



Whale Watching Center



Perched on a seawall with expansive ocean views and a large viewing deck, the Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay is the perfect spot to see whales. Park staff and volunteers answer questions and help visitors spot whales and other marine life. The center is equipped with binoculars for visitors and displays that feature facts about whales. During the busiest weeks, thousands of gray whales migrate past on their way to Baja waters and then back to Alaska.

OPRD purchased the historic property from Depoe Bay in 2008. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its unique architecture and history. It is the only state wayside constructed during the postwar period, and it's designed to serve the increasing number of visitors arriving by car. The center also takes advantage of a unique scenic vista—the world's smallest navigable harbor at Depoe Bay.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers and staff operate the Whale Watching Center, which welcomes as many as 1,000 visitors per day. It's a huge opportunity to educate the public about wildlife and conservation efforts that support migrating gray whales and other marine mammals including humpback whales, orcas, dolphins, porpoise and even blue whales.

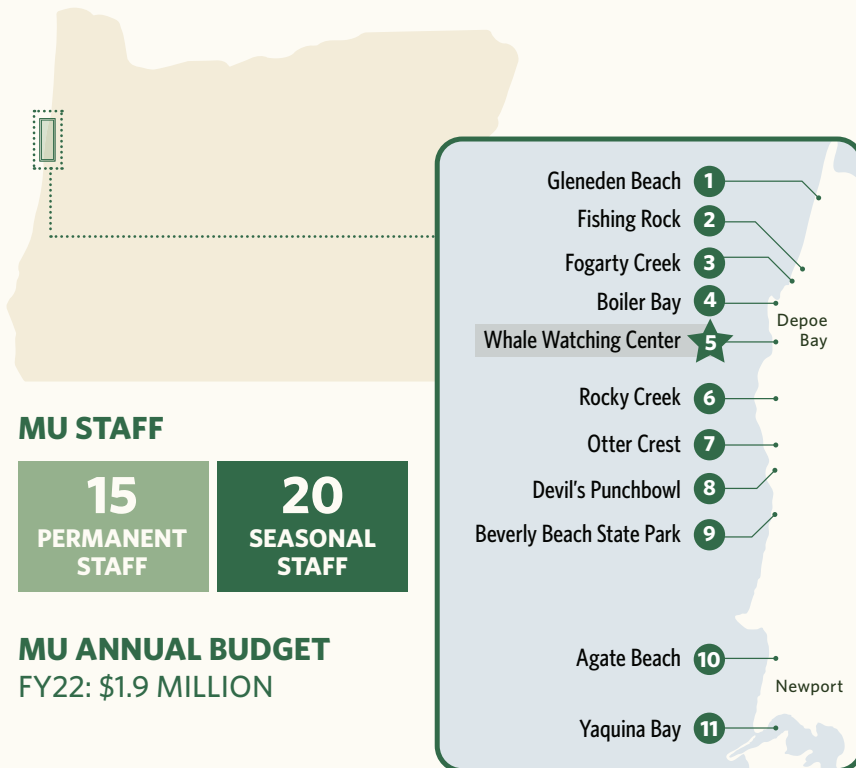
Despite the many benefits of the center, it is an ongoing challenge to operate in the historical building. The walls and windows often leak, and it's difficult to find funding and qualified architects and contractors to work on historical structures. But park staff find a way to make it work. For example, the new interpretive displays were recently completed using outdoor grade products to help their longevity in a concrete building prone to moisture.

Overall, the structure is a success story as it draws crowds to Depoe Bay to learn more about whales and helps boost the local economy.

3 FLOORS	1 OBSERVATION DECK	1 DAY-USE AREA
1 RESTROOM	3 ACRES	MULTIPLE EXHIBITS

BEVERLY BEACH MANAGEMENT UNIT

The Whale Watching Center is a property within the Beverly Beach Management Unit. The management unit also manages a nearly 300-campsite campground, a water treatment plant and a sewage treatment plant, the Depoe Bay Whale Watching Center and several parks and viewpoints known for year-round opportunities to see whales on the Oregon Coast. These popular whale-watching sites include Devil's Punchbowl State Natural Area, Rocky Creek State Scenic Viewpoint and Boiler Bay State Scenic Viewpoint. Every year the MU organizes two Whale Watch Week events, which includes recruiting and training up to 400 volunteers and organizing and managing the coast-wide program. In addition, the management unit includes three historic buildings, including Yaquina Bay Lighthouse, and natural wonders such as the collapsed sea cave Devil's Punchbowl and the nearby Otter Crest Marine Gardens brimming with tidepools.



MU STAFF



MU ANNUAL BUDGET

FY22: \$1.9 MILLION

WHALE WATCHING CENTER VISITATION*

UP TO 1,000 PER DAY

*per calendar year

PARK VOLUNTEERS



*2019

