

Oregon Accessibility Travel Guide

***From wheelchair users
around the state.***

2020



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Photo courtesy of Oregon Adaptive Sports



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About Willamette Partnership

Willamette Partnership is a conservation nonprofit dedicated to solving complex environmental problems in ways that work for people. Known for helping state and federal natural resource agencies, businesses, and conservation interests take advantage of opportunities to achieve conservation, social, and economic outcomes.



Have you ever been stoked to explore a new place to recreate outdoors, only to finally get there and run into a ton of barriers? **You're not alone.**

I've had my fair share of moments where, after gearing up to try out a new trail or park, I've had to turn around and head back to the car because of a barrier. There's nothing more disconcerting as a person with a disability than heading out into the unknown without all the information I need. It takes a lot of thought and planning to prepare for a successful outdoor recreation experience.

This is what led us to create this Accessible Outdoor Recreation Travel Guide. Oregon has many beautiful, world-class outdoor recreation opportunities that anyone can access and enjoy, regardless of their ability level. This guide was created specifically for people in our disabilities community, so that you've got the information you need to plan a fabulous trip before you head outdoors.

How it came together

This guide was created in partnership between Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection, Adventures Without Limits, and Willamette Partnership. We firmly believe that health and joy are intricately connected to access to nature, that everyone deserves an equitable opportunity to explore and experience the outdoors, and that we achieve better outcomes through partnership and working together.

What You'll Find Inside

While this guide is by no means an exhaustive list of all the accessible recreation spots in Oregon, it includes popular favorites and hidden gems that came directly from the local community. We crowdsourced six diverse locations from around the state that people in our community love to visit. You'll get to see their photos, hear their personal stories and experiences from these places, and have detailed accessibility information about each feature highlighted in this guide. We've also got information about recreation equipment and adaptive outfitters around the state who can help get you outdoors on guided trips.

Have fun out there!

Disclaimer

We sourced recommendations from community members who have been to these places themselves, interviewed them about the spaces, and checked out available online resources to make sure we included timely and accurate information. However, things change constantly. Call ahead to make sure the information here is still correct before getting in your car and heading out!



Meet the Author

My name is Evita Rush, and I work with the Oregon Health & Outdoors Initiative at Willamette Partnership. As a person living with a spinal cord injury, recreating outside can sometimes be a bit of a challenge for me if I haven't done my research, and sometimes even when I have. I'm so excited to share with you a small handful of accessible outdoor features across the state of Oregon, so that you can be prepared and know what to expect before heading outdoors.

One of my favorite places to get outdoors is Milo McIver State Park in Estacada, Oregon. Milo McIver is only 45 minutes away from my home in Vancouver, WA, and it's perfect for a quick weekend escape. The camp sites are fairly level and full of trees and vegetation, and the bathrooms by our group spot were fully accessible with grab bars and big stalls. If you love to kayak, Estacada Lake is right there to enjoy! There is also a large course for Disc Golf.

I love the versatility of this place. There are a variety of activities you can do, and I love that the lake is close by to access. My favorite memory of this park would have to be me being nestled in my tent with my dog. Besides the joy of being able to camp out with my dog, I will never forget the effort Oregon State Parks and the Land Managers took to make sure my stay was accessible as possible.

With that, I proudly present to you the Accessible Outdoor Recreation Travel Guide. Bring extra water, don't forget the sunscreen, and I'll see you out on the trail!

Best,

EVITA RUSH



Beaver Creek State Natural Area





Beaver Creek State Natural Area

**Brian Booth State Park,
Seal Rock, Oregon**

When I moved to Oregon in the summer of 2016, I had next to zero paddling experience. After breaking my spine in a mountain biking crash, I suspected kayaking would be an ideal way for me to explore the outdoors. However, I didn't want to invest in a kayak and the accessories until I had some clue of what I was doing. With that in mind, I began looking for places I could rent gear from with beginner-friendly water.

Most years, the staff at Brian Booth State Park offer guided tours on Beaver Creek from July 1st through Labor Day. They supply the boats, life vests, paddles, and tons of information about the ecosystem and history of the area. In the summer of 2016, I called them and asked if they'd be comfortable taking me, a wheelchair-user, out on the water. They were happy to work with me.

On the day of the trip, I arrived at the Beaver Creek parking area. At one end of the nicely paved parking lot was an accessible vault toilet and at the other end a gentle, paved slope into the water. This being my first attempt at a river paddle, these simple accessible features reassured me that I belonged.

