



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Oregon/Washington
2024: Annual Manager's Report

Cascade-Siskiyou

National Monument





Accomplishments

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) was established in recognition of its remarkable ecology and to protect a diverse range of biological, geological, and historic objects. The richness of the plant community is due to the CSNM's location at the intersection of the Cascade, Klamath, and Eastern Cascade Slopes ecoregions. Evolution, long-term climatic change, and geological processes all contributed to the important wildlife habitat and ecological richness of the lands now within the CSNM.

In 2024, the CSNM continued to provide high quality recreation opportunities, including hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, cycling, riding horses, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, birdwatching, and wildlife viewing. There are numerous hiking opportunities in the CSNM, including over 40 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Grizzly Peak Trail, and the Lone Pilot Trail. The Hyatt Lake Recreation Area, in the northern portion of the CSNM, provides camping, hiking, fishing, and boating opportunities.

During the 2024 season, the CSNM hosted an artist through the BLM's annual Artist-in-Residence Program. Serena Richelle, a biological illustrator from Portland, Oregon, spent over 2 weeks immersed in beautiful early summer weather, illustrating the ecosystems of the Hyatt Lake Recreation Area. Serena donated a piece called *Hyatt Lake* to the BLM, which will be used in promotional materials for the CSNM.



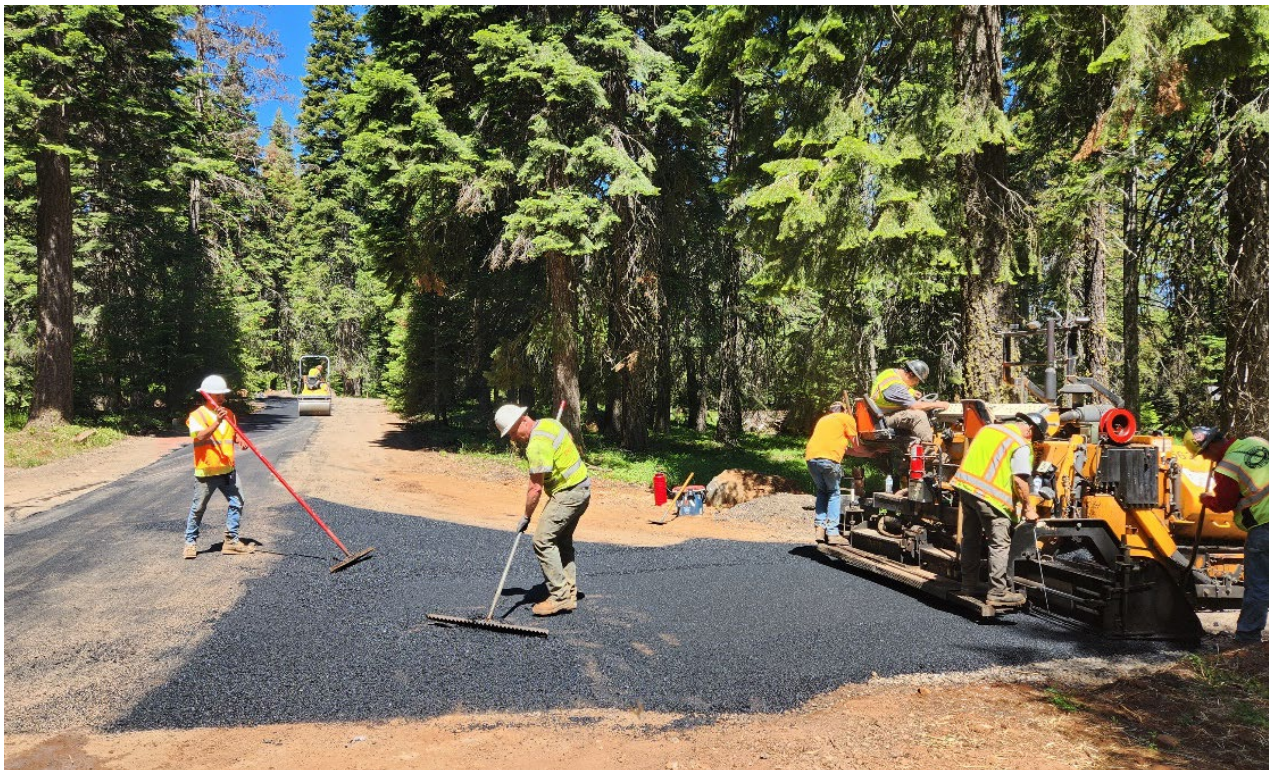
Hyatt Lake painting from 2024 artist-in-residence Serena Richelle

