



**OREGON
WILD**

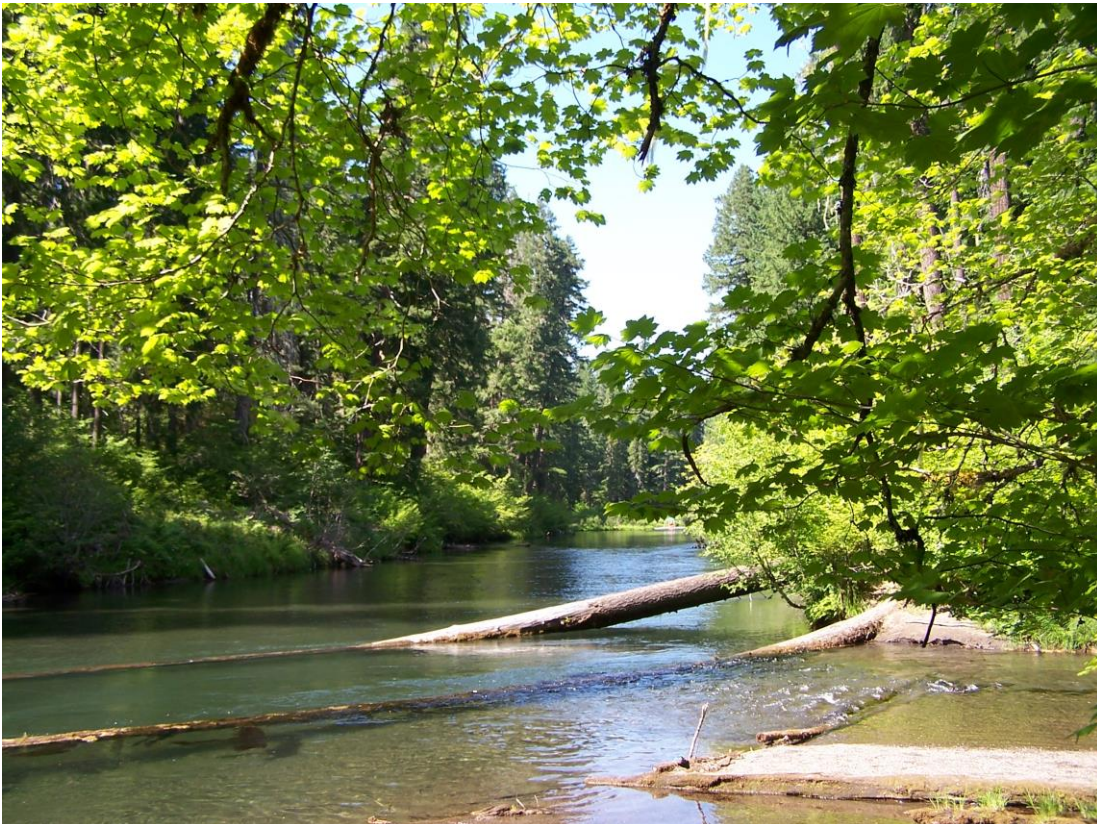
Formerly Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC)

Rogue Gorge (Mt. Stella) Roadless Area-- T30S R3E (primarily in portions of Sections 23, 26, 33, 34 & 35)

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest--High Cascades Ranger District

Upper, higher elevation trail provides two expansive summit top views of the Crater Lake Rim and crest of the southern Cascades. Additionally, two, lower, old growth-lined trails closely parallel the upper Rogue River within this same roadless area. A longer 7 mile, (north-south) river trail, follows just above the Rogue River's westside. While a shorter 3.5 mile trail provides easy access opportunities on the opposite shore to outstanding riverside views of the geologically remarkable "Rogue Gorge" and "Natural Bridge"—the latter being the southern access to the riverside portion of this remarkable roadless area.

All 4 recommended hikes (described below) in this most varied roadless area are easily accessible from the main Crater Lake Hwy. 62 (& Hwy. 230). Also, nearby and outside this proposed Wilderness area are 3 local area campgrounds, a restaurant, rustic cabins, and a small store.



Upper Rogue River along trail #1034A at the confluence with Union Creek.

