

## Lava Crest Forest Trail

(A Short Hike Revealing an Incredible Story of the Pacific Northwest Geologic History)

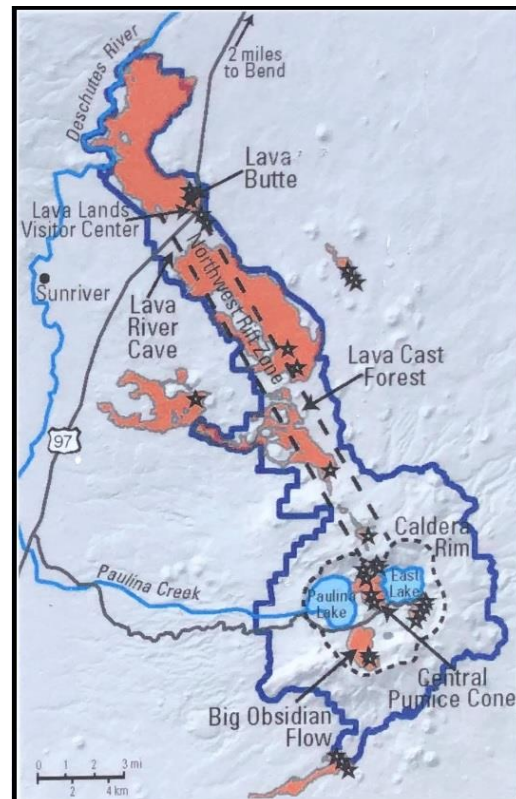
If you want an easy hike showing off examples of the vast geologic and natural history of the Pacific Northwest, this one may fit the bill. About 15 miles south of Bend, Oregon an unpaved road (Forest Service Road 9720) meanders off to the southeast about nine miles to the parking lot and trailhead. Here begins a one-mile paved self-guided interpretive trail with barrier free access.

The trail shows off but a piece of the larger Northwest Rift Zone which includes the Newberry Caldera to the south and extends nearly to the city of Bend. The area is a system of fissures or cracks that allowed magma to reach the surface in a series of cinder cones and lava flows. About 7000 years ago eruptions included both the one that created the Newberry Crater as well as the one that created Mount Mazama. Both of these are calderas that filled with water to create Paulina Lake and Crater Lake.

Besides the incredible geologic history there is a great natural history on display here. Several conifers make their home here, including lodgepole, ponderosa, and western white pines, and both western and common junipers, and grand fir. Some of the lava flows coursed around some existing cinder cone forests to create island forests that are common in the area. These island forests are called kipukas, which is the Hawaiian word for “hole”.



Trail in red



Source: U.S. Forest Service





*Near the beginning of the trail*



*Molten lava flowed around trees, and the lava cooled and the trees decayed to create these holes*





*Lava flowed destroying the forest in the lower areas and sparing the higher areas. See Mt. Bachelor in the distance*



*Looking towards Newberry Crater and Lake Paulina*



The trees along the trail:



*The ubiquitous ponderosa pine*



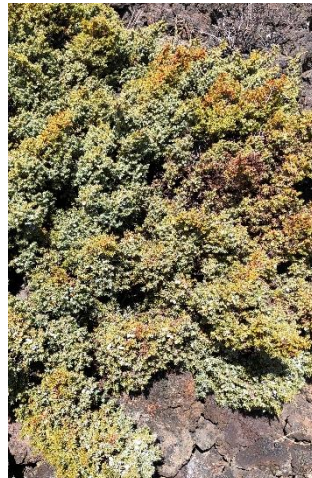
*The not-so-common western white pine*



*Western white pine cones*



*Lodgepole pine*



*Common juniper*



*Grand fir*



*Western juniper*