Challenges

In 2023, work began to replace the water and wastewater systems throughout the CSNM's Hyatt Lake Campground and associated day use area. The water and wastewater systems dated to 1969 and had become an ongoing operations and maintenance issue. All three campground loops were closed in 2023 and 2024 while the contractor worked to replace the water and sewer lines. The Wildcat Primitive Campground and Hyatt Lake Horse Camp, which are also located in the Hyatt Lake Recreation Area, were unaffected by this work and were open all season.

The Medford District encompasses over 870,000 acres of BLM-administered land; three BLM law enforcement rangers and two full-time contract deputies are responsible for patrolling the entire district, including the CSNM. Ongoing support is needed to continue the positive trends in protecting the CSNM and Soda Mountain Wilderness resources from trash dumping, unauthorized off-highway vehicle travel, mud bogging, vandalism, and campground-related issues.

Numerous feral horses now spend much of the year at the Agate Flats area of the CSNM near the California border. These horses are creating trails, spreading invasive weeds, and causing ecological impacts. Monument staff are exploring options for fencing to help keep these animals outside of the CSNM.



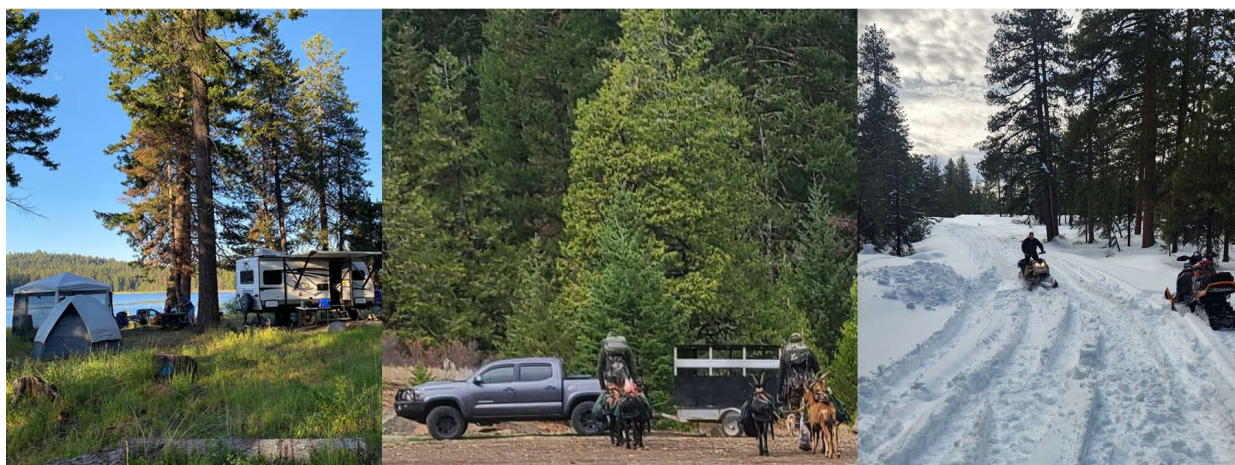
FY 2024 infrastructure repair work in Hyatt Lake Campground

Visitors

With an estimated 235,613 recreation visits in FY 2024, the CSNM continues to see increased visitation; estimated visitation in FY 2023 was 230,182. Many of these visitors enjoy the CSNM while driving and stopping at waysides. Visits for hiking and winter recreation activities, such as sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling, have also been increasing.

Visitation was down significantly from 2023 at the Hyatt Lake Recreation Area due to the closure of facilities for construction. In 2024, Wildcat and Hyatt Lake Horse campgrounds were the recreation area's only operating campgrounds. Wildcat Campground offers a more rustic camping experience, while the Hyatt Lake Horse Camp offers campsites with corrals for equestrians. With the Hyatt Lake Campground closed for the season, Wildcat Campground had an occupancy rate of nearly 70 percent for the entire season, hosting over 1,800 visitors.