Once everyone was situated in their boats, myself included, we were off. We paddled upriver through towering trees and grassy fields. The guides pointed out where an abandoned beaver lodge was, taught us about different aquatic plants, and told stories of the few black bear sightings they'd had over their years on the creek. I was engulfed by all of the life around me and didn't know where to look! Do I look up in the sky and trees for birds, along the shore and surface of the water for wildlife, or down into the water for fish and newts? One thing's for sure, the slow meandering pace of Beaver Creek got me hooked on kayaking.

I recommend Beaver Creek for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. The accessibility features of the parking area and gentle current of the creek make it an ideal spot for anyone who wants to experience a beautiful coastal river.

Feature Description:

Beaver Creek State Natural Area is part of Brian Booth State Park south of Newport, Oregon. The welcome center hosts a small museum, picnic tables, and observation deck. The Natural Area is a great place to kayak, with guided tours running most years during the summer, and there are some trails at the park, too.

Accessibility Description:

For a kayaking spot, Beaver Creek is beginner-friendly, kid-friendly, and really easy to navigate. The boat ramp down to the water is a really mild slope (probably no more than 3%), which makes it simple and safe to get down into the water. It's a really accessible space naturally—the landscape works with you instead of against you. Bring your own boat if you've got it, though there are also guided tours where they provide kayaks during the summer. You can check out the tour schedule online ahead of time on their website.

Parking:

There's a large, recently-paved lot with lots of spaces, plus additional room to park your car along the edges. There may not be any designated ADA spots in the lot, but there are 4 spots on the end of rows that offer extra space to get in and out of your vehicle without risk of being blocked. You can also park along the outside of the lot to make sure you have space protected space around your vehicle.

Bathrooms:

There's one accessible vault toilet at the end of the parking lot. It's large enough to accommodate just about any manual chair, and likely most motorized chairs. There are also handrails both alongside and behind the toilet. No hand washing area though, so bring your own hand sanitizer!



How to Get There:

From Newport, head south on Highway 101 for about 10 minutes, then turn left onto N Beaver Creek Road. Follow the signs to the parking lot, which leads directly to the boat launch.

Where to Learn More:

Website: <https://stateparks.oregon.gov/index.cfm?do=park.profile&parkId=191>

Other Things to Know:

While you could set your chair out in the shade while you're kayaking, there's not a secure spot to store your chair while you're on the water. We'd recommend putting it in your car to be safe. And for folks looking to extend their stay overnight, the nearby South Beach State Park has several accessible yurts available for rent.



Submitter Profile:

Name: Yvonne Michaud

From: Independence, OR

Self-describe disability & ability level:

T-11 spinal cord injury, complete paraplegic. I use a small manual wheelchair to get around.

Rates this feature: 4/5

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I like to go out with friends mostly. Any water sport, I prefer to be with somebody—it's just smart not to go out by yourself if you're on the water. Being on the water or cycling is a great way to do something I love and connect with other people who enjoy doing those things.

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

- Close-toed shoes (or neoprene socks for kayaking)
- Hand sanitizer
- Wet wipes
- Sun screen
- Water





Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge



Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge

Sherwood, Oregon

Getting out of the city and into nature is easier than you might think. Public transportation takes me straight to the trailhead, and I love the journey of it—seeing the city move further and further away, then finally ending right at the trail.

Once you're at the Refuge, there are so many different things to see and experience. They've got a lot of paved viewpoints, and the rail is low enough for me to see the whole landscape, instead of something blocking my view. There's one particular spot that's circular, all paved, and you can get a 360 view of the meadow. Seeing deer, all the flowers, the trees...it's just beautiful. And there are all different kinds of habitats to explore, with wetlands, beaver ponds, and forests, too. The sounds of the birds and the water make you feel like you're way outside of the city. The spring and summer are the best times to go, and in each season you'll have a totally different experience because of how the landscape changes. As a photographer, there's no end to the things I can take pictures of. People always assume I went to a bunch of different places when I show off my photos after a single trip.

This place is really great for families and kids, too. They've got educational programs, bird watching, photography, and at the center they have an exhibition hall with different animals you can see on the trail with a small gift shop that has local art. The picnic area is covered and close to the restrooms, and is also really close to the entrance to the trail. If you're looking for a quick nature fix close to Portland, this is the place.