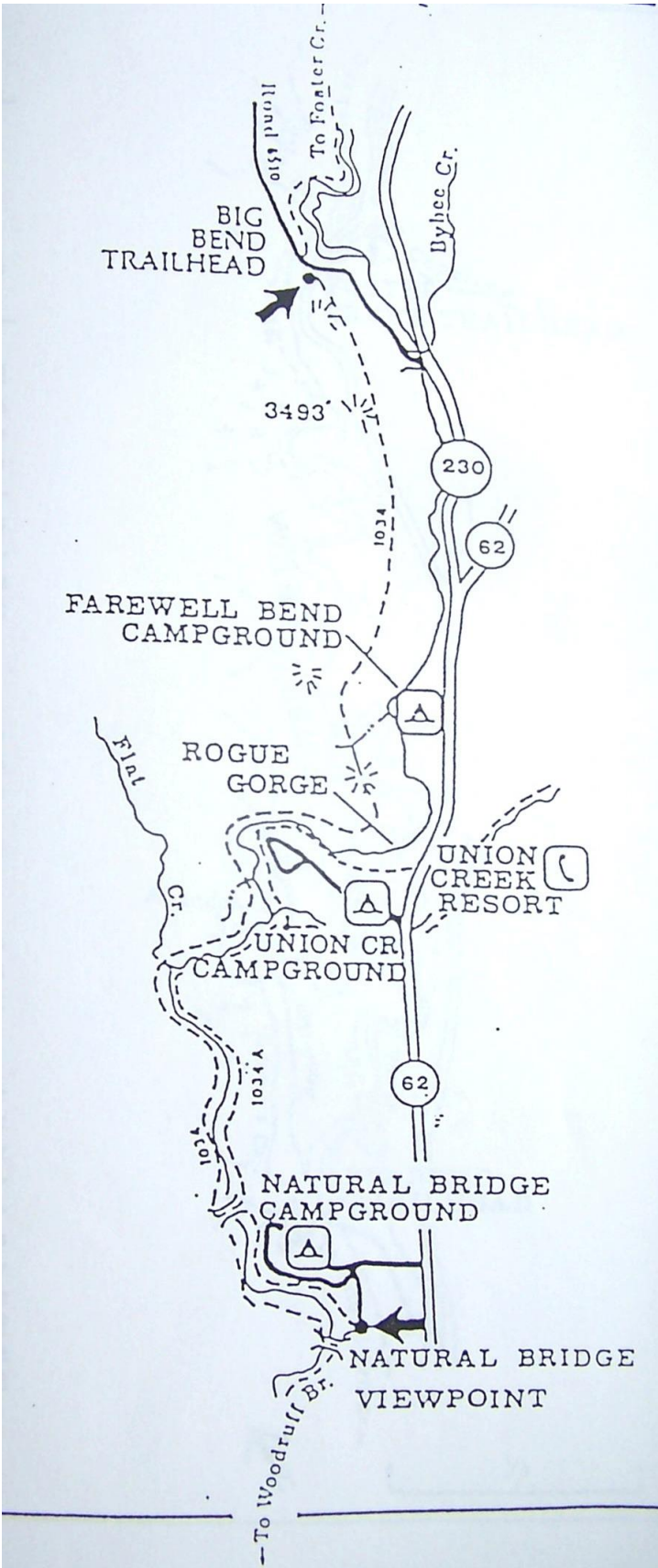
The 2,300 acres Rogue Gorge proposed Wilderness area, bordered along its east side by the upper Rogue River, provides unspoiled vistas along the river and the Crater Lake/Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Highway. The lower elevations of this old growth dominated, riverside roadless area provide a scenic backdrop for the Forest Service's Farewell Bend and Union Creek Campgrounds, as well as the geologically remarkable "Rogue (River) Gorge". All described trailheads below are located just off the Crater Lake Highway 62-230, immediately north and south of the 56 mile post at Union Creek (private restaurant and resort). Here, Hwy. 62 continues as Hwy. 230, upstream along the east side of the Rogue River, after the turn off for the nearby west entrance for Crater Lake National Park.

