



Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Recreation Niche

Comprising 1.3 million acres, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest stretches from the Columbia River Gorge north to the boundary of Mount Rainier National Park. From the summit of Mt. Adams, the Forest stretches westward to the volcanic landscape shaped by Mount St. Helens. Forest staff crafted the recreation niche as a method to begin to capture the settings, traditions, and uses of the recreating public now and into the future. Situated near large metropolitan areas to the north and south, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest is fortunate to have gateway communities such as Packwood, Castle Rock, Cougar, Stevenson, Trout Lake and others to provide a base for exploring the forest's extensive backcountry, seven wildernesses, hundreds of lakes, and wildlife. Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument's living landscape draws visitors from every point on the compass.

Settings—

Front Country (Easily accessible)

Located near urban communities and along key paved travel ways this setting receives concentrated use and provides easy access for urban visitors and those less familiar with outdoor settings. Past management is evident and produced open conifer stands for easy viewing and access. Mount St. Helens continues to astound visitors, and the incredible resilience of the natural world is seen in its ashen landscape.

Backcountry (Sense of “Getting Away”)

With lava fields, berry fields and high country conifer forests, located be-

tween the front country and solitude settings this area provides a sense of “getting away” with less development and lower standard roads.

Solitude (Incredible Views, Wilderness)

From Mt Rainier to Mt Adams this high alpine setting, dotted with lakes includes the majority of designated Wilderness on the forest and provides incredible views of the changing landscape.



Activities—

Opportunities—

Experiences—

Front Country Well-maintained roads, signage, and information make this setting well known and well used by urban communities. Day use activities are the primary focus in this setting including: short, easy day hikes, scenic driving, winter activities (snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snow play), watchable wildlife, water play, and mountain biking. Mount St. Helens is a huge draw and can be explored from the visitor center surroundings or by hiking to the very edge of the crater.

Backcountry Quality rustic facilities support attraction based camping, long distance hiking (PCT), and horseback riding. There is a high quality system on existing routes for challenging motorcycle and all terrain vehicle riding. Traditional uses such as berry picking and mushrooming are emphasized.

Solitude This setting provides true solitude and is nationally known for its peak climbing opportunities. Horseback riding, hiking, and backpacking allow visitors to enjoy the solitude and beauty.