

Strawberry Mountain Wilderness Obsidian Summer Camp



Sunday, August 23 – Saturday, August 29, 2026

This Camp Guide is available at
<https://obsidians.org/events/category/summer-camp/>

Adapted from the Camp Bell 2014 Summer Camp Guide
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NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

The Place

The 2026 Obsidian Summer Camp will be held within the Malheur National Forest approximately 32 miles south and east of John Day in eastern Oregon. We will camp at the Lake Creek Youth Camp located near the south side of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness (<https://lakecreekcamp.org/>).

The Camp Site

The Lake Creek Youth Camp is a non-profit organization operating in the Malheur National Forest by special permit from the Forest Service. It is in the beautiful Logan Valley at an elevation of 5,200 feet. All the roads into camp are paved except for the last 2 miles on FS 924, which is well-maintained gravel.

This site provides very good access to the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness. It is located among a stand of pines adjacent to grassy meadows. Lake Creek runs through the camp.

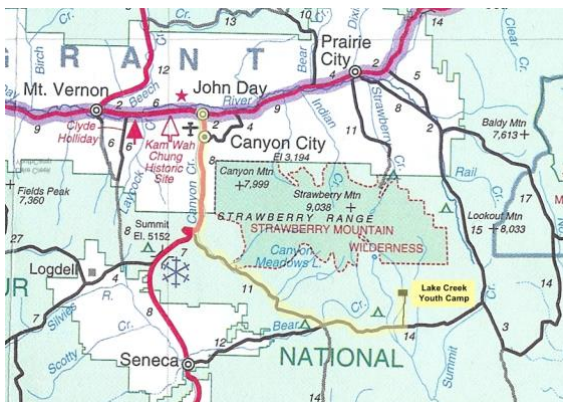
When you send in your registration you will indicate your lodging preferences. Options include tent camping, bunkhouse cabins, or staying in your RV/camper. There are no connections. Two bathhouses provide a total of 13 showers and sinks, and 12 flushing toilets. There is also a vault toilet.

There is no Wi-Fi or cell service. An internet phone (via satellite) is available for emergencies only. Electricity is provided by a generator which is turned off from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM. During that time, there are no lights and no water. Bring a headlamp/flashlight!

Pets, firearms, and illegal drugs are not allowed on trips or in camp. Alcohol is not permitted on official Obsidian outings but is allowed in camp.

The main lodge is furnished with chairs and tables and has a fireplace. A piano, ping-pong table, basketball hoop, volleyball net, books and other games are provided in and around the main lodge. A fire pit area is available for evening gatherings.

Driving Directions



The camp is approximately 300 miles from Eugene. Plan to arrive between **3:00 PM and 5:30 PM** on Sunday, August 23rd. Please don't arrive early—we need uninterrupted time to prepare camp for you!

Carpooling: In the interests of conserving gas and costs, we encourage campers to share rides to camp. To find rides or riders, check the online registration. The suggested carpooling donation to/from camp and while driving to trailheads at camp is \$.11/mile. Please bring small bills.

A northern route from Eugene-Springfield:

1. Take Hwy 126 east to Sisters, Oregon (Hwy 20 will join Hwy 126 at Santiam Junction).
2. On the east side of Sisters, turn left to continue on Hwy 126 to Redmond.
3. In Redmond, turn left (north) onto Hwy 97 for a short distance, then turn right onto Hwy 126 (eastbound) to Prineville.
4. Entering Prineville, Hwy 126 meets and becomes Hwy 26. Pass through Prineville and continue eastbound on Hwy 26 for approximately 117 miles to the town of John Day.
5. At John Day, turn right (south) onto Hwy 395 and travel about 10 miles.
6. Turn left on Canyon Creek Rd (aka County Road 65) for about 14 miles to the intersection with FS Road 16. (Along the way, Canyon Creek Rd/County Road 65 becomes Forest Service (FS) Road 15).
7. Turn left onto FS Road 16 (Logan Valley Lane) for about 7 miles.
8. Turn left onto FS Road 924 for about 2 miles to Lake Creek Youth Camp, on the left.

A southern route from Eugene-Springfield:

1. Take Hwy 126 east to Sisters, Oregon (Hwy 20 will join Hwy 126 at Santiam Junction).
2. On the east side of Sisters, keep right to continue on Hwy 20 for about 152 miles, passing through Bend, and on to Burns (En route, Hwy 395 will join Hwy 20 at Riley).
3. Continue on Hwy 20 through Burns. After about 3 miles, turn left (north) onto Hwy 395, and continue for about 42 miles to reach the small town of Seneca.
4. At Seneca, turn right (east) onto 1st Street, which becomes FS Road 16, for approximately 18 miles.
5. Turn left onto FS Road 924 for about 2 miles to Lake Creek Youth Camp, on the left.

LOGISTICS

Meals

All meals will be provided by Lake Creek Youth Camp staff. The first meal will be dinner served the evening of Sunday, August 23rd. The last will be breakfast on Saturday August 29th. Vegetarian options will be available. Lunch makings will be set out each morning after breakfast. **Hands must be washed prior to each meal and before making lunch at the communal tables.**

Lake Creek Youth Camp will provide plates, bowls and eating utensils as well as washing and cleaning dishes. You do not need to bring your own dishes and utensils; however, you may want to bring a water glass and/or coffee mug for use outside of mealtime. Bring reusable containers for packing your lunch.

