

## Rimrock Springs Natural Area

This small Natural Area is big on views and wildlife. It is an hour drive north of Bend, and perfect for a short family walk. You can do the 1.7 mile loop in about an hour. Half of the trail is paved and level. If you want to do the whole loop, the remaining portion is gravel with a little climb. There are interpretive signs throughout. Because of the dryness and relatively lower elevation, the area is accessible most of the year. I would avoid it in the summer because of the high desert heat, unless you take a hat and lots of water, as there is no water available there.

You will see plenty of the high desert's common inhabitants of western juniper and sagebrush. When I was there in April, there were plenty of small flowers just blooming, and the lupine looked like it was ready to flower. Cattails border the wetland just to the east.

I saw a western fence lizard, with its distinctive blue belly, scurry around. There were also hawks circling over the wetland area. These and the many ducks and geese were easily spotted from the viewing areas.

The area is part of the National Grassland system which is managed locally by the U.S. Forest Service. You can get to it (see map) easily from Highways 97 and 26. It has also been known as the Rimrock Springs Wildlife Management Area, and is part of the Crooked River National Grassland. Dogs are permitted on leash.



*Entrance*



*Small picnic area at entrance*



*View from small bluff on south side (the western junipers were the only trees in the area)*



*The tenacity of this western juniper to hang in there!*



*The small lake on the east side of the area*



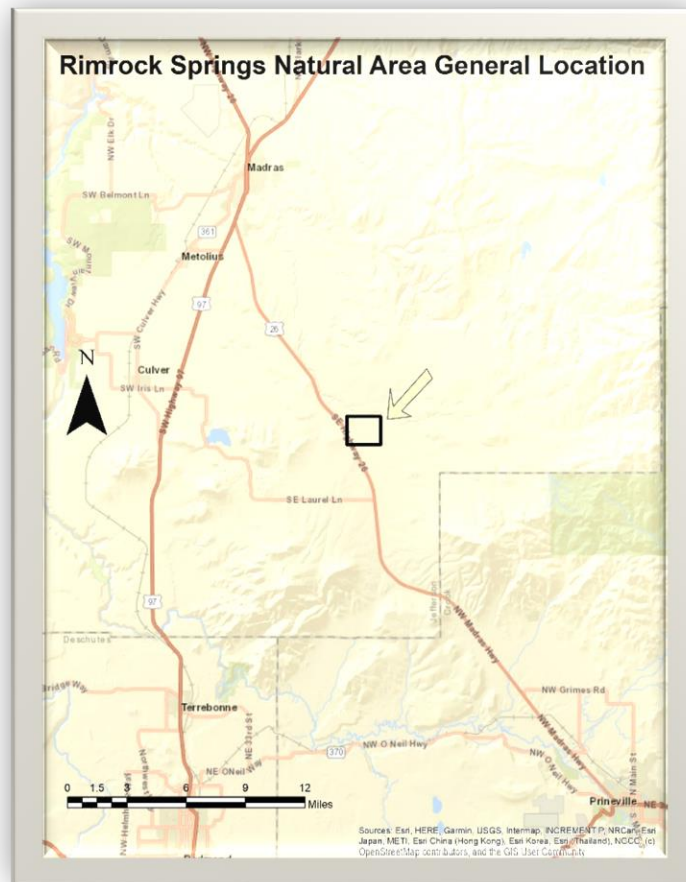
*A few of the giant sagebrush plants, which are common in the area*



*An unidentified flower*



*Some native grasses and lichen*



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