1) Loop trail, beginning at the southern end of the Rogue Gorge proposed Wilderness paralleling the upper Rogue River:

Start at the "Natural Bridge View Point" parking area just off of highway 62. The Rogue Gorge (proposed) Wilderness Area can be traversed by trail along both sides of the river. Two foot bridges connecting two parallel trails on each side of the river make for a great 2.4 mile loop hike. Hike initially upstream the first mile, with a 1 mile return down the opposite, eastside of the river--returning back to "Natural Bridge View Point".



Upper Rogue River just below Natural Bridge—lower most footbridge connecting trails # 1034A & 1034.



Map of Area—left (west) side of upper Rogue River including trail #1034 is primarily the eastern most boundary of the Rogue Gorge proposed Wilderness.
Directions for two mile loop-hike paralleling both sides of the Rogue River:

Turn off the Crater Lake Hwy. 62, .1 mile south of the 55 mile post onto FS Rd. 300 and continue just over a mile to the parking area for the “Natural Bridge Viewpoint”. While separate trails parallel both sides of the river, first cross the footbridge to the river’s far, westside, where interpretive signs explain this geologic wonder, and you can best see the lava tube returning the upper Rogue River summer time flows back into the main stem of the river. Continue on upstream along the river’s westside trail #1034, for approximately one mile to another footbridge; and then back to the eastside of the river, with a downstream return to the Natural Bridge Viewpoint parking area (and trailhead) on the opposite eastside river trail #1034A.

If you, don’t return via the second footbridge, but continue upstream staying on the far (westside) of the river, the next possible trailhead access (north) is a total of 7 miles from the Natural Bridge Viewpoint trailhead to the next Big Bend trailhead access—located upriver just off of FS Rd. 6510. See longer hike described below.

2) One way, 7 mile (downstream) hike beginning at the northern end of the Rogue Gorge Roadless Area--generally paralleling the upper Rogue River at an approximately 3,300 ft. elevation.

Hike along the old growth lined, Rogue Gorge proposed Wilderness area’s eastern most boundary-- generally paralleling the west side of the upper Rogue River. A car shuttle is recommended, leaving a vehicle at each end.

From north to south, this hike begins off FS Rd. 6510, climbs a rocky embankment, and traverses a steep slope overlooking the Upper Rogue River. A brief opening in the trees offers a glimpse of Fish Mountain (6789 ft. elev.) to the north in the nearby Rogue-Umpqua Divide Wilderness. While the Forest Service’s description doesn’t disclose that you are hiking in a still unprotected “roadless area” the agency’s website description, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/rogue-siskiyou/recreation/hiking/recarea/?recid=69946&actid=50> well summarizes the highlights of this section of trail #1034 as it parallels the upper Rogue River above its west bank, on down to the next possible vehicle access at Natural Bridge View Point trailhead.

(Beginning on this north end) “the trail rises and falls with frequent switchbacks following gullies in the terrain. Two miles south, a steep forested slope overlooks Farewell Bend Campground across the Upper Rogue River. At the southern end of the campground area, the trail momentarily descends to river level to view the river raging through the long, narrow chute of a collapsed lava tube. Continuing south, the trail will wander away from the river.

One mile south of the Flat Creek crossing, the trail junctions with a tie-thru trail which leads to a footbridge crossing the Upper Rogue River. This bridge provides access to the Rogue Gorge Trail and the north end of the Natural Bridge Campground. Continuing south on the Upper Rogue River Trail for the final mile of this segment leads to the Natural Bridge Viewpoint and footbridge. This area is 0.5 mile (in a straight line) west of Highway 62, accessible by Forest Service road 300.

NOTE: Flat Creek has no bridge and must be waded. Water levels can be high in spring and after heavy rains.”



Rogue Gorge Roadless Area—Rogue River confluence with Flat Creek (far shore, left of center) in summer.