Mealtimes are as follows:

6:30 AM	Coffee/Tea/Cocoa
7:30 AM	Breakfast
After breakfast	Lunch Prep
6:30 PM	Dinner (Please wear nametag at dinner)

Evening Campfire

Each evening, we will gather at **8 PM** for trip reports and other activities.

Duties

There are no assigned camp duties this year! With that said, please keep in mind the following responsibilities:

- Keep food in sturdy containers in your cabin or car.
- Keep grounds clean and tidy.
- There may be light housekeeping duties at the end of camp.

Bulletin Board

Campers should check the bulletin board to:

- Look at maps and other information about the area.
- Read notices about updates to road and trail conditions.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We try to be eco-friendly at camp. You can help by bringing two containers in which to pack your lunches. *Please take your personal beverage containers home.*

Essential Services

Fuel and a small market are available in John Day, 32 miles from camp.

The Weather

The closest location with comprehensive weather data is John Day. The average daily temperature in August is 71° with an average low of 50° and an average high of 91°. Please note, however, that high temperatures over 100° are possible. The camp will be slightly cooler, and the mountains cooler still. The average rainfall for the month of August is 0.64 inches.

Occasionally, there are afternoon thunderstorms. If a thunderstorm moves in while you are hiking, remember to: stay low, find shelter in a building (keep away from trees, tall objects, hiking poles and metal objects and water), spread out as a group, and crouch down.

WHAT TO BRING

Camping Gear (depending on your lodging):

- Tent campers: Tent, sleeping bag, pillow etc.
- Bunkhouses: Bunks with mattresses are provided, but bring bedding or sleeping bag, pillow
- RV's: There are no connections
- Clothesline and pins (optional)
- Camp chair

Hiking Gear:

- Day pack
- Water bottle
- Hiking boots/shoes + water shoes for creek crossings
- Clothes for warm, cold, and wet weather
- Swimsuit
- Mosquito repellent
- Biodegradable soap
- Sit pad
- Hiking poles
- Binoculars and spotting scopes

Personal Gear:

- Towel
- Flip-flops for the shower
- Head lamp/flashlight
- 2 containers suitable to pack lunches
- Playing cards and board games

Ten Essentials to carry when away from camp:

1. First-aid kit
2. Compass (and know how to use it)
3. Map(s) of the area where you will be
4. Small functional pocket knife
5. Flashlight with good batteries (extras & bulb)
6. Rain gear: parka and pants
7. Sunscreen
8. Extra food and water
9. Fire kit: waterproof container of matches, candle
10. Whistle

SAFETY

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is our best defense against illness. You **must** wash your hands prior to meals, to making your lunch, and to enjoying afternoon snacks!

Travel in Eastern Oregon

Do **not** rely solely on your car or phone GPS for directions. Especially in eastern Oregon, they may mislead you about road locations and conditions, with potentially serious consequences.

Do **not** rely solely on the driving and hiking descriptions in this booklet. Road and trail signage, and conditions, often change.

Do carry a reasonably up-to-date paper map of the area in addition to any GPS devices (such as Garmin) or apps (AllTrails, Gaia). Carry a compass with your 10 Essentials, and know how to use it. Notice landmarks and your surroundings as you travel and hike.

Safety on Hikes

Before leaving camp on any trip, make sure that you are signed up on either a hiking **Signup Sheet** or the **Other Excursions** sheet. We need to know where to look if you don't return.

Anyone who leads a hike at Summer Camp should be familiar with the Obsidian Safety Manual. We'll have a copy at camp, but it is readily available in the Members Area of the website, under Leader Manuals. Why not look through it online today?

Carry the 10 Essentials, including a personal 1st aid kit, whenever you are away from camp. See the 10 Essentials list on page 5.

Summer thunderstorms are common in eastern Oregon, especially later in the afternoon. Many hikes traverse exposed ridges, summits, and high lakes. If you see lightning, hear thunder, or see a storm in the distance, descend immediately to a lower, less exposed location.

Dehydration, heat exhaustion, and sunburn are common summer risks. Use sun screen. Wear a hat and other sun-protective clothing. Carry a minimum of one quart of water per person and drink it. Bring more on longer or more challenging hikes.

Do **not** drink unfiltered/untreated water from streams, lakes, or springs, due to the risk of contamination and infection.

Ticks are less common in late August, but make sure to check for them after each hike.

When you encounter horses on the trail, move off to the side of the trail, on the downhill side if possible, and talk softly until the horses pass.

Health Care Services

Please let either the Camp Boss or Camp Committee Chair know as soon as possible if you are experiencing a health issue or first aid need. We will have a few additional first aid supplies in camp, and also an AED device.

Medical services are available in John Day, about 30 miles from camp. Additional services are located about 65 miles away in Burns. Lake Creek Youth Camp maintains a satellite phone for calling 911 in an emergency.

Blue Mountain Hospital
120 E. Main St.
John Day, OR 97845
(541) 575-0629

Len's Pharmacy
170 Ford Road
John Day, OR 97845
(541) 575-1311

THE AREA

The Strawberry Mountain Wilderness is located east of John Day, Oregon, in the Malheur National Forest. The area includes approximately 68,700 acres and encompasses the headwaters of Pine, Indian, Strawberry, Canyon, Bear, Lake, Wall, Roberts, and Big Creek. The area is dominated by the Strawberry Mountain Range with the highest point being Strawberry Mountain. This area has extremely diverse ecological makeup. Five of the seven major life zones in North America can be found here. It also supports native populations of Rocky Mountain Elk and other wildlife. Acreage additions, including the Canyon Creek Research Natural Area, have improved both the quantity and the quality of the wilderness experience.