Feature Description:

The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is a 1,856 acre wildlife refuge, with a visitors center, picnic area, and 3.1 mile trail. The wetlands change across seasons, so it's a great place to revisit and see how seasonal rains change the landscape from summer's scattered ponds to a glassy lake in the winter.

Accessibility Description:

The Wildlife Center is ADA accessible, as are most all other amenities at the Refuge. If you're taking the bus here, the bus stop is paved and drops you off right at a wheelchair-friendly trail access point. From there, you can either hop on the trail straight to the wetlands, or you can head up toward the Wildlife Center and access the trail from there.

You can also drive and park here, then get to the trail through the parking lot. From the picnic area to the trail is a moderate incline, and coming from the bus stop there's a moderate incline if you head toward the wildlife center. But other than that, it's all flat. The trail is flat and compacted with different substrates, either compact dirt or a compacted dirt and gravel mix that's navigable in a manual or power chair.

Parking:

The parking lot is large, paved, and has ADA spots available. There are some grades in the parking lot, but they have ramps to get up to the sidewalk to get to the Wildlife Center and bathrooms.

Bathrooms:

The bathroom inside the Wildlife Center is ADA accessible, with no steps to get to it and large stalls that can easily accommodate a chair.



How to Get There:

If you're taking Trimet, both the 93 and 94 lines will take you to the Refuge. If you're driving from Portland, take I-5 south to Exit 294, then merge onto OR-99W S. Continue about 6.5 miles until you see signs for the Refuge on your right.

Where to Learn More:

Phone: (503) 625-5944

Website: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tualatin_river/



Submitter Profile:

Name: Inés García Fullana

From: Portland, OR

Self-describe disability & ability level:

I was born with spinal bifida, L3 level. Good upper-body movement, lower-body movement is intermediate. I can stand for a very short period of time and do transfers.

Rates this feature: 5/5 accessibility rating

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I like to scout out ADA trails by myself. I like to take my time on the trail, take some pictures...if I want to enjoy a specific spot on the trail, I don't have to rush for anybody else. It's a time to relax from a heavy work week.

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

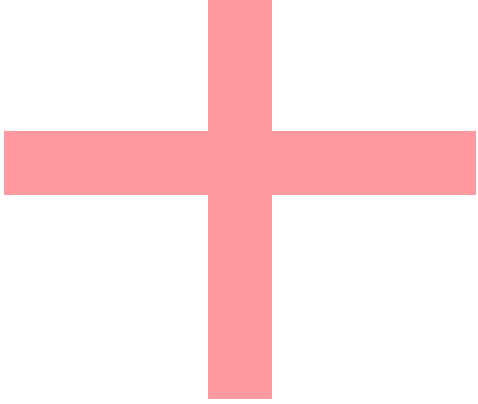
- Camera
- Snack
- Water
- Sunblock
- Phone



Alvord Desert & Hot Springs







Alvord Desert & Hot Springs

Princeton, Oregon

Dust storms so thick you can't see six feet in front of you. Steaming water gushing up from the ground. No roads, and yet people here have broken land speed records of over 500 miles. If the Alvord Desert sounds a little Mad Max, that's because it feels a little Mad Max.

It reminds me of Burning Man. The last time I went, we got caught in a huge dust storm. We ran to the car, locked ourselves in, and had to wait there until it settled. Later that day, a stranger walked up to us from out of the middle of nowhere. His motorcycle had run out of gas, he didn't have any water...it would've been bad if he hadn't found us.

Tucked into Oregon's far southeast corner, the Alvord Desert is a wide open, expansive flat that would be smooth as ice if it weren't for the heat drying mud into crinkled strips along the top. And without any markers, roads, or signs to navigate, there's a feeling of danger and mystery that permeates the wilderness in ways that can feel otherworldly.

It's an extreme place. It's kind of scary. And it gets the adrenaline going a little bit. But having an intense day and then getting into the hot springs is just unbeatable. It's also ridiculously photogenic—you could just ride your bike around and take pictures forever. As long as you've got plenty of water and sunscreen, that is.

Feature Description:

The Alvord Desert is a unique feature in Oregon, hemmed in by mountains and getting about seven inches of rain a year. It's a harsh climate and fun place to explore on your bike or car. Inside the desert itself, it's a choose-your-own-adventure kind of place, with no real infrastructure to speak of. The hot springs are close by, naturally fed, and a great way to end the day after wearing yourself out in the heat. They're privately run, and admission costs \$5.