Directions, beginning at the north end, for a 7 mile one-way (downstream) hike primarily paralleling the the westside of the upper Rogue River, including the entire eastside of the Rogue Gorge (Mt. Stella) Roadless Area:

At the junction of Hwy 230 and Hwy 62 (turn off for the south entrance to Crater Lake National Park) continue .9 mile north on Hwy 230, and turn left (west) onto FS Rd. 6510 (and just before crossing over Bybee Creek on Hwy. 230). Continue ¾ mile watching for a sign on the left for the Big Bend Trailhead labeled: “Upper Rogue River Trail No. 1034” (below). See end point directions for Natural Bridge Viewpoint in hike #1 above.



The Rogue Gorge Roadless Area borders the Rogue River and Upper Rogue River Trail No. 1034

3) Very easy, short hike to the Rogue Gorge--a spectacular view of the Upper Rogue Wild and Scenic River cascading through a constricted channel of basalt lava

Directions from just off Hwy. 62:

A parking area and short trail for the Rogue Gorge geologic area is signed and easily accessed off the main Crater Lake Hwy. 62) just ¼ mile north of the 56 mile post, and the Union Creek Resort and Becky’s Restaurant. The Rogue Gorge itself, is the name-sake, and the center, eastern most location of this roadless area. The Rogue Gorge Roadless Area’s old growth forested slopes provides the entire back drop along this several mile, mostly riverside stretch of the Rogue Gorge (Stella Mt) Roadless Area—(from north of Farewell Bend Campground, on south and to just above Natural Bridge Campground)—all immediately west of the upper Rogue River and Crater Lake Hwy. See map on page 3.

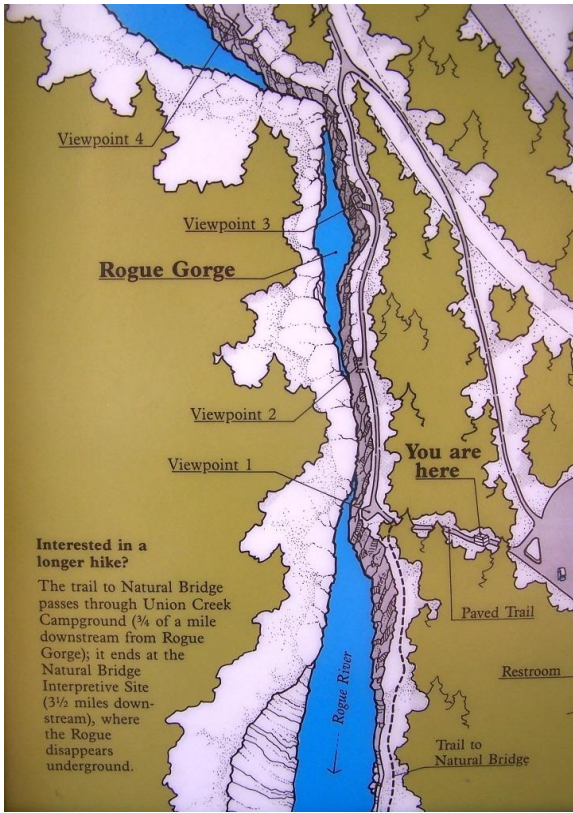


The Rogue Gorge—easily accessible from along a short segment of trail #1034A off Hwy. 62 in the middle, eastern edge of the roadless area.

After seeing the best views of the Rogue Gorge along the highway side of the river, a 3.5 mile trail, #1034A (graphic below) resumes near the public restroom area, and continues on downstream past Union Creek and Natural Bridge Campgrounds, ending at the equally spectacular Natural Bridge View Point (and lower trailhead parking area).



Upper Rogue River canyon, just above Natural Bridge Viewpoint (and southern-most, downstream, riverside trailheads #s1034 & 1034A).



Portion of Rogue Gorge interpretive sign displayed at Rogue Gorge Parking Area—(just off Hwy. 62, north of Union Creek and mile post 56). (Upper Rogue River Trail No.1034, along and above the river's opposite, west bank is not shown.)



Trail on west (left side) of Rogue River over footbridge, provides access to the eastside of the Rogue Gorge (Mt. Stella) Roadless Area as accessed along a 7 mile section of trail #1034, also beginning (or ending) to the north, ¾ mile up FS Rd. FS Rd. 6510. Graphic of footbridge in lower left corner (above) is pictured below.