The complex geological story of this landscape began millions of years ago with the buckling of an ancient sea floor beneath the area where the western part of the Strawberry Range now rises. Much later, volcanic ash and lava formed the eastern part of the range. Most recently, the glacial ice carved its classic signature of U-shaped valleys into the mountains. The ice also hollowed out the rock beds that today hold the seven alpine lakes of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness.

In a normal year, most people use the Wilderness between July and November. Snow may be encountered at higher elevations any time of the year. The climate from September is mostly mild, with clear skies. Summertime thunderstorms may occur, usually in cycles lasting several days. Daytime temperatures normally range between 30 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit; nights are cool. Freezing temperatures can occur any time.

When you go to the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness, be prepared for hiking in the high country. The land is rugged, and elevations range from 4,000 to the 9,038-foot summit of Strawberry Mountain. Over a hundred miles of trails cross the wilderness, offering vista after vista to the enterprising hiker. In 1984, the Oregon Wilderness Act more than doubled the original area of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness to its current total of 68,700 acres.

If you are patient, lucky, and observant, you may see many kinds of wildlife in the wilderness. The list includes: elk, mule deer, antelope, black bear, cougar, California bighorn sheep, ruffed and blue grouse, pileated woodpecker, sharp-shinned hawk, bald eagle, pine marten, mink, beaver, and many more birds, fur-bearing animals, and other creatures. In fact, 378 kinds of animals and 22 fish species can be found in the area.

REFERENCES

Books

A special “thank you” to a primary source of information:

Sullivan, William. 100 Hikes Eastern Oregon, Navillus Publishing, 2022.

The following may also be of interest:

Dunegan, Lizann. Falcon Guides: Hiking Oregon, 4th Ed., 2022.

Boschetto, Eli. 100 Classic Hikes: Oregon, The Mountaineers Books, 2025.

Paper Maps

Most of the trails listed in this booklet are shown on the following map, except Trail # 5, the Malheur River Recreation Trail; Trail #14, Sheep Creek; and Trail #15, Arch Rock:

- **Strawberry Mountain Monument Rock Wilderness**, Malheur & Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, US Forest, United States Department of Agriculture.

All of the trails, plus much of the surrounding area, are shown on:

- **Southern Blue Mountains** 2018, USDI Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service

Although a limited number of these maps may be available from the Willamette National Forest Supervisor’s Office (3106 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, Oregon, (541) 225-6300, it may be easier to order them online. Additional sources of maps and information may be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r06/malheur/maps-guides>

Permits and Fees

Free, self-issued wilderness permits are available at many trailheads. Remember to bring your Northwest Forest Pass, Senior Pass, America the Beautiful Pass or similar, in case one is needed at a parking area. An Oregon State Parks pass may also be helpful for nearby activities.

HIKING GUIDE

The description for each hike provides a general difficulty rating, the round-trip driving distance, the round-trip hiking distance, and elevation gain. Keep in mind that the pace of a hike is a critical element of its difficulty. When you sign up for a hike, please make sure the pace that the leader has indicated on the signup sheet is a good fit for your interests and abilities.

Notes: Trail numbers (#000) in these descriptions correspond with those shown on the Strawberry Mountain/Monument Rock Wilderness map. However, many trails and intersections do not have signs.

The hiking distances, elevation gains, difficulty ratings, and descriptions shown below were derived from various sources. Please be aware that actual conditions may vary.

List of Hikes by Difficulty Rating

All distances are round trip miles

Hike #	Name	Driving Distance	Hiking Distance /Elevation Gain	Page
EASY: generally, up to 5 miles round trip; up to 1,000 ft. of gain.				
4c	High Lake	22	2.6 / 550 loss	15
5	Malheur River Rec.Trail	28	4.0-7.6 / 200-800	16
8	East Fork Canyon Creek	45	5.8 / 580	18
11b	Strawberry Lake	87	4.0 / 550	20
13a	Bullrun Rock	74	4.4 / 380	22
15	Arch Rock	120	1.0 / 302	23
MODERATE: generally, 5-10 miles round trip; up to 2,000 ft. of gain.				
1	Lake Creek	6	8.0 / 1,920	12
2a	Mud Lake	7	7.0 / 1,680	12
4a	Wildcat Basin	21	6.9 / 1,330	14
4b	Strawberry Mtn. Summit via Roads End TH	21	7.2 / 1,170	14
6	Buckhorn Meadows	40	5.0 / 1,000	16
10a	Canyon Mtn./Dog Creek	70	6.6 / 1,200	19
11c	Strawberry Falls	87	6.6 / 1,200	21
11d	Little Strawberry Lake	87	7.8 / 1,350	21
13b	Monument Rock	74	5.6 / 550	22
DIFFICULT: generally, 10-15 miles round trip, up to 3,000 ft. of gain.				
2b	Meadow Fork	7	9.6 / 2,330	12
3	Big Creek	7	10.6 / 2,340	13
4d	Slide Lake	22	10.0 / 2,250	15
10b	Canyon Mtn./Dean Creek	70	11.0 / 1,700	19
11a	Onion Creek	86	9.6 / 4,000	20
14	Sheep Creek	76	10.8 / 2,400	23
16	Amelia Creek	160	8.6 / 1,300	24
VERY STRENUOUS: generally, over 15 miles, or over 3,000 ft. of gain.				
4e	Loop of the Lakes	22	15.6 / 3,470	15
7	Table Mountain	35	12.0-15.7 / 1,600	17
9	Joaquin Miller	44	11.6 / 3,250	18
12	Indian Creek	90	9.8 / 2,560	21

Trailheads Within 10 RT Miles from Camp

1. Lake Creek Trail (Trail #378)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 8.0 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,920 feet

Driving Distance: 6.0 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn left onto FS 924 to the end, approximately 3 miles.