Accessibility Description:

While there isn't much of any built infrastructure in the desert, it's a naturally-accessible feature. Long, flat stretches of ground make it easy to navigate in dry weather. The ground is just dried mud, but it feels like textured pavement when you're rolling over it. You don't need knobby tires or anything to get over it—standard road tires are probably best. (Knobby tires might break through the surface and into the sand, so we'd actually recommend against them.)

The hot springs are a little trickier, with (again) no real technical accessibility built into the space. There are ramps to get to the springs from the parking lot, but you need to get your chair up over the end of the ramp (wooden planks) before you're on it. It is a little steep going up, but also short. Ashley is able to navigate it with a running start, but you may need someone to help give you a bump or push on the way up.

Within the hot springs themselves, there are rails you can use to lower yourself into the pool, but no permanent seating inside the springs. Instead, folks sit on movable washing machine drums that are inside the pool. If one isn't right by the railing, you may need help in getting it situated in the right place before you transfer. There also isn't a guardrail to keep you from falling in as you maneuver around the pool, so be extra careful!

Parking:

There's no designated parking on the desert itself, so you can park anywhere throughout. With that said, it's important to be really visible during the day and at night. People drive through the desert at ultra-fast speeds, so we recommend parking and camping along the edge of the desert instead of out in the middle.

For the hot springs, the gravel can be thick in the parking lot, so bring a freewheel or something else to help navigate.

Bathrooms:

There's one ADA pit toilet with bars as you enter the desert. It's big, so there's plenty of space to turn around. It is up on a gravel slope, so you may need to drive up close to be able to access it.

At the hot springs, there's a short step up for the bathroom by the entrance. It's an easy wheelie for me to pop up onto, but could be hard for others.



How to Get There:

From Bend, take the US-20 East toward Burns, then head south on OR-78 E. After 64 miles, follow signs to turn right on Folly Farm Rd (it turns into Fields-Denio Rd), then take the gravel road for 30 miles until you get to the Frog Spring entrance. Watch out for rattlesnakes on the gravel road—we saw a bunch last time we were out there!

Where to Learn More:

Website: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/oregon-washington/alvord-desert-wsa>

Hot Springs: <http://www.alvordhotsprings.com/>

Phone: (541) 589-2282

Other Things to Know:

- Don't plan to tent camp. Tent camping isn't advisable because of the strong winds and unpredictable weather. If you're planning to stay overnight, camping in a car or camper would be the way to go.
- Check for rain before you go. If you get stuck in the rain, you can't really move at all—the clay turns sticky and packs into everything.
- Plan well if you're bringing a dog. It's really hot and shade is nonexistent.
- Don't try to wheel on the gravel road, we saw a lot of rattlesnakes the last time we were out there.
- Gas up ahead of time. The nearest town is Fields, OR, about 30 minutes away. They've got a diner with good milkshakes and a gas station if you need to fill up.

Submitter Profile:

Name: Ashley Schahfer

From: Bend, OR

Self-describe disability & ability level:

T12 paraplegic, incomplete but presents more as a complete injury. I have partial ab control, no leg function.

Rates this feature: It's a 4/5 for me—the bathroom is the most difficult thing. And there are some little things to adapt to get into the hot springs.

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I like to go outside with one person or a few friends, and my dog (of course). I love getting out to places that feel isolated and to be in the water.

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

Water

Snack

Bathroom or way to go without one

Knowledge about where I'm going

Freewheel



Mt. Bachelor Ski Area







Mt. Bachelor Ski Area

Bend, Oregon

If you like adventure and fresh mountain air, Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort will not disappoint. We go every year at least one time for skiing. Once a person arrives in Bend, there is no need to drive the rest of the way to the mountain. We take one of the numerous wheelchair lift shuttles available. The shuttles and buses drop us off right at the lodge where one can get their adaptive ski equipment.

The staff at Oregon Adaptive Sports are knowledgeable and set me up with a comfortable and fast mono-ski. It is nice that veterans get a discount as skiing is not a cheap hobby. It is easy for me to maneuver towards the lift. There is an elevator, wide hallways, accessible restrooms and only two steps to the snow. (Less if there's lots of snow!)

Once on the mountain, the views are spectacular. It is the highest point around. Now, I finally take a deep breath and settle in for the day.

