

The Ice Age Floods Story

During the most recent episode of major ice-sheet expansion, between about 18,000 and 14,000 years ago, a lobe of the Cordilleran ice sheet advanced into the Idaho Panhandle to the area that is now occupied by Lake Pend Oreille, blocking the Clark Fork River drainage and causing Glacial Lake Missoula to form.

At its largest, the lake was more than 2,000 feet deep at the dam and held over 500 cubic miles of water — as much as Lake Erie and Lake Ontario combined. However, as the lake waters rose the ice dam eventually failed catastrophically, and the lake would drain away in as little as two or three days.



When the dam broke the towering flood of water and ice up to 1000' deep swept across parts of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, scouring the landscape and ripping out soil and rock on its way to the ocean. The peak flow rate of the floods was ten times the combined flow of all the rivers of the world.



Then over a period of years the glacier would advance again, damming the river and reforming the lake. This process was repeated scores of times, until the ice sheet eventually ceased its advance and receded to the north at the end of the Ice Age.

Ice Age Floods Institute

The Ice Age Floods Institute (IAFI) is a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit founded in 1995. The Institute is dedicated to promoting public awareness and education relating to the significance of the Ice Age Floods.

The IAFI is working with the National Park Service, its federal and state partners, and tribal agencies in the development of the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, which will be based on existing public lands and roads.

Local chapters of the IAFI operate in Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon communities, offering public field trips and lectures. The Institute website maintains a comprehensive list of chapter events and has a wide range of resources including displays, exhibits, guidebooks, videos and maps.



For Ice Age Floods information, resources and contacts, and to join the Institute, please visit our website at <https://iafi.org/>, email us at IAFIInstitute@gmail.com, or leave a message for us at (541) 716-1311.



Cover illustration by Stev H. Ominski, generously provided by the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, is a detail view of the large painting titled "The Rowena Incident". The original can be seen at the Discovery Center in The Dalles, Oregon, or online at www.StevOminski.com. Maps were provided by Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects.

ICE AGE FLOODS

Left Their Mark On The Pacific Northwest



Thundering torrents of water, ice, rocks and soil roared across the Pacific Northwest, carving new canyons, creating monstrous waterfalls, instantly transforming the face of the land.

The face of the Northwest was forever changed


www.iafi.org

Ice Age Floods Institute

Explore Over 60 Ice Age Floods Features in 11 Chapter Brochures

<https://iafi.org/brochures>

1 Clark Fork Ice Dam
Purcell Trench Ice Lobe



THIS IS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!

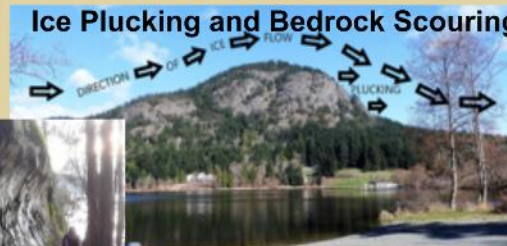
Stev Omirski

2 Bowl & Pitcher
Riverside State Park



SHORT HIKE

3 Mt. Erie
Ice Plucking and Bedrock Scouring

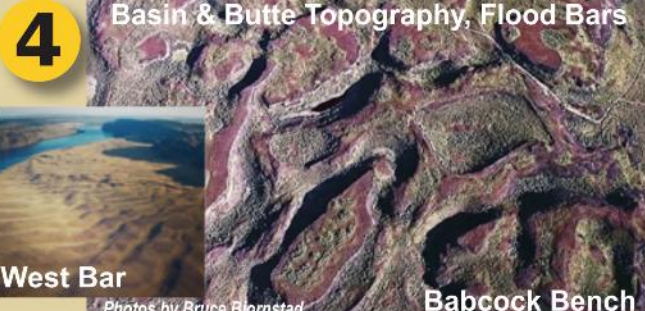


Ice-carved Groove

EASY ACCESS

Babcock Bench/West Bar
Basin & Butte Topography, Flood Bars

4




West Bar

Babcock Bench

Photos by Bruce Bjornstad

5 Palouse Falls
Recessional Cataract




The Castle

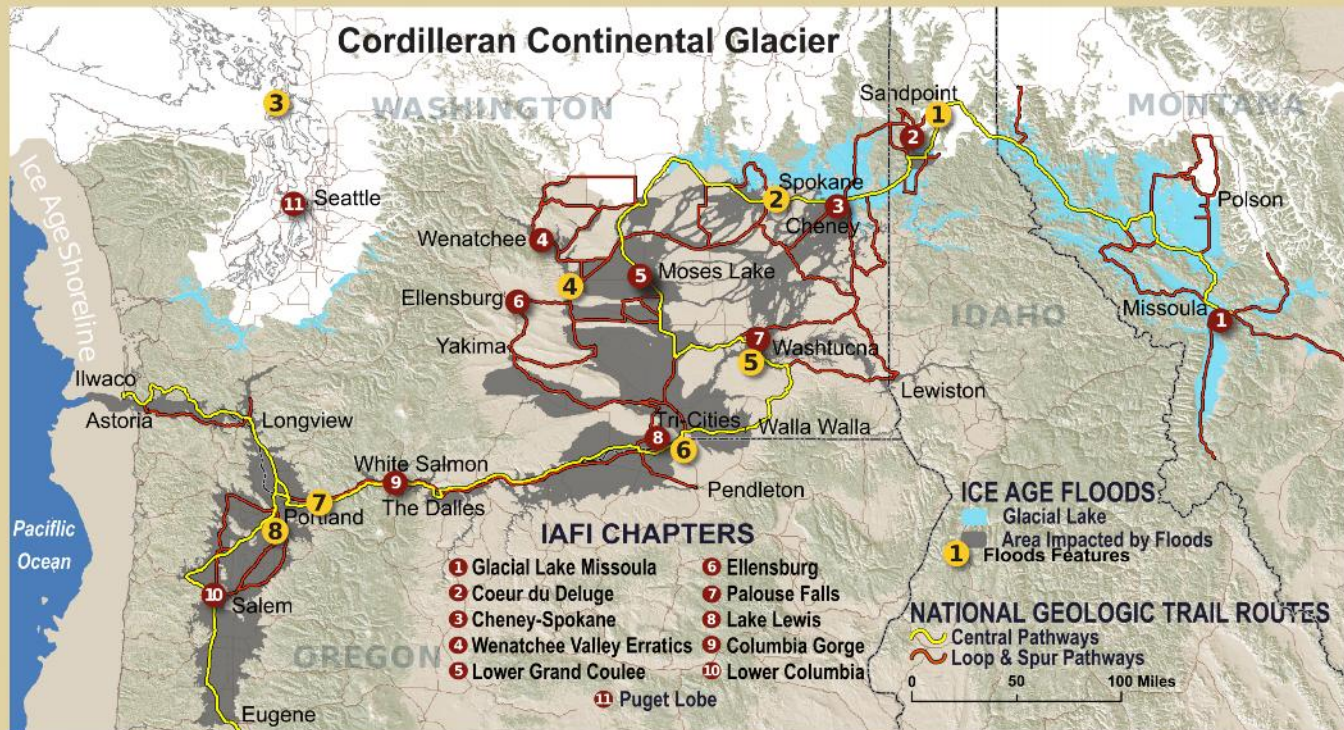
VIEWPOINT

Lloyd Stuess


6 Wallula Gap
National Natural Landmark and Two Sisters Pillars



SHORT HIKE



7 Crown Point
Vista House - Women's Forum



VIEWPOINTS

Photo by Mike Pinnau

8 Willamette Falls
Oregon City and West Linn



SHORT HIKES