Trail Description: This trail passes through open stands of pine and meadows to reach High Lake. Not a developed trailhead and limited parking. In 2014, there were approximately 100 dead trees on the trail, making hiking very challenging.

2. Hikes from Meadow Fork Trailhead

Driving Distance: 7.0 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn left onto FS 924. After a short distance, turn right onto FS 1648. After another a short distance, turn left onto FS 021. After 1.2 miles, turn left onto FS 039 and follow this road 1.3 miles to its end at the trailhead.

2a. Mud Lake (#376)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 7.0 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,680 feet

Trail Description: The Forest Service states this is a good trail for one who wants solitude in a wilderness lakes setting. Begin the hike on the Meadow Fork Trail (#376), and stay to the left at the fork at 0.8 miles (#379). Continue 2.5 miles to reach a short 0.2-mile trail (#5008) to reach Mud Lake, which is prettier than its name.

2b. Meadow Fork Trail (#376)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 9.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 2,330 feet

Trail Description: The Forest Service describes this as a moderate hike through old growth stands of pine and fir, on the south side of Strawberry Mountain. The area has been impacted by wildfires in recent years. After 0.8 miles, the trail forks. Stay to the right and continue on #376 for 3.8 miles to an intersection with Big Creek Trail (#377) to the right. Continuing on the Meadow Fork Trail for 0.2 miles reaches the intersection with the Sky Line Trail (#385). Return by the same route.

3. Big Creek Trail (#377)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 10.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 2,340 feet

Driving Distance: 7.0 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn left onto FS 924. After a short distance, turn right onto FS 1648. After another a short distance, turn left onto FS 021 and follow this road 2.5 miles to its end at the trailhead.

Trail Description: The trail passes through areas recovering from past wildfires. Water is scarce during the mid-summer. The trail forks after 0.7 miles. Stay to the left (#377) and continue 4.6 miles to intersect with Meadow Fork Trail (#376). Continue 0.2 miles to the right to reach the Sky Line Trail (#385). Return by the same route. (See Sullivan, Hike 124, Big Riner Basin).

Trailheads 11 to 30 RT Miles from Camp

4. Hikes from Roads End and High Lake Rim Trailheads

Driving Distance: 21 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn left onto FS 924. After a short distance, turn left onto FS 1648. After 3.4 miles, turn right onto FS 1640. Follow FS 1640 for 6 miles to the Roads End Trailhead. To reach the High Lake Rim Trailhead, continue to the end of FS 1640, another 0.5 miles.

4a. Wildcat Basin via Roads End Trail (#201A)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 6.9 miles Loop

Elevation Gain: 1,330 feet

Trail Description: The trail follows an old roadbed for about a mile and comes to an unmarked junction. Turn left and go downhill along a ridge on a fainter trail for 0.3 mile, crossing a wooded saddle to a fork. Keep left again (#201) for 1.6 miles toward Wildcat Basin. The path descends into the old burn through waist-high snowbrush bushes that obscure the tread. Wade straight through, heading downhill. The trail then switchbacks past a white badlands of knobby pinnacles and striped volcanic ash. In Wildcat Basin itself, a dry meadow below the badlands, you'll reach a T-shaped junction. Fifty feet to the left is Wildcat Spring. Take the T-junction right-hand path to continue the loop. After another mile, keep to the right at a saddle and follow the Indian Creek Trail (#364) down into a burned forest of standing snags. In 0.2 mile, cross a small creek and begin to climb. Look for cut log ends to find the faint trail. The route climbs steeply 0.5 mile to a marsh of wild onions. The path is faint, but continue to complete the loop, find the road and go back to your car. (See Sullivan, Hike 27).

4b. Strawberry Mountain Summit via Roads End (#201A)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 7.2 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,170

Trail Description: One of several possible routes to the summit of Strawberry Mountain. The trail is relatively level and follows an old closed road for the first couple of miles. At the junction at 1.2 miles, take Onion Creek Trail (#368) to the right (north). Continue to climb the shoulder of Strawberry Mountain for 1.4 miles to the next trail junction (at #375). Turn left at the trail junction and continue 0.7 miles to the next trail junction (#5002). Turn left and climb a few switchbacks to reach the summit in 0.3 miles. Enjoy panoramic views of Steens Mountain to the south and Ironside Mountain to the east as well as wild flowers at your feet. Return by the same route. (See Sullivan, Hike 27, Other Options).

4c. High Lake via High Lake Rim Trailhead (#385)

Difficulty: Easy

Hiking Distance: 2.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 550 feet

4d. Slide Lake via High Lake Rim Trailhead (#385/#5007)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 10.0 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 2,250 feet

4e. Loop of the Lakes via High Lake Rim Trailhead (#385)

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Hiking Distance: 15.6 miles total

Elevation Gain: 3,470 feet

Trail Description: This hike will take you by several alpine lakes, over two passes and climb high on the east shoulder of Strawberry Mountain. From the trailhead, Skyline Trail (#385) switchbacks down to **High Lake** in 1.4 miles, with views of the Rabbit Ears, a pair of rock spires.

