

FieldNotes

Oregon's Preservation Magazine

Summer 2024



**Cumberland Church
Relocation and Restoration**

**DISCOVER ONE OF OREGON'S
HISTORIC GRAND LODGES**



Photo of the Oregon Caves Chateau.

DISCOVER ONE OF OREGON'S HISTORIC GRAND LODGES THE CHATEAU AT THE OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT & PRESERVE

By Nicole Possert

Photos Courtesy of Friends of the Oregon Caves & Chateau.

Nestled high in the forested splendor of the Siskiyou mountains in southern Oregon, the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve was Oregon's first National Monument designated in 1909 by President Taft. The monument was expanded (adding Preserve) in 2014 to over 4,500 protected acres today. The main attraction is a cave that the National Park Service (NPS) calls "the wondrous Marble Halls of Oregon." Nearby the cave entrance is the Chateau, an historic lodge with 25 rooms. Built by local investors in 1934, a luxury hotel with a welcoming lobby, indoor plumbing, and private rooms was needed to attract those who could afford to travel in their private automobiles, seeking luxury while adventuring in nature. The Chateau is an impressive 6-story lodge built in a canyon with a creek running through the dining room.

Its interior boasts whimsical, rare, and iconic Monterey-style furnishings (today, the largest

public collection anywhere). It has attracted many presidents and celebrities and is the birthplace of the ViewMaster.

The Chateau is one of the national park system's signature "great lodges" and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987. It is a rare example of

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Rustic style or "Parkitecture" which utilizes native materials, rough-hewn/natural logs and conveys it was built by hand. The Chateau also sits centrally located within the 60-acre Oregon Caves Historic District. Yet, it is likely the least known of Oregon's three iconic lodges

– Crater Lake Lodge, Timberline Lodge and the Oregon Caves Chateau.

Realizing the national importance of the Oregon Caves, in 2007, after Senator Ron Wyden suggested that a Friends group could bring additional strength to the Monument, the Friends of the Oregon Caves & Chateau (Friends) was founded. As an official non-profit philanthropic partner with the NPS,

this organization works to preserve, protect, and improve the cultural and natural resources of the Monument and Preserve. As such, it has long focused on restoring the Chateau and advocated becoming one of Restore Oregon's Most Endangered Places in 2016. After raising awareness and support for investing in the Chateau, NPS began restoration work in 2018 while the Friends raised funds and worked toward restoring character-defining features like the interior lighting, fixtures, doors, balconies, and all that original Monterey furniture.

Late last year, the Friends asked Restore Oregon to bolster and provide critical technical support and services to their new efforts to ensure the Chateau's survival and full restoration. As an anchor organization to a Blue Ribbon Committee, we are once again working closely with the Friends to raise awareness, funds, and all the advocacy needed to sustain this critical asset for the economy, quality of life, and our shared cultural heritage it represents.

During the onsite work in 2020, additional structural and seismic deficiencies were discovered; restoration work was paused until a plan was developed to

