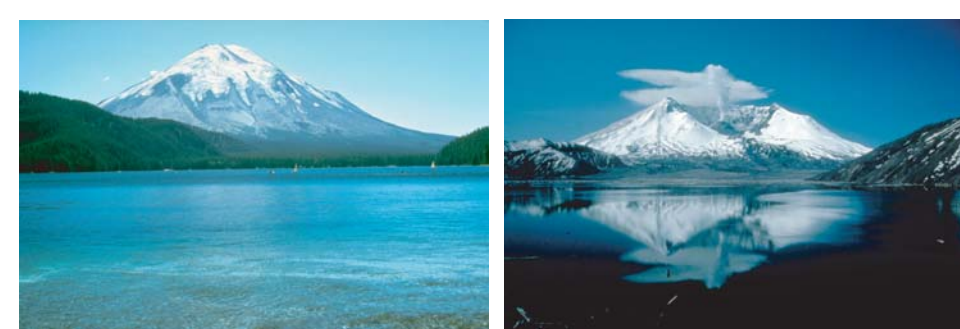


# North America's Active Volcano: Mount St. Helens



## The 1980 Eruption

Before 1980, Mount St. Helens was a quiet mountain retreat and a popular location for skiing, hiking, camping, and fishing. However, in a matter of minutes on May 18th, 1980, the landscape changed from dense forest to devastated moonscape. Following two months of unrest the volcano erupted catastrophically, resulting in a massive landslide into the Toutle River valley and devastating mudflows down several drainages. The eruption killed 57 people, flattened over 230 square miles of trees, and left the area barren and nearly devoid of life for years. A vertical eruption column persisted for 9 hours, sending a stream of ash and pumice 15 miles into the atmosphere.



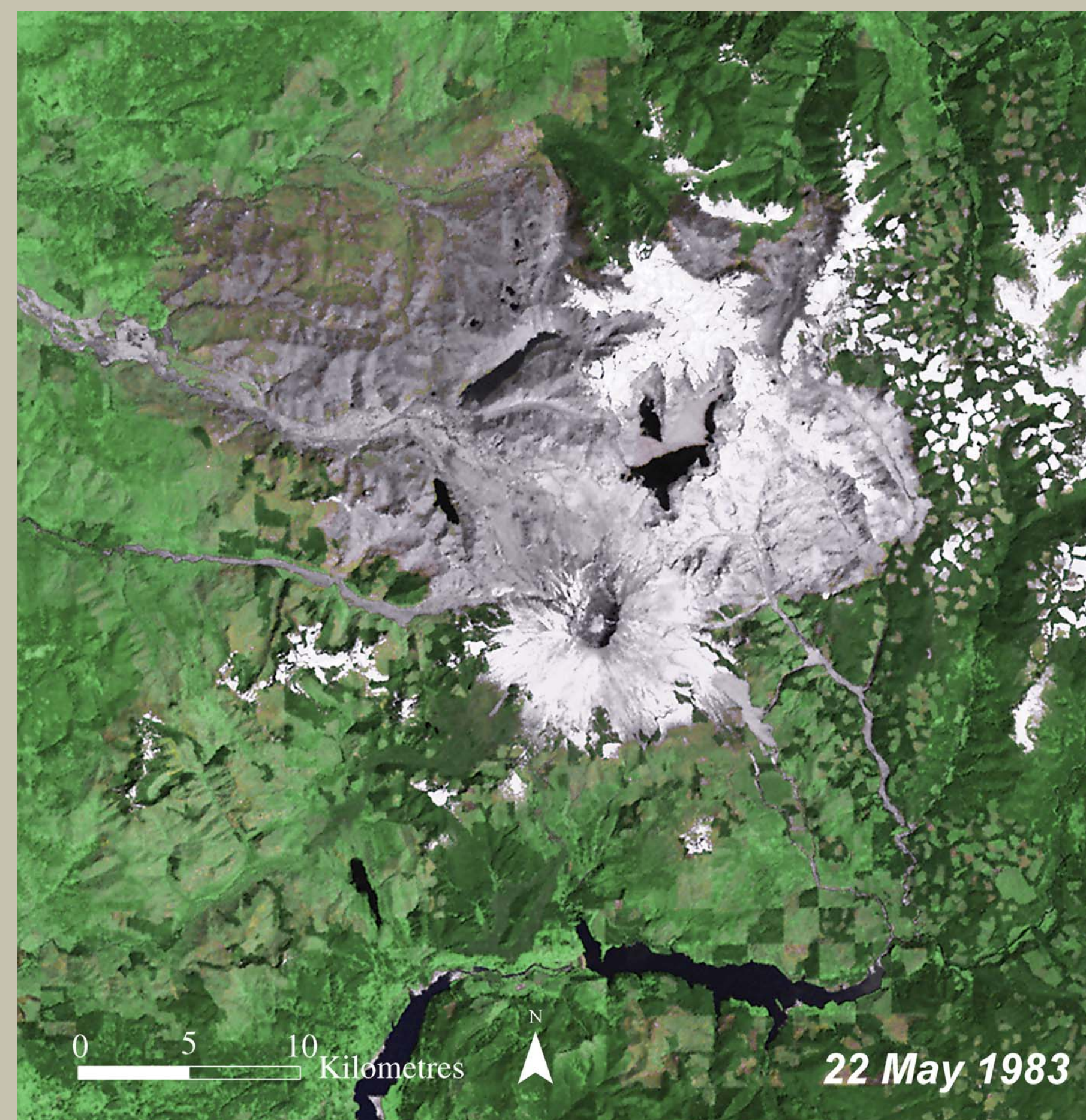
## Post Eruption

Mount St. Helens is considered to be one of the most beautiful and interesting of the Cascade volcanic peaks. The volcano and the surrounding devastated area are now within the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, under jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service. Visitor centers, interpretive areas, and trails are being established as thousands of tourists, students, and scientists visit the monument daily.