The trail forks with Lake Creek Trail (#378) at High Lake, but don't take the far right Lake Creek Trail. Instead, veer gently to the right to continue west on Skyline Trail (#385) for 1.6 miles, climbing over a ridge to reach a junction with Mud Lake Trail (#379). Turn left at the junction to continue to **Slide Lake**. (Note: Unlikely, but you may encounter a snowfield. To avoid it, head downhill and pick up the trail at its next switchback 0.3 miles below.) Once past the snowfield, follow the trail for 1.4 miles down to a junction in the woods. Keep right at the junction to circle around Slide Lake.

After circling Slide Lake, to continue **the Loop**, return to Sky Line Trail and turn right, climbing the ridge on the east side of Strawberry Lake for 0.5 miles to a 'Y'. Stay to the left for 2.0 miles passing a spring to reach a junction with Strawberry Trail (#375). Turn left for 0.2 miles to Strawberry Lake. Travel to the end of Strawberry Lake (0.4 miles) to a junction at the end of the Lake. Travel up the valley 0.9 miles, leaving Strawberry Lake behind to

reach a junction at Strawberry Falls. To the left (0.6 miles) is Little Strawberry Lake. Turn right to continue the loop, travel 3.0 miles to reach the junction with Onion Creek Trail (#368). Turn left (south), travel 1.4 miles to a trail junction. Turn left (south) to travel 1.2 miles to Roads End Trailhead. Turn left on FS 1640 for 0.5 miles to reach your car.

Note: As this trail is a loop, you may begin at Roads End Trailhead and reverse the hike, ending at High Lake Rim Trailhead to walk the 0.5 miles on FS 1640 to your vehicle. (See Sullivan, Hike 28).

5. Malheur River Recreational Trail (#303)

Difficulty: Easy (to gorge view pt.) – Moderate (to Hog Flat)

Hiking Distance: 4 miles RT, or 7.6 miles with a car shuttle

Elevation Gain: 200-800 feet

Driving Distance: 28 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 1 mile. Turn left onto FS 1643 for 10 miles, then left on FS 1651 for 1.3 miles to the riverside parking area at Malheur Ford. Or, continue on FS 1643 for 6 miles, then left to FS 142 for 1.4 miles to the southern Malheur River trailhead at Hog Flat.

Trail Description: From Malheur Ford, the trail begins in a picnic area with surrounding meadow, then gradually climbs 4 miles to reach a gorge viewpoint, continues along the river. Hike as far as you like and return, or continue for the remainder of the hike. The last 1.2 miles have switchbacks that climb out of the gorge to Hog Flat. Consider beginning at Hog Flat for a car shuttle option.

Note: watch for rattlesnakes. (See Sullivan, Hike 30 and Southern Blue Mtns. map).

Trailheads 31 to 50 RT Miles from Camp

6. Buckhorn Meadows Trail (#205)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 5 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet

Driving Distance: 40 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 6.2 miles, then turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 4.8 miles. Look for a brown sign and turn right onto gravel FS 1520 for 4.0 miles to the abandoned Canyon Meadow Campground. Continue 3 miles on an extremely rough road to the end.

Trail Description: This provides access to the Wildcat Basin. It is a steady, uphill trail. At times the trail is faded, however, tree blazes and rock cairns mark the way. There are unique geological formations of volcanic origin as well as wildflowers. Wildcat Spring in Wildcat Basin is one of the few good water sources in the area. The trail intersects with Pine Creek Trail (#201), with a gentle flowing spring marking the beginning of Wildcat Basin. An additional 3.7-mile loop around Wildcat Basin passes through a recovering burned area that has an impressive view of Strawberry Mountain, and can be showy with meadow flowers. (See Sullivan, Hike 122, which includes a typo: the directions from John Day should be to drive south on Hwy 395, not Hwy 26).

7. Table Mountain Trail (#217)

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Hiking Distance: 12 miles RT or 15.7 miles with loop

Elevation Gain: 1,600 feet

Driving Distance: 35 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 6.2 miles, then turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 6.4 miles. Turn right onto FS 651 (unimproved dirt road) for 3 miles to the trailhead.

Trail Description: Climb a wooded ridge into the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness in 3.7 miles and 1,500 feet to reach a viewpoint. Continue a level 2.3 miles to intersect with the 3.7-mile Indian Creek Butte loop (#217, #211, #201, #5000). The Forest Service reports this trail is often used by hunters as it gives good access to the upper end of East Fork Canyon Creek. (See Sullivan, Hike 121).

8. East Fork Canyon Creek Trail (#211)

Difficulty: Easy

Hiking Distance: 5.8 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 580 feet

Driving Distance: 45 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 6.2 miles, then turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 9.7 miles. Turn right at the brown Alder Gulch sign onto gravel road FS 6510. Keep left for 1.6 miles. Turn right onto FS 812 for 2.7 miles to a large gravel parking lot for equestrians/hikers at the end of the road.

Trail Description: One of the quietest forest canyons of Eastern Oregon. A 2015 wildfire burned the trailhead and the lower 3 miles of this trail, but the upper portion is still green and the views of the Strawberry Range remain. The trail is along the East Fork Canyon Creek in a deep canyon. At 2.5 miles, the Yokum Corrals Camp will appear, a grassy flat area. Add 0.3 miles to reach the Tamarack Creek (dry) crossing and the junction with Tamarack Creek Trail (#202). Remain on the East Fork Canyon Creek Trail for 0.4 miles to Brooklings Creek, a shallow 10-foot creek with no bridge. Return by the same route. (See Sullivan, Hike 120).

