



Protecting Cultural, Environmental, and State Resources at Crump Lake

The Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) is working to protect cultural resources and artifacts and prevent impacts to the environment and state property in and around Crump Lake, located in Lake County. There is currently an emergency closure in place and DSL is exploring options for long-term solutions to protect the area in future dry years. The following document provides additional background and information on next steps.

History of Impacts to Resources

In recent months, drought conditions have depleted Crump Lake of water, exposing the lakebed. The Department of State Lands (DSL) has received reports from Burns Paiute Tribe, Oregon State Police, and nearby leaseholders of individuals entering the lakebed and removing, damaging, or destroying cultural, environmental, and state resources.

The reports describe irreparable damage and loss of historic and cultural resources, including the looting of artifacts and protected funerary objects. In pursuit of these objects, artifact hunters have dug and cut into the lakebed. The activities have also impacted surrounding state property; fences have been cut and at least one gate destroyed.

In 2014 and 2015, emergency restrictions were put in place after similar activities were reported, also following dry lake levels.

Emergency Closure to Public Access

On November 19, 2021, Vicki Walker, Director of the Department of State Lands enacted an emergency closure of state-owned lands in and around Crump Lake (OAR 141-088-0007). The indefinite closure restricts public access to these lands, including any foot traffic and motor vehicle use.

Users with permission from DSL may access the land for administrative or land management purposes.

To inform the public of the closure, the Department has posted onsite signage. DSL is also distributing a news release and placing a public notice in *The Oregonian* and a local newspaper. We encourage our partners to help us spread the word.

Collaborating Toward Long-Term Solutions

The Department is currently examining options for long-term solutions to address and prevent future destruction and looting following lowered lake levels. Such options may include permanent rulemaking that establishes a water level threshold to trigger automatic closures, as well as enhanced public education and outreach. Collaborative engagement with affected communities and stakeholders will be integral as we work to develop enduring solutions that can be implemented before lake levels rise and fall once more. We look forward to listening and working toward shared solutions.