

Summer 2005

New Ground

News of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Gifford Pinchot
National Forest

Mount St. Helens Continues Slow Eruption

The current eruption at Mount St. Helens which started in September of 2004 continues. As of June 23, analyses of images from the USGS camera at the crater mouth reveal that the smooth lava spine continues to grow. Several 2.8 magnitude and larger earthquakes have occurred recently. Scientists said these recent large earthquakes over the past week in mid-July probably mean the spine is succumbing to the force of gravity. For perspective, the new spine is already roughly the height of the pinkish-hued 42-story U.S. Bancorp Tower in Portland.

(Source: *USGS and Columbian*) The spine is visible on the Mount St. Helens [VolcanoCam](#) located at the Johnston Ridge Observatory. Daily updates from the U.S. Geological Survey can be found on the [Forest website](#). (Photo Dome Glow by Elliot Endo-USGS)



Additional Areas around Mount St. Helens Reopen: Eastside Windy Ridge/MMBC



Eight backcountry camps in the Mount Margaret Backcountry, north of Spirit Lake, reopened to camping last month. The Mount Margaret Backcountry was closed last fall as a result of increasing volcanic activity at Mount St. Helens. Forest Road 99 leading from Forest Road 25 to the Windy Ridge viewpoint on the east side of Mount St. Helens is also open for the summer. Forest Roads 81 and 83 on the south side of Mount St. Helens also reopened to the public earlier this spring. Visitors should drive cautiously on all Forest roads and be prepared

to encounter sections of road damaged this past winter. Visitors are advised to always check on current road conditions before traveling. Visitors near the volcano need to be prepared for a potential [ash fall](#).

Changes in Fee Programs/Fee Accomplishments: The Gifford Pinchot National Forest recently dropped day-use fees at 11 recreation sites as part of a new, nationwide fee program designed to bring quality and consistency to fee sites throughout the country. The Gifford Pinchot will continue charging fees at 34 day-use sites, including trailheads, interpretive sites and picnic areas operated by the Forest Service. Fees are one source of funds that pay for care of recreation facilities. Last year, the Forest [invested more than \\$1.5 million of collected funds](#) in recreation sites on the Forest. Forest visitors are encouraged to check with local forest offices to determine whether passes are [required at a site](#).



New Mt. Adams, Indian Heaven and Trapper Creek Wilderness Map:

A new color map of the Mount Adams, Indian Heaven and Trapper Creek Wildernesses on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest is available for sale at Forest Service offices and other recreational outlets. The new map details the three Wildernesses and replaces maps last printed in the early 1990s. The cover of this map has a beautiful picture of Mount Adams taken from Bird Mountain in the Indian Heaven Wilderness. These new maps will provide visitors with details on a number of Forest activities. The maps display information on the Wilderness trails system as well as information on camping, leave-no-trace Wilderness use, horse camps, fishing, hunting, picnicking, and other points of interest. The map is printed on a durable rain-proof paper, which should allow it to hold up better during those rainy trips into the Forest. The map sells for \$5 at all Forest Service offices and some sporting goods stores.

Longtime Forest Cartographer Passes: If hikers lost the forest for the trees, they could always turn to Helga Christensen. As chief cartographer for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, she set countless lost souls straight with her maps. Helga died unexpectedly on June 20. Throughout her life, Christensen never slowed down. "She was just totally focused on what she did," said her husband, Bob. Born in Germany, she found a job in Nuremberg and started supporting herself at age 15. She hired on with the Gifford Pinchot in 1977 as a mail clerk and worked her way through the ranks, becoming a technician and then a full cartographer. Mount St. Helens a mountain that fascinated her in 1980 disappointed her last year. Helga had mapped the glacier inside the crater when the latest round of eruptions started. "She said, 'I worked so hard and they all melted,'" Bob said. "If you're a backpacker in the Gifford Pinchot, you take one of her maps." If you're a berry-picker, if you're a mushroom-gatherer, you take one of her maps." (*Vancouver Columbian*, Justin Carinci, July 9, 2005, Photo Roger Werth, *The Daily News*).



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Mt. Adams Ranger District

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Amboy, WA 98601
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Mount St. Helens

Visitor Center: Silver Lake

3029 Spirit Lake Highway
Castle Rock, WA 98611
(360) 274-0962

Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center

Located at MP 43
(360) 274-2114
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TTY: (360) 274-2102

Johnston Ridge Observatory

Located at MP 52
(360) 274-2140
TTY: (360) 274-2102

Internet:

www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/



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Chinook Trail Receives National Designation:



On May 23, the [Chinook Trail Association](#) and the USDA Forest Service's Gifford Pinchot National Forest announced that Regional Forester Linda Goodman has designated 29 miles of the Chinook Trail between Lucia Falls and Bluff Mountain, in the Southwestern corner of the Forest, as a National Recreation Trail. NRT designation recognizes exemplary trails of local and regional significance. The newly designated segment of the Chinook Trail crosses Washington Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service lands in Clark and Skamania counties.

Off-Highway Vehicles Remain Illegal on Gifford Pinchot Roads

Operating all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and other off-highway vehicles (OHVs) [remains illegal](#) on all Gifford Pinchot Roads following legislation passed recently by the Washington State Legislature. State law had prohibited the operation of off-road, or off-highway vehicles on "non-highway" roads. The legislation gives the Forest Service authority to permit OHV operation on these roads. "That does not mean these roads are immediately open for OHV use," said Ron Freeman, Forest Engineer. Forest officials will decide later this year whether to budget for studying possible OHV use of some Forest roads.



Forest Set to Change Camping Stay Limit

Following a recent review the Forest leadership made a decision to reduce the limit for stay at dispersed campsites on the Forest from 28-days to 14-days. This brings the Pinchot more in line with other Northwest Forests.

South RAC to Meet and Discuss Projects

The South Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will review and make recommendations from a list of 33 proposals for Forest projects when it meets Friday, August 19 in Stevenson, Wash.

North RAC Recommends Projects

The North Gifford Pinchot National Forest met on July 15 and recommended 17 proposed projects totaling \$776,644 to be funded for fiscal year 2006. Projects include noxious weed control, fish passage, road maintenance, and trail restoration. Recommended projects await approval by the Forest Supervisor.

Forest Announces Changes to Commercial Huckleberry Permits

Forest officials [announced changes](#) this month to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest commercial huckleberry permit system. The changes are being made to help protect resources and reduce sanitation problems on the Forest. There is no change to personal use huckleberry harvest. A permit is not required for personal use.



Forest Service Centennial: The Packwood Lake Guard station will open its doors for visitors from August 9 through September 5. The Guard Station will be one of the principal [Centennial](#) destinations on the Forest where visitors can learn about 100 years of service and forest management.

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