9. Joaquin Miller Trail (#219)

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Hiking Distance: 11.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 3,250 feet

Driving Distance: 44 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 6.2 miles, then turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 9.7 miles. Turn right at the brown Alder Gulch sign onto gravel road FS 6510. Continue on FS 6510 for 5.0 miles to the road's end in an unburned forest.

Trail Description: A 2015 wildfire burned the last part of the forest that the trail traverses. The start of the trail is confused by cattle routes. At 0.3 miles a gate will leave the cows behind and begin the wilderness hike. After 2.4 miles of up and down, woods and

meadows, it will intersect with Tamarack Creek Trail (#202). Stay to the left to continue on the Joaquin Miller Trail to gain 2,000 feet and cross Tamarack Creek at 1.8 miles. Continue 1.5 miles on the ridge crest. As the trail begins to head down into the woods, leave the trail for a 0.2-mile jaunt for a panoramic view from a rocky summit. The trail continues for 0.7 miles to intersect with Canyon Mountain Trail (#218). (See Sullivan, Hike 119).

Trailheads 51 to 99 RT Miles from Camp

10. Canyon Mountain Trailhead (#218)

Driving Distance: 70 miles RT

Driving Directions: Note that the last part of the road to the trailhead may be a little rough and confusing. From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn right on FS 16 for 6.2 miles, then turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 14.7 miles. Turn right onto Highway 395. Continue north to Canyon City and turn right on Main Street just past the Grant County Historical Museum. Travel for 1.8 miles to turn right onto paved Gardner Ranch Lane for 0.3 miles and curve to the right onto one lane Canyon Mountain Trail Road for 0.2 miles. At a fork, reset your car's odometer to 0 and go straight on a steep and bumpy gravel road for 2.2 miles, ignoring dirt spurs. When the gravel ends in a saddle at a junction at the 2.2-mile mark, veer left and keep left on a steep, rutted dirt road for 0.1 mile to its end at the trailhead. (GPS: 44.3627, -118.9264)

10a. Dog Creek (#218)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 6.6 Miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,200 feet

10b. Dean Creek (#218)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 11 Miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,700 feet

Trail Description: Scenery with dramatic views of the John Day Valley. Provides access to the western slopes of Strawberry Mountain and intersects with Pine Creek (#201) and East Fork Canyon Creek (#211) trails. The trail begins in an open forest with

scattered ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. A 2015 wildfire damaged many trees and downed trees may still be a possibility. At 1.6 miles, Little Pine Creek emerges. The path climbs for 0.6 miles to reach a meadow and view of the John Day Valley. Continue 1.1 miles, taking in the colorful rock, to reach **Dog Creek**.

After another 2.2 miles and 500-foot elevation gain, reach **Dean Creek** with a small waterfall. Return by the same route. (See Sullivan, Hike 31).

11. Hikes from Onion Creek and Strawberry Trailheads

Driving Distance: 86 miles RT

Driving Directions: Note: The final 5 miles of the trailhead access Road 60 are rough, so vehicles with good clearance are recommended. From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn left onto FS 16 for 7.6 miles. Turn left onto Highway 62 for 22.3 miles to Prairie City. In Prairie City, follow the signs to Strawberry Campground, turning left (south) onto S. Bridge Street/Highway 60 for approximately 11 miles to the Onion Creek Trailhead. To reach the Strawberry Trailhead, continue another 1.2 miles to the end of the road at Strawberry Campground.

11a. Onion Creek Trail (#368)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 9.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 4,000 feet

Trail Description: The trail is a very steep, less-used route to Strawberry Mountain. A steady incline for 4.2 miles leads to a spur trail (#5002) to the right which switchbacks for 0.7 miles to reach the summit of Strawberry Mountain. An additional 4.0 miles will reach the Roads End Trailhead, a possible car shuttle of a total of 8.9 miles. (See Sullivan, Hike 123).

11b. Strawberry Lake (#375)

Difficulty: Easy

Hiking Distance: 4.0 Miles RT

Elevation Gain: 550 feet

11c. Strawberry Falls (#375)

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 6.6 Miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,200 feet

11d. Little Strawberry Lake

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 7.8 Miles RT

Elevation Gain: 1,350 feet

Trail Description: This is a popular destination for swimming, hiking, and camping. After 1 mile, the trail will intersect with Slide Lake Trail (#386). Turn right at the trail junction for approximately 0.4 miles to reach **Strawberry Lake**. The hike around Strawberry Lake is 1.4 miles.

Take the left side of Strawberry Lake (0.5 miles) or the right side (0.9 miles) to reach the steep, unmarked trail to continue to **Strawberry Falls** and Little Strawberry Lake. At 0.9 miles, stop to enjoy the splash of Strawberry Falls, a 60-foot waterfall. Mountain goats are often seen.

At the top of the falls, you will reach a trail junction, turn left (#5003) to hike 0.4 miles to **Little Strawberry Lake**, or right (#375) to hike 4.0 miles toward the summit of Strawberry Mountain. (See Sullivan, Hike 29).

12. Indian Creek Trail (#364)

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Hiking Distance: 9.8 miles

Elevation Gain: 2,560 feet

Driving Distance: 90 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn left onto FS 16 for 7.6 miles. Turn left onto Highway 62 for 22.3 miles to Prairie City. Take S. Bridge Street to Hwy 395/26 for 8.0 miles, then left on CR 71/55 (Indian Creek Road). Travel CR 55 for 3.2 miles, continue on CR 71/7101 for 8 miles to the trailhead just past the Malheur FS Boundary.