Hunting continues to be a popular fall activity in the CSNM. The area is well-regarded for black-tailed deer hunting and, in the autumn, the CSNM's roads and dispersed camping areas are busy with hunters looking to fill their tags. The variety of intact habitats within the CSNM provides many different hunting experiences close to the population of the Rogue Valley, including hunting for deer, elk, bear, mountain lion, and waterfowl. Anglers fish via boat and shoreside at Hyatt Lake, as well as on Jenny Creek along the CSNM's eastern boundary.



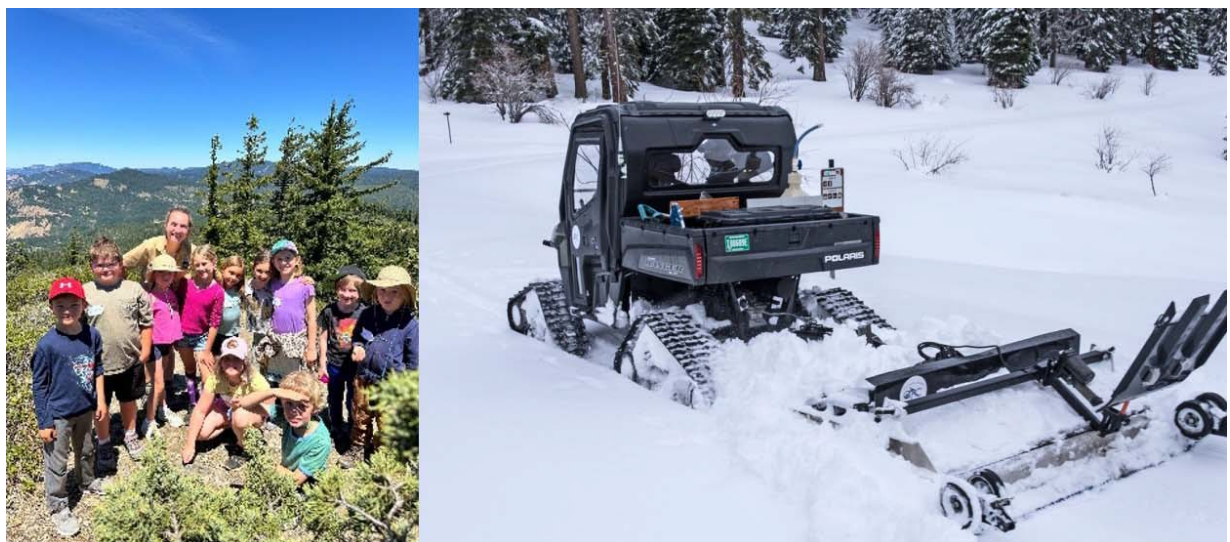
Camping on the shore of Hyatt Lake at Wildcat Campground (left); Hunters returning from a successful CSNM mule deer hunt with pack goats at Pilot Rock (center); snowmobiler on CSNM winter trails (right)

Partnerships

In 2024, BLM staff continued a successful partnership with the Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (Friends) to offer interpretive programs, guided hikes, and naturalists talks in the CSNM, reaching about 850 people. The Friends connected with another estimated 700 people at fairs and events throughout local communities.

For the third year, the BLM and the Friends co-hosted a successful summer program with the Crest at Willow-Witt. The program, which spanned 7 weeks and served about 200 primary school students, provided an opportunity for participants to hike, engage in hands-on activities, and attend outdoor education sessions. The Friends are also important partners for the National Public Lands Day (NPLD) event in the CSNM. In 2024, the BLM partnered with the Friends on an NPLD event where 12 volunteers planted 250 aspen trees at the Wildcat Campground.

The Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) is an active partner and helps maintain over 40 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in the CSNM. Since the main Hyatt Lake Campground was closed due to construction in 2024, the PCTA was unable to host their annual Trails Skills College at the CSNM. However, PCTA volunteers continued to maintain the Pacific Crest Trail through the CSNM and there are plans for the Trails Skills College to return in 2025. The CSNM also partners with the Southern Oregon Nordic Club (SONC) to maintain the Buck Prairie Winter Trail System, which has over 32 miles of trails for skiers, snowmobilers, and snowshoers. The SONC donates hundreds of hours grooming and maintaining trails and provides outings and workshops to skiers of all ages and abilities.



