Bear** Happy Birthday and celebrate his **75 years** at the lower viewing platform of **Multnomah Falls** on Friday, **August 9** from **10 am to 2 pm**. Rangers will lead family friendly activities, share Smokey giveaways, and serve a **birthday cake** in his honor. Of course, Smokey will make an appearance to partake in the festivities and fun!