I firmly strap on the mono-ski. It is like a tight fitting boot, you don't want to stop and retie your boot over and over again. With my ski buddy we head to the nearest lift and away we go! Most days I have been there it is abundant sunshine. I do all the blue and black runs I can get the ski on. Sure, it can get crowded at times, but it is hard to keep a good thing to yourself. I stop for a few photo ops so I can remind myself later how great a day it was. I used to wear music during skiing, but now I go without so I can hear the wind whistle through my helmet. This is the sound I hear when I reach proper velocity.

A day on the mountain builds a great appetite. We take one of the last shuttles back to Bend and replenish ourselves to the point of gluttony. The altitude finally takes its toll on me when I am completely full of good eats. Some places in Bend you can still see the mountain. Whether it is dark or not, your body tells you the mountain is there. Yet, I can't wait to return to the slopes. I will have no problem sleeping tonight.

Feature Description:

For winter skiing and snowboarding, there's no place like Mt. Bachelor. With accessible lodges, local adaptive outfitters, and outstanding views of the surrounding mountains, Mt. Bachelor has enough to keep you entertained for days. And though we're just focusing on skiing here, it's also a great spot for mountain biking and hiking in the summer, too.

Perhaps the simplest way to experience Mt. Bachelor is with Oregon Adaptive Sports, an accessible outfitter who can help handle all the trip planning, equipment, and logistics. They offer both group excursions and personalized adventures, so head to their website or give them a call to see what upcoming trips you could join.

Accessibility Description:

Mt. Bachelor is large, with two main lodges and one on slope lodge, restaurants, and other spaces to navigate. Both West side Village and Sunrise lodges are accessible from the parking lot year-round, with elevators you can take to get in from the parking lot and many accessible amenities (including

food) inside. Pine Marten lodge on the slope also has food and is accessible with a loaner chair when requested upon arrival from your ski. The Cross country lodge is not accessible. The website also includes a page with more specific information about accessibility and their policies on motorized vehicles, including powered chairs:

www.mtbachelor.com/accessibility

Parking:

The main parking lot is relatively flat and plowed often in the winter, but conditions can be snowy or icy depending upon the weather. Knobby tires, or potentially skiing blades for the front wheels on a manual chair, can help maneuver through the snow if it gets too bad. Parking is free.

Bathrooms:

There are several fully-accessible restrooms in the lodges with large stalls that can accommodate wheelchairs.



How to Get There:

Many hotels and outfitters in the area have shuttles that will take you up the mountain, but check ahead to make sure your shuttle has a wheelchair ramp. If you're driving from Bend, take the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway to the west for about 20 miles. Follow the signs to turn off to the left up the mountain. OAS is located at Sunrise Lodge and the bigger lodge, West Village at the end of the road continuing straight.

Where to Learn More:

Website: www.mtbachelor.com

Phone: (541) 382-1709

Shuttle: www.mtbachelor.com/plan-your-trip/getting-here/shuttle

Oregon Adaptive Sports:

Website: <https://oregonadaptivesports.org/>

Phone: (541) 306-4774

Other Things to Know:

When you're on the slopes, there are assistants who can take your chair and hold it for you while you're skiing. During large events, there are group canopy areas to keep your chair safe and covered while you're on the mountain.

Submitter Profile:

Name: Dennis Hooper

From: Sutherlin, OR

Self-describe disability & ability level:

T12 incomplete paraplegia, ASIA B

Rates this feature: 4/5 accessible

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I always go out with my girlfriend. We like doing things we can both do, and usually try to avoid crowds. Having a great, safe parking space to get in and out of (and protect our vehicles!) is important, too. Nothing puts a damper on your trip like finding a new dent in your car when you get back from the trail!

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

A good view

Low cost

Few people

Doable/possible in my chair

Close to some cheap eats for afterward



Crater Lake National Park







Crater Lake National Park

Crater Lake, Oregon

It's beautiful. It's majestic. And seeing pictures can't prepare you for the sense of majesty and awe of seeing Crater Lake in person. Formed when Mount Mazama collapsed thousands of years ago, Oregon's only National Park boasts any number of recreational opportunities, from hiking along the rim, camping at one of the campgrounds, or enjoying a bite to eat while staring out over the lake. With several accessible viewpoints along the road around the lake and a handful of accessible trails to choose from, Crater Lake is a place to soak in the splendor of nature and lose yourself gazing through the deep cerulean waters. It's my favorite place to escape the heat of summer with my family.