The Crest program students in the CSNM (left) and SONC grooming CSNM winter trails (right)

Science

Ongoing monitoring for rare and sensitive species continued across the CSNM in 2024. Raptor monitoring documented northern spotted owls, peregrine falcons, and bald eagles nesting within the area. Notably, a previously documented nesting pair of northern spotted owls had two fledglings for the second year in a row. BLM partners and collaborators continued to monitor the Oregon spotted frog by documenting their egg masses in the Parsnips Lakes. Documenting these special status species is an indicator of the valuable wildlife habitat the CSNM provides.

BLM biologists improved floodplain habitat, connectivity, and inundation of 2.5 miles of three different streams within the CSNM by installing beaver dam analogues. The CSNM's streams were historically inhabited by beaver, but the species has largely disappeared from the area. Beaver dam analogues enhance the streams' ability to capture and retain water on the landscape into the summer months while utilizing only natural, biodegradable materials. This project improved conditions for the reintroduction of beaver and provides habitat for rare CSNM species, including the Mardon skipper butterfly, Oregon spotted frog, Jenny Creek sucker, and redband trout.

The BLM collaborated with Southern Oregon University (SOU) professor Dr. Karen Mager to monitor mammal populations and wildlife-vehicle collisions. Dr. Mager and 16 SOU undergraduates placed wildlife cameras along a stretch of the Interstate 5 corridor and recommended sites for a future wildlife crossing to make travel safer for both motorists and wildlife.



Beaver dam analogue installation (left); grey fox (top middle); Pacific fisher (top right); bobcat (bottom middle); mountain lion (bottom right)

Outreach and Special Events

In 2024, the BLM authorized two special recreation permits (SRPs) in the CSNM, both of which have been issued for the last several years. An SRP was issued to the Siskiyou Field Institute to conduct a 1-day field course (The Wide World of Butterflies & Diurnal Moths) to observe butterflies and moths in the CSNM. The second SRP was for the Pacific Crest Endurance Ride, a 25, 35, 50, and 75-mile endurance horse riding event held over the course of 2 days.

The Buck Rock Tunnel, in the western portion of the CSNM, is part of the original railroad route over the Siskiyou Mountains, although the railroad company abandoned this project in 1883 due to financial difficulties. For decades, the partially-constructed tunnel portals have been a favored local hiking spot. The BLM and the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA) have partnered to develop a series of field schools, volunteer opportunities, exhibits, digital content, and free public talks and programs. In 2024, the Buck Rock Tunnel was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

In May 2024, in partnership with SOULA, and the Friends of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, the BLM offered a history hike up to Buck Rock Tunnel. Future plans for the Buck Rock Tunnel include the development of recreational hiking opportunities, an informational kiosk at the trailhead, and interpretive panels telling the history of the tunnel and the Chinese laborers who helped build it.



Hikers head to Buck Tunnel (left) and talk to BLM archaeologists about artifacts (right)

Staff Topic of Choice

The staff of the CSNM are keenly aware of the essential role of the Monument's many motivated and creative partners, volunteers, and supporters. We recognize that, moving forward, we will need to continue to work together to accomplish our shared goals within the CSNM. We cannot thank these volunteers and supporters enough for their tireless service to the CSNM's unique and varied resources and values.

In 2024, the CSNM worked with Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon to upgrade emergency response equipment at two previously developed communication sites on Soda and Table Mountains. Jackson County had approved a bond measure to upgrade the current 911 radio infrastructure, as the existing infrastructure was over 20 years old, utilized obsolete analog technology, and no longer had available replacement parts. A determination was made that Jackson County was in critical danger of losing emergency services radio communications throughout the county. The communications sites within the CSNM were critical to the success of the overall system upgrade, allowing for coverage for many rural areas within Jackson County.

In 2024, the BLM continued work revising the CSNM Resource Management Plan. Previously operating under three separate plans, the BLM's new consolidated plan will ensure more consistent management of the entire CSNM. The plan, which incorporates public input received through a 90-day public comment period and multiple public meetings, uses the best available science to protect both the CSNM and valid existing rights for private property owners, utility companies, and right-of-way and lease holders. The BLM received nearly 4,000 public comments during the comment period, which were incorporated into the final plan.



View from Hobart Bluff, with Pilot Rock visible in the distance



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