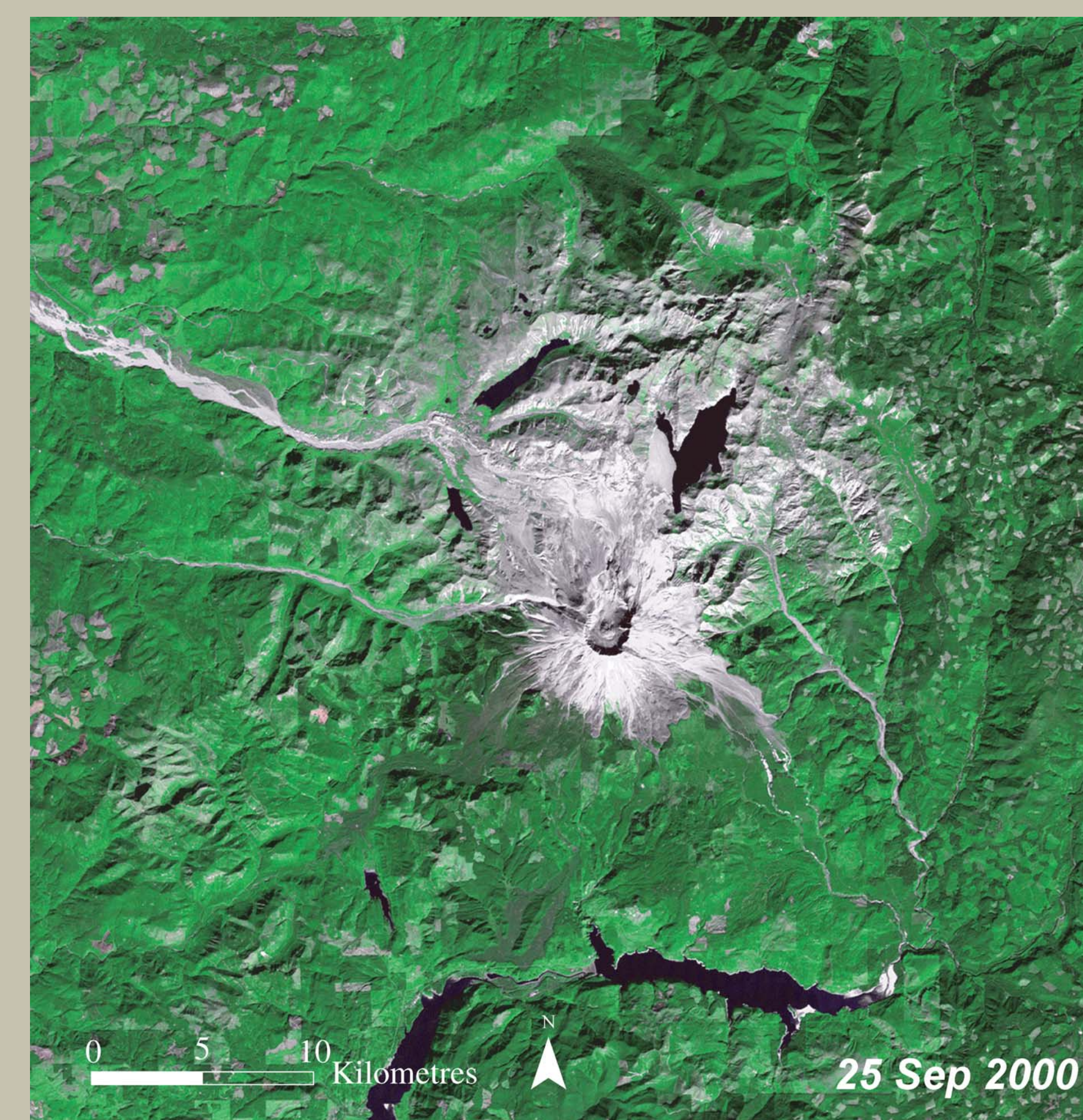
Growth of the new lava dome inside the crater of Mount St. Helens continues, accompanied by low rates of seismicity, low emissions of steam and volcanic gases, and minor production of ash. Future eruptions of other volcanoes in the Cascade Range are inevitable and the lessons learned from Mount St. Helens and other volcanic activity in the Cascade Range will be invaluable to scientists for predicting such events and anticipating their ecological impacts.



In 1973 before the volcanic eruption in 1980, Mount St. Helens was a quiet mountain retreat and a popular location for skiing, hiking, camping, and fishing.



This image shows the mount St. Helens after it erupted in May 1980 with its entire collapsed north flank of the mountain into the Toutle River. This reduced the height of its peak by 1 300 feet.



By the year 2000, life had returned in earnest to the area affected by the eruption. Seeds blown in by the wind have taken root in the avalanche deposits giving life to shrubs and grasses. Elk, rodents, insects, and other animals followed the plants, and today, 22 years after the eruption, a thriving ecosystem exists.