Feature Description:

Crater Lake National Park is massive, with over 180,000 acres of backcountry to explore. Most people stick to two main areas, though: Rim Village (which boasts a visitor's center, lodge, and trails) and the Rim Drive (a road that loops around the whole lake). Between these two spots, you've got a feast for the eyes that can last for days, with plenty of views to enjoy and pictures to take.

The National Park Service has a handy guide on accessibility at the park here: www.nps.gov/crla/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm

They've also got an accessible trail map of the park here: www.nps.gov/crla/planyourvisit/upload/Accessibility-2016-508.pdf

Accessibility Description:

Rim Village is a sprawling complex with a cafeteria, picnic area, lodges, visitor's center, and restrooms. These spots are all accessible, though there are some slopes to be aware of as you work your way around the buildings. Along the edge of the lake, there's a lovely promenade you can stroll around that offers breathtaking views of the scenery, and it's railed off at a low enough space where the view shouldn't be impeded. (It'll also keep you safe from falling over the edge.)

The Rim Drive around the lake is a paved road that you can take to see the lake from every angle. Generally speaking though, it's a great, accessible way to see the various features around the lake without having to exert too much effort. This is a great way to keep the family entertained, with a good mix of short car trips leading to new lookouts.

There's also one fully ADA accessible trail in the park, the one-mile Godfrey Glen Loop that will take you through old growth forests past a view of the lake. And if you're looking for a campground, the one by Mazama Village has some accessible spots.

Parking:

The parking lots at both Mazama Village and Rim Village are accessible and have ADA spaces. There are some slopes as you navigate the parking areas, but nothing too steep.

On the Rim Drive, most pull outs have paved parking lots with ramps to get up to the viewpoints, though not all of them have ADA spaces (and they can get quite crowded in the summer). Several of the lots allow you to park alongside the edge of the lot, where you can have space to get in and out of your vehicle without having to worry about getting blocked in.

Bathrooms:

Both Rim Village and Mazama Village have ADA restrooms.



How to Get There:

From Klamath Falls, take the OR-97 N for 20 miles, then head west on the OR-62. After about 20 miles, follow the signs to enter the park on your right.

From Roseburg, take the OR-138 East out of town for 85 miles, then follow signs to enter the park.

Other Things to Know:

Views of the lake can be obscured by wildfire smoke in the late summer and early fall during some years, so check on the air quality before you head out. Expect several feet of snowfall in the fall and winter months, and though the parking areas around the lodge are usually kept plowed, it may be helpful to have knobby tires to maneuver around the snowier places.

Where to Learn More:

Website: www.nps.gov/crla/index.htm

Phone: (541) 594-3000

Submitter Profile:

Name: Casey Moore

From: Medford, OR

Self-describe disability & ability level:

I'm a C5/C6 quadriplegic, and a powerchair user full time with limited use of my arms, no finger dexterity in hands.

Rates this feature: 4/5

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I love getting out and enjoying nature with my family—having a 4 year-old makes exploring new places all the more fun. Nothing's better than finding a place that doesn't have barriers to access the great outdoors!

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

- Water
- Snacks
- Sun screen
- Family
- Camera



Bonneville Dam Fish Hatchery







Bonneville Dam Fish Hatchery

Cascade Locks, Oregon

My son was two year old when I became quadriplegic, so for years, we were on the lookout for wheelchair accessible things to do that would entertain kids and adults. We love outdoor activities best, as well as science and history, so Bonneville Fish Hatchery and Dam was a great find for us. I could feel myself decompress upon arriving at the picturesque hatchery grounds. It is out in a fairly rural area so I got my outdoor fix. It is a fun and safe place—a concern for our family as my son and I are legally blind.

I liked wheeling the grounds, checking out the different basins with the various stages of fish on the self-guided tour, and watching the salmon and trout jump up the fish ladder. The fact that we could pop into the gift shop for a coffee or ice cream and that I didn't have to worry about finding an ADA restroom was huge. I loved the slightly humid, invigorating fresh air here and I always made sure to take the short trail along Mitchell Creek because the view of the mountains is awesome.

My son loved feeding the ducks and fish. We always came prepared with a pocket full of quarters, and my son delighted in sliding each coin into the slot, cranking the knob, collecting the handful of pellets that spilled out, then feeding the bounty to the greedy ducks and fish.

My husband liked visiting Herman the Sturgeon in his aquarium. This prehistoric fish is huge—over ten feet long and nearly 500 pounds. Where else can you see something like that?!