Southern most (downstream) foot bridge at Natural Bridge Viewpoint trailhead connects parallel trails #s 1034 (westside) & 1034A (eastside) along the upper Rogue River, and into the proposed “Rogue Gorge Wilderness” upstream. See hikes #s 1 & 2 above, and bottom of map on page 3.

4) Trail to Mt. Stella’s summit, in the Rogue Gorge Roadless Area features rock cliffs, an abandoned fire lookout, and unparalleled views west of the crest of the southern Oregon Cascades and much of the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness Area.

Most spectacular, from Mt. Stella’s very accessible summit are outstanding views of the entire west side of Crater Lake National Park and the crest of most of the southern Oregon Cascades. From the roadless area’s higher elevation west side, a former access road (now gated) provides a 3/4 mile (gradual, but all uphill) hiking trail to an abandoned fire lookout at the top of Mt. Stella’s 4715 ft. elev. summit.



As described at

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?wp=GC1X2D8&Submit6=Go

“Mount Stella Lookout went into service as an L-4 on a 20’ pole tower in 1932. In 1946 it was replaced by a newer model L-4 on a 30’ treated timber tower. (Photo from 1947). It has been on standby status, and pretty much abandoned since the mid-1980s. In 2000 it was placed the national registry of historic places in Jackson County.”

Just before reaching the lookout, the trail brings you to the edge of a long rocky precipice with an expansive, 180 degree view of the Crater Lake Rim from Red Cone on the north to Garfield Peak to the south, and with Liao Rock,

Hillman Peak and The Watchman in between. Standing alone, further to the southwest is pyramid-shaped Union Peak in the southwest corner of Crater Lake National Park. And looming most prominently to the extreme southwest is Mt. McLaughlin near the southern most end of the Sky Lakes Wilderness Area. Also, surprisingly at this higher elevation, the cliff's face (immediately below) Mt. Stella is dotted with the less common, stunted "Brewer's Oak" variety of Oregon White Oak, (*Quercus garryana* var. *breweri*).



Crater Lake Rim as seen along trail near the summit of (4715 ft. elev.) Mt. Stella

Directions to the old fire lookout and trail to Mt. Stella's summit:

At the junction of Hwy 230 and Hwy 62 (this is the turn off for the west entrance to Crater Lake National Park) continue .9 mile north on Hwy 230, and turn left (west) onto FS Rd. 6510 (and just before crossing over Bybee Creek on Hwy. 230).

Continue on FS Rd. 6510 for a total of 3 miles (bearing left all the way in) and finally bearing left onto FS Rd. 200. On Rd. 200, continue uphill for just $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and park by the first fork to the left, where this road tops out (and otherwise continues downhill as unsigned Rd. 250). To the left unsigned gated Rd. 200 continues as a hiking trail beginning in an old snowbrush, *Ceanothus* covered unit, but soon enters a lovely mature and old growth (predominately white) as well as Douglas fir forest. The $\frac{3}{4}$ mile trail to Mt. Stella's summit is all up hill, but overall gradual, and nowhere excessively steep.