Trail Description: This trail is described as “very steep” by the Malheur National Forest, but passes through alpine meadows, wild onion fields, and views of the west face of Strawberry Mountain. After 6.7 miles, the trail intersections with Pine Creek Trail (#201). Return by the same route or, to continue on to Roads End trailhead (see directions for Hike 4) for a car shuttle, turn left on Pine Creek Trail for 1.1 miles (spring located at the midpoint) to intersect with Pine Creek Trail/Onion Creek Trail. Turn left for 0.3 miles to a trail intersection, then turn right for 1.2 miles to Roads End Trailhead.

13. Bullrun Rock / Monument Rock Area

Driving distance: 91 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn left on FS 16 for 7.6 miles. Turn left on CR 62 for 14 miles, then turn right onto FS 13. Continue on FS 13 for 12 miles, and turn left onto FS 1370 at a sign for the Little Malheur River. After 4.4 miles, fork to the left to stay on Rd 1370. In another 1.5 miles, turn right at a ‘Table Rock L.O.’ sign. Keep to Rd 1370, and after 0.2 miles, the road forks. Take the left hand fork for 3.8 slow, rocky miles to a switchback with a message board and small parking area. The lookout is 0.8 miles farther up the road. A high clearance vehicle is recommended.

13a. Bullrun Rock (#365)

Difficulty: Easy

Hiking Distance: 4.4 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 380 feet

13b. Monument Rock

Difficulty: Moderate

Hiking Distance: 5.6 miles RT

Elevation Gain: 550 feet

Trail Description: The first 2.0 miles of the trail is an old jeep road to Bullrun Rock’s 15-foot cliffs. A faint fork of the abandoned road continues for 1.0 miles and meanders close to Monument Rock (7736 feet). It is possible to bushwhack to the mysterious,

lichen covered 8' stone pillar on top of Monument Rock, that was possibly created by Basque shepherds. (Highly recommend Sullivan, Hike 32, for very helpful, detailed directions). For additional details, see:

www.OregonHikers.org/field_guide/Monument_Rock_Loop_hike

14. Sheep Creek Trail (#371)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 10.4 miles RT

Elevation: 2,400 feet

Driving Distance: 76 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn left on FS 16 for 7.6 miles. Turn left on CR 62 for 14 miles, then right onto FS 13. Continue on FS 13 for about 15 miles to a cattle guard and a 'Sheep Cr Tr' sign on the right.

Trail Description: Climb to Rd 548 at Lookout Mtn. This shared use trail is mostly timbered with scenic views at the top. (See Sullivan, Hike 130, and Southern Blue Mtns. map).

Trailheads 100 or More RT Miles from Camp

15. Arch Rock Trail (#258)

Difficulty: Easy

Hiking Distance: 1.0 mile

Elevation Gain: 302 feet

Driving Distance: 120 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. After 6.2 miles, turn right onto FS 15/CR 65 for 14.7 miles. Turn right onto Highway 395 and continue north to John Day. Turn right (east) on Hwy 395/26 for 9.5 miles, then turn left on Rd 18 for 10 miles. At the junction with FS 36, turn right and follow Camp Creek for 9.0 miles. Turn right on FS 3650 for 0.7 mile to the trailhead.

Trail Description: This is an easy, enjoyable day hike that takes visitors to Arch Rock, an ash flow tuff with a scenic arch that you can walk through, as well as sights of several small rock shelters eroded into the outcrop. (See Sullivan, Hike 118, and Southern Blue Mtns. map).

16. Amelia Creek (#1973)

Difficulty: Difficult

Hiking Distance: 8.6 miles RT

Elevation: 1,300 feet

Driving Distance: 160 miles RT

Driving Directions: From camp, turn right on FS 924 to FS 16. Turn left onto FS 16 for 7.6 miles. Turn left onto Highway 62 for 22.3 miles to Prairie City. Turn east on Highway 26 for 36 miles to Unity. From Unity, turn off Highway 26 and travel west on FS 600 (South Fork Burnt River Road) for 7 miles to the Forest Boundary. At the Forest Boundary this road becomes FS 6005, continue on FS 6005 for 0.5 miles to FS 6010, turn left on FS 6010 and travel 6 miles to the trailhead.

Trail Description: This shared use trail is mostly timbered with scenic views at the top. This trail has been designed and managed for mountain bikes. The trail ends at a gate at Bullrun Rock. (See Sullivan, Hike 132).

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Prairie City

This town sits on the edge of a vast grassland, surrounded by the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness on one side and layers of ancient lava rock on the other. Scenic trails are an easy trip from the historic downtown. Nearby lakes and rivers provide excellent steelhead and mountain trout fishing. The historic town of 841 residents (2020 census), was originally a gold-mining community. Today's architectural features include historic stone buildings and the former Sumpter Valley Railway Depot. The depot's second floor houses the **DeWitt Museum**, with pioneer artifacts, tools, furniture, and memorabilia, as well as rocks and minerals from the surrounding area. DeWitt Museum is located at 425 S. Main Street, Prairie City, OR 97869, and is open daily from 9 AM. to 5 PM, (541) 820-3330. Admission is free. The current economy of Prairie City includes ranching, retail vendors, and public services.

Near Prairie City is **Bates State Park**, built on the site of a former lumber mill. The 131-acre park lies along the Middle Fork John Day River, Bridge Creek, and Clear Creek, with excellent birding opportunities and more than 3 miles of hiking trails. Bates State Park is 16 1/2 miles northeast of Prairie City at Bates, near Austin Junction, at the intersection of US 26 and OR 7.