About half of the time, we made it indoors to the Bonneville Dam visitors center. There is so much science and history surrounding the Columbia River dams and learning it here with the music of Woody Guthrie filling the air is fitting. A favorite for us all was looking through the giant window on the visitors center lower level at the fish—up close and personal—before they went past the dam.

Note: On the Washington side of the dam, Washington Shore Visitors Center has great views of the powerhouse and the massive turbines that produce enough electricity to run 900,000 homes!

Feature Description:

Located near the Bonneville Dam, the Bonneville Fish Hatchery lets you get up close and personal with Chinook and coho salmon, which are hatched from eggs before being released into the Columbia River. While the fish are the main draw, the site offers a number of family-friendly recreation opportunities, including a picnic area, trout ponds where you can feed the fish, and a 500-pound sturgeon named Herman! There are also a number of trails and waterfalls to explore close by in the Gorge, with varying degrees of accessibility.

Accessibility Description:

The hatchery itself is part of a complex of features at Bonneville, all of which are fairly accessible. Most of the features around the hatchery, including the parking lot, picnic area, and restrooms, are all flat and paved. Because the hatchery is so large, it's pretty easy to maneuver around crowds and find places that are less busy—getting stuck shouldn't be a problem.

There's also a short paved trail along the creek that you can take to see the fish ladder, where salmon jump up through the white water to get past the dam. The slope to get down to the fish ladder was easy to access in a powerchair, but may be too steep for some manual chair users without assistance. A freewheel might also be helpful for some people in manual chairs who are navigating the paved surfaces all day, since there may be some cracks or potholes here and there.

Parking:

There's a large, paved parking lot with several accessible parking spaces. The visitor center and gift shop are closeby. And with a properly displayed Handicap Parking Permit, you can drive to some areas not open to the public.

Bathrooms:

The hatchery visitor center and the learning center both have clean ADA-accessible restrooms. I found the restrooms at the learning center easiest and roomier. The dam visitors center also has nice ADA restrooms.

How to Get There:

From Portland, head east on I-84 to exit 40 (about 40 miles outside of town). Follow the signs from the exit toward the fish hatchery.

Where to Learn More:

Website: www.myodfw.com/bonneville-hatchery-visitors-guide

Phone: (541) 374-8393



Submitter Profile:

Name: Lilly Longshore

From: Vancouver, WA

Self-describe disability & ability level:

I am C5-C6 quadriplegic, with almost fully recovered use of my arms (although with limited dexterity in my hands). I am also legally blind.

Rates this feature: 5/5 accessible. It's really easy.

What's your ideal outdoor experience?

I love getting outside with my husband or the whole family.

My 5 Outdoor Essentials:

Freewheel

Water

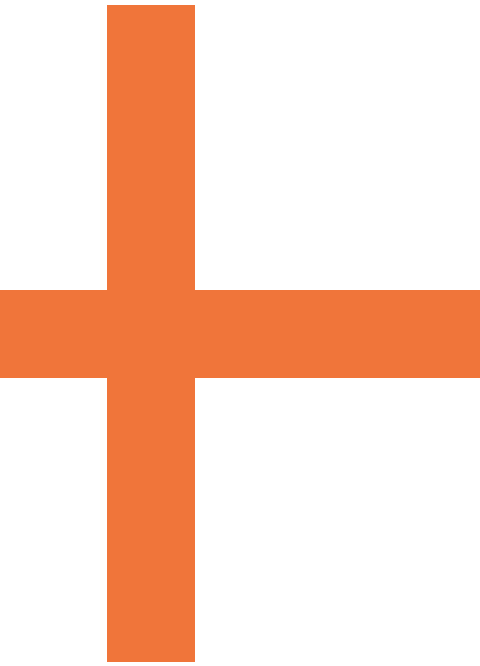
Hat

Polarized sunglasses

Cell phone







Adaptive Outfitters in Oregon

If you're wanting to get outside with a group or need to borrow some adaptive equipment before you hit the trail, Oregon has two fabulous adaptive recreation outdoor outfitters that can help you out.

Adventures Without Limits

Based out of: Forest Grove, OR

Types of trips: Everything from camping to whitewater rafting, snowshoeing to kayaking.

Website: AWLoutdoors.org

Oregon Adaptive Sports

Based out of: Bend, OR

Type of trips: Skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, and more.

Website: OregonAdaptiveSports.org

Have fun out there!

See ya outside!