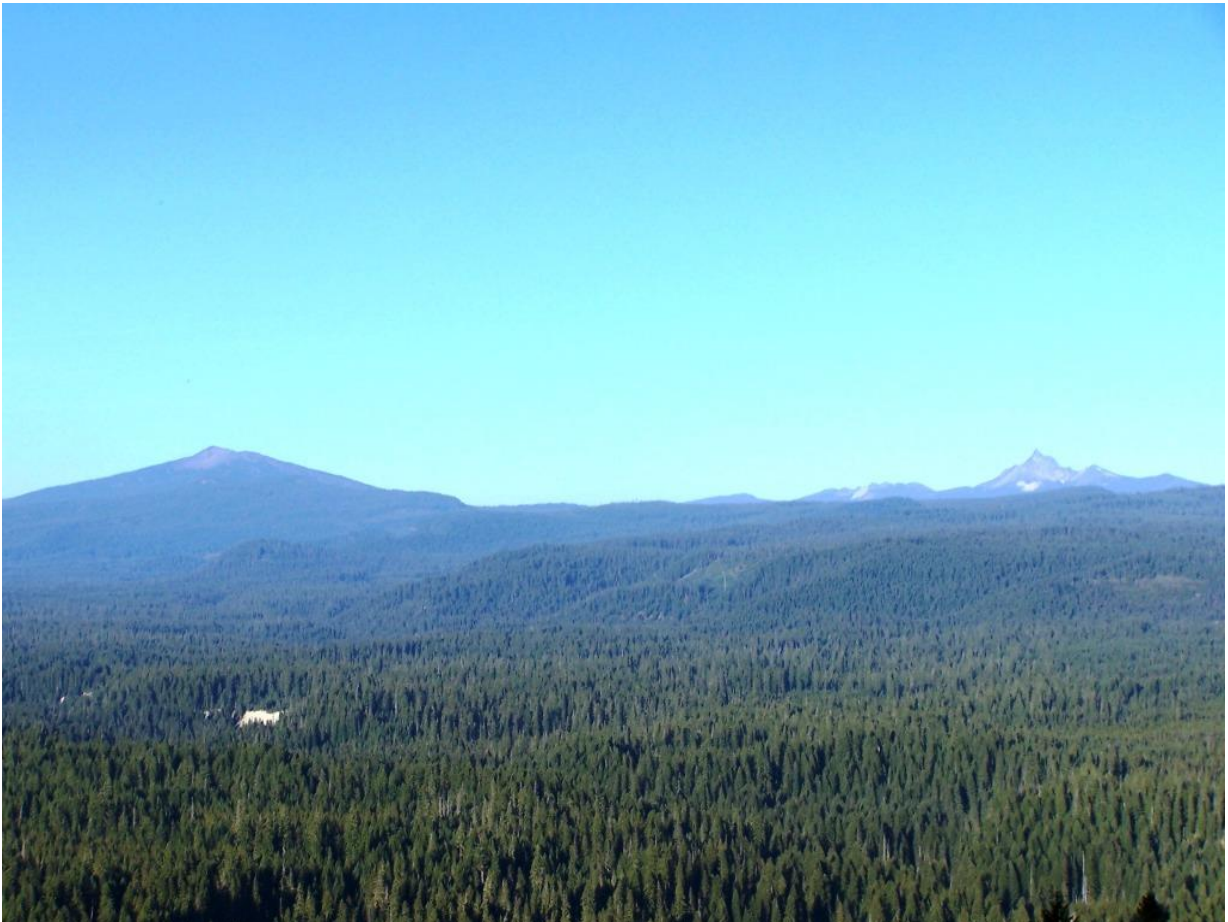


Mt. Stella Lookout (October 2012)



Outcrop below lookout

Additionally, just a little over half way to the top of Mt. Stella is yet another equally scenic expanse of the Cascade Crest to the north--directly above an even more sheer vertical rock cliff, with a spectacular old growth forest flat a couple of hundred feet below.



(Left): Mt. Bailey, and (right): Mt. Thielsen is seen to the NE as observed from just above the trail to the summit of Mt. Stella.

To reach this outstanding view point, you need to hike cross-country steeply uphill for about 30 yards right where the older fir forest is replaced above the old road by a rocky, manzanita-covered hillside. On your way in, once you see these upper rock outcrops and blue sky (uphill side of the trail), retreat back just a short ways, and then cut directly uphill to reach an east facing vertical, solid rock, monolith just beyond this upper forest canopy. Due north is a view of just one of the two “Rabbit Ears” near the Rogue-Umpqua Divide. Along the Cascade Crest to the northeast is Mt. Bailey and Mt. Thielsen beyond.

In summer this impressive, rock face blooms with showy stonecrops, *Penstemon* and other wildflowers. Chinquapin, and creeping *Ceanothus prostratus* var. *prostratus* “Mohalla Mat” further adds to the main trail’s overall vegetative diversity as you near the old historic fire lookout at its small tree-surrounded, upper-most summit.



Quercus garryana var. *breweri*, Brewer's Oak, unexpectedly grows near summit of Mt. Stella