Serving as a monument to pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail, the **Conestoga Wagon** is an oversized replica of a historic covered wagon. It is located a few miles east of Prairie City on the *Old West Scenic Bikeway* at Highway 26/7, near the Dixie Mountain grade. The Bikeway continues for a 174-mile roundtrip paved scenic tour of the John Day Valley, John Day Fossil Beds, and northern-most Malheur National Forest. The state and county roads which make up the Old West Scenic Bikeway offer travelers a journey through, up, and over, the Malheur National Forest and surrounding rural communities. There are many access points, campgrounds, and trailheads, as well as views of the Malheur National Forest along the way.

Approximately 40–45 miles northeast of Prairie City is the **Sumpter Valley Dredge State Heritage Area** in Sumpter,

Oregon. Essentially a ship on dry land, the dredge excavated the valley in search of gold, leaving piles of debris in its wake. The last of three dredges built in the Sumpter Valley, it ran almost continuously from 1935 until 1954 and is estimated to have removed more than \$4 million in gold. Visitors may explore the decks, or take a ranger-led tour on the weekend. There are no fees to access the Heritage Area. Tours are free with donations accepted. In addition to viewing the Dredge, there are 1.5 miles of trails with viewing platforms winding through the park wetlands. The Dredge is located at 211 Austin Street, Sumpter, OR 97877. Managed by the Oregon State Parks Department, there is general park information available at (800) 551-6949.

John Day

The city of John Day is located approximately 2 miles north of Canyon City in Grant County, Oregon, at the intersection of U.S. Routes 26 and 395. As of 2024, the population was 1,641. The city was named for the nearby John Day River which, along with Dayville, had been named for a Virginia member of the 1811 Astor Expedition, John Day.

The **Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum** in John Day was originally a trading post built in the 1860s. It was purchased by two Chinese immigrants, Lung On and Ing Hay. The converted general store became a social, medical, and religious center for the community. In the 1970s, the building, then the property of the city of John Day, was converted into the Museum. Now operated in conjunction with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, it is a National Historic Landmark. Tours are offered Thursday–Monday, May to October. It is recommended that you call and book your tour in advance, as both tour spaces and tour times are limited. There is a maximum of 8 people for the free tours. Donations are accepted. 125 NW Canton Street, John Day, OR 97845, (541) 932-4453.

A new Interpretive Center and Collections Building planned for development in 2026 is on hold due to an Oregon State funding shortfall. However, when resolved, the project will add a new 10,000 square foot building, including an expanded interpretive center and climate-controlled collections space.

The **Grant County Ranch and Rodeo Museum** captures the legacy of American cowboys, with a collection of photos, tools, and literature chronicling the cowboy lifestyle. 241 East Main Street, John Day, OR 97845, (541) 575-0052. Admission: \$3.00.

The John Day area in general is well known for the **John Day Fossil Beds National Monument**, which includes more than 14,000 acres within three separate units. Visiting any one of the units can be a full day of sightseeing, exploration, and learning. There is no fee to visit the Monument.

1. *Sheep Rock Unit*: 32651 Highway 19, Kimberly, OR 97848. Home to the Thomas Condon Visitor Center (open Thursday–Monday, 10:00 AM–4:00 PM, (541) 987-2333 and the Cant Ranch Museum (open as staffing allows; outdoor areas always open). The Visitor Center is 40 miles from John Day, on Hwy 19, two miles north of the junction with Hwy 26. The Cant Museum is slightly north of the Visitor Center on the opposite side of the road.
2. *Painted Hills Unit*: 37375 Bear Creek Road, Mitchell, OR 97750. Distinguished by varied stripes of red, tan, orange, and black, this area preserves a sequence of past climate change, and is one of the most popular destinations in the park, particularly on weekends toward evening. It contains a diverse assemblage of leaf fossils and a small outcropping of rock containing animal fossils. There are three .25-mile trails, one .5-mile trail, and one 1.6-mile trail. The drive from John Day is approximately 69 miles via US 26 west toward Mitchell. Turn north on Burnt Ranch Road to access Bear Creek Road and enter the Monument.
3. *Clarno Unit*: State Route 218, Fossil, OR 97830. This area displays the oldest exposed layers of the park on three short trails. The Palisades Trailhead is located 1/4 mile west of the picnic area along Highway 218. The Trail of Fossils (1/4-mile loop) and the Clarno Arch Trail (1/4-mile round trip) start at the trailhead. The Geologic Time Trail (1/4 mile each way) connects the trailhead with the picnic area. The drive from John Day is approximately 117 miles via US-26 west to OR 19, then north to OR 218 W.

Canyon City

Canyon City is the historic Grant County seat, located on U.S. Route 395 just south of John Day. Known for its 1860s gold rush, it remains a hub for exploring the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness, Malheur National Forest, and the John Day Fossil Beds. The small town of an estimated 600–900 residents features local museums and antique shops. It is home to the **Grant County Historical Museum**, located at 101 S. Canyon Blvd., Canyon City, OR 97820. (541) 575-0362. Exploring the lives and livelihoods of Eastern Oregon pioneers, the museum houses over 7,000 photographs and over 3,000 paper documents, in addition to a collection of historic books related to both Grant County and wider Oregon history. Notably, the Museum has the historic Greenhorn Jail, and the Joaquin Miller Cabin, the home of the 19th century poet and judge. Open Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Admission: \$4 Adults, \$3.50 Seniors 62 years and older, \$2 Children 7–17 years, Free for Children under 7 years.