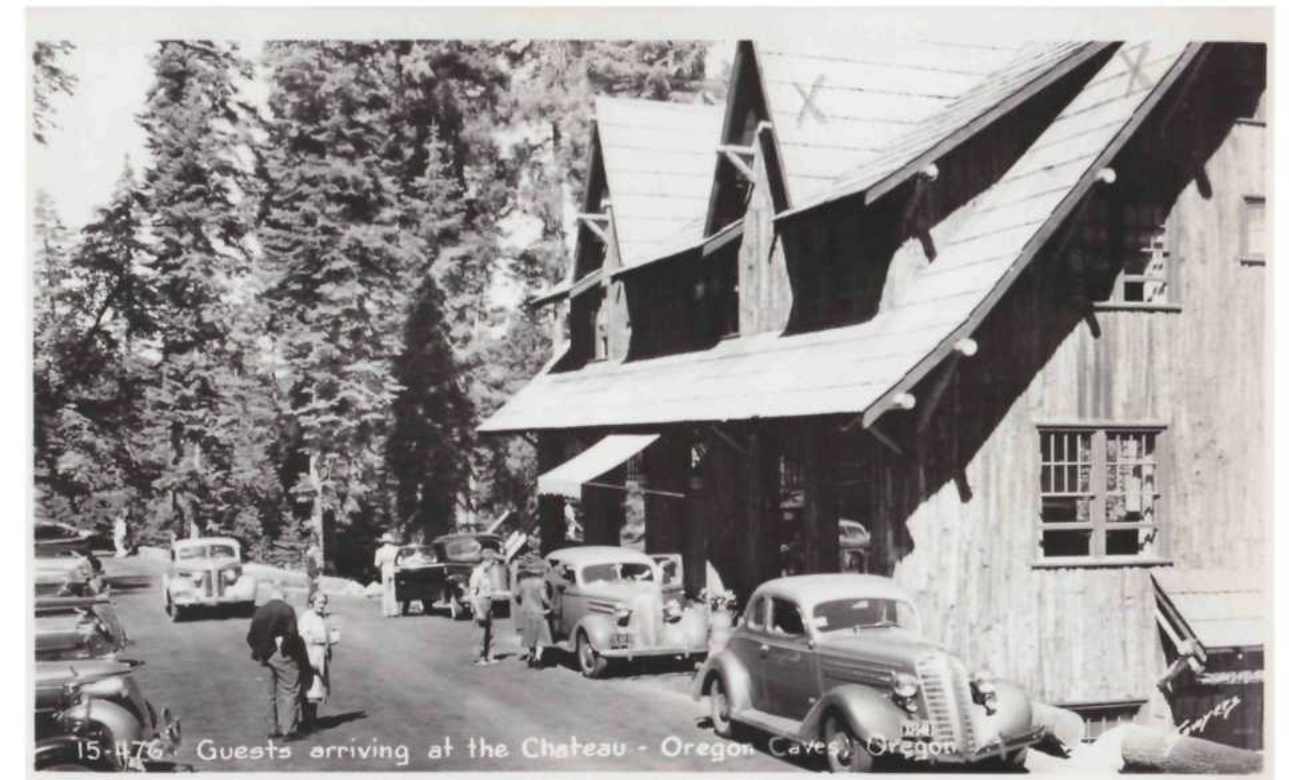


Photo Above: Exterior of Oregon Caves Chateau, Guests Arriving at the Chateau

address these issues and additional funding could be secured. Currently, the NPS is stabilizing the Chateau, protecting it from the elements and decreasing any degradation until the needed funding for its complete restoration can be secured. They are also working with Architectural Resources Group to complete new designs that would allow the structural and seismic work to be done in phases with the life/safety work to follow.

Restore Oregon helped the Friends secure a large grant from the State of Oregon during last year's legislative session to complete the interior work that can be done now, including restoring the 97 interior and exterior doors with original hardware. Friends are actively working to restore the over 400 pieces of Monterey furniture original to the lodge.

The Monument employs 75 full-time and seasonal staff, making it a significant regional employer. When the Chateau is reopened, 30 additional jobs will be restored. The sooner the Chateau opens, the better it will be able to stabilize the long-term infrastructure at the Monument. In 2022, 72,900 visitors to the Oregon Caves spent an estimated \$6.8 million in SW Oregon. Nationally, park visitors spent \$20.5 billion within 60 miles of the national parks. These

Photo Below: Interior Postcard of Oregon Caves Chateau Lounge



benefits are amplified when visitors stay overnight, one crucial reason to restore and re-open the Chateau. And for every dollar invested in park amenities, like the Chateau, \$10 in economic activity is generated for local communities.

While there is much forward momentum, more effort is needed to educate all Oregonians about the value and importance of the Chateau to collectively advocate for its complete restoration. We need to show overwhelmingly that Oregonian's care and demand that this historic lodge be restored to become a successful historic grand lodge once again. It will take everyone to support this sustained effort.



The interior of the Chateau - down to the studs

The Chateau at the Oregon Caves is a critical and irreplaceable asset for southern Oregon and the National Park System, or as the Friends of the Oregon Caves & Chateau say, "It's OUR National Treasure."

New History Book

"Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve"

Introducing a new book, a visual journey through the rich history of the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve. This treasure trove of over 240 photographs captures the essence of Oregon's iconic national treasure. The book not only chronicles the development and preservation of this unique marble cave but also unveils the story of the Chateau and its unique history, architecture, and interiors.

Authored by the Friends of the Oregon Caves & Chateau as part of their efforts to protect and preserve the wonder of the cave, the wild beauty of the park, and the grandeur of the historic Chateau. The book also shares local community leadership's important role in developing the Monument and the Chateau, including the Grants Pass Chamber. They always knew that it was critical to have overnight lodging at the Monument due to its remote location. Restore Oregon is part of a new effort to raise awareness about the Chateau's restoration needs. You can support this effort and learn more by purchasing this new book.



For more information about the work of the Friends of the Oregon Caves & Chateau, please visit:

www.FriendsOCAC.org

Scan the QR code to get to the bookstore!

