

RECREATION
REPORT

FOREST SERVICE
WAIVES DAY-
USE FEES ON
VETERANS DAY

The U.S. Forest Service will waive fees at day-use recreation sites in Oregon and Washington on Nov. 11 in honor of Veterans Day.

“This fee waiver is one small way of thanking and honoring our nation’s veterans,” said Glenn Casamassa, Pacific Northwest Regional Forester. “We hope this fee-free day will encourage veterans, their families, and all Americans to visit their national forests and enjoy the many benefits these public lands provide.”

The fee waiver includes many picnic areas, boat launches, trailheads, and visitor centers. Fees for camping, cabin rentals, heritage expeditions, or other permits still apply. Fees will continue to be charged at recreation sites operated by concessionaires unless the individual manager chooses to participate.

WINTER RATES
IN EFFECT FOR
IDAHO POWER
COMPANY
CAMPGROUNDS

Winter rates are now in effect at all Idaho Power campgrounds, which remain open year-round, weather permitting. Water has been shut off, and RV dump stations are closed until spring. Overnight camping fees are discounted by 50% until March 31.

In addition to the four campgrounds in Hells Canyon and three at C.J. Strike that can be reserved in advance, Idaho Power provides free camping at Swan Falls south of Boise on a first-come, first-served basis.

The company also owns and maintains numerous day-use parks, boat launches and other recreational access points along the Snake River, from American Falls to Hells Canyon.

Camping rates and regulations are available on Idaho Power’s website, www.idahopower.com

FISHING
FORECAST

HAINES AND
NORTH POWDER
PONDS

Received a fall stocking of rainbow trout in mid-October.

POWDER RIVER

Flows are low below Mason Dam. Look for some good fall rainbow trout fishing.

PEACH (LADD)
POND

Received a fall stocking of rainbow trout in mid-October.

EXPLORING THE SCIENCE BEHIND BLUSTERY WEATHER



Photo by Ethan Shaw

It’s early in the season but winds have already started to form cornices on steep slopes in the Wallowa Mountains. Cornices, which resemble frozen wave white-caps, can be dangerous for hikers and mountaineers, as they create unstable overhangs.

Why the wind blows

As that great high-altitude wind the jet stream moves south, set to ferry Pacific storms our way all winter, I’m thinking about the “little” winds closer — or lower — to home. Around these parts, of course, wind is a familiar, often in-your-face piece of weather. Here in Cove, that fierce north wind at the start of last week comes to mind, the all-night howler that ushered in our Arctic-flavored Halloween: definitely of the in-your-face variety.

Other winds are subtler, more localized. The breath of mountain ranges, for example. Mountains do breathe, it’s true: The “mountain wind system” (as atmospheric



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ETHAN SHAW

scientist C. David Whiteman calls it) describes the upslope and up-valley winds of daytime — the inhalation, driven by the earlier and more intense heating of higher terrain compared to lower — and the nighttime exhalation of downslope and down-valley winds, “gravity winds” prompted by radiational cooling and the liquid-like drainage of heavy, cold air.

That’s the basic pattern, anyhow, but lots of factors impact and interrupt the mountain breath, including seasonal changes in sun angle, weather fronts and

other larger-scale atmospheric processes, and the influence of terrain and landcover. And the slope and valley winds aren’t the only local mountain breezes: In narrow valleys and gorges, crosswise winds kick up during the day, flowing from the cooler, shadier sidewall to the sun-warmed one. This cross-breeze can collide with the stronger up-valley winds to make a corkscrew breeze swirling into the mountains.

At night, cold air may pool on a mountaintop or plateau, deepen, then overwhelm its bounding terrain and spill in a rush downslope. That intermittent gravity wind, periodically pulsing down the mountainside throughout the night — whenever the topographic dam above is breached — is

called a “cold air avalanche,” (again, Whiteman’s term) and knowing the science behind it doesn’t diminish the strange suddenness of it.

The local breezes of the mountain wind system are easily overpowered by winds of larger scale, such as those accompanying fronts (that frigid pre-Halloween howler, case in point), the gusts of thunderstorms, and big-picture airflow from high-pressure to low-pressure realms. In the Grande Ronde Valley, there are no more defining winds than the southerly blows revved up through the gaps of Ladd and Pyles canyons, spurred by frontal passages or simply temperature/pressure differences between the Baker Valley and the Grande Ronde. These

are the south winds that in winter can bellow with a dull daylong roar, and that scrape the snow away from the valley floor and kick up loose powder into ground blizzards.

The interaction of wind and topography is all the more evident and complicated in the high country. Mountain passes funnel winds in the same way as those lower canyons. And wind — or lack thereof — is a prime shaper of the mountain snowpack. As avalanche guru Bruce Tremper notes, wind can heap up the white stuff at a rate 10 times that of direct snowfall.

This time of year sees the scaffolding of the snow season’s cornices laid down.

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ARCHAEOLOGISTS STUDYING CHINESE MINING SITES ON MALHEUR NATIONAL FOREST IN GRANT COUNTY

Saving Oregon’s mining history

By Erin Ross
Oregon Public Broadcasting

It was the kind of July day in Eastern Oregon when the dusty air waits for a spark to ignite a fire. In fact, two fires were already burning nearby.

Chelsea Rose, clad in black jeans, a black woven cowboy hat and black leather combat boots, was leading a team of U.S. Forest Service employees, archaeologists and volunteers through the backwoods. Two-way radios crackled with fire spotters’ updates. Although the fires were a distance away, another could have started at any minute. Everyone needed to be prepared to evacuate.

Rose stepped over felled logs and rutted ground. Piles from a forest thinning operation were scattered throughout the landscape. There was no trail, but Rose didn’t need it — she spotted a small, unassuming depression in the ground.

“It’s a mining ditch, an aqueduct,” said Rose, an archaeologist from Southern Oregon University. She turned to follow it after pointing out a large reservoir and a bump in the aqueduct that probably held a gate. Moving water, Rose said, was crucial for gold mining operations. Hand-built aqueducts like this one could stretch for miles, descending steadily across a mountainside.

The people who created them are almost certainly dead, but only recently.



Erin Ross/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Archaeologists excavate the hearth from a Chinese gold miners’ cabin in the Malheur National Forest.

Many of their children are still alive.

Rose works on the Oregon Chinese Diaspora project. She studies the mass immigration of Chinese workers into Oregon, many of who came as miners when gold fever hit Oregon in the mid-1800s. At one point, 40% of the residents of Grant County, where Rose

is excavating, were Chinese.

“If you look at the population of Chinese residents (in Grant County), in the 1860s up through the turn of the century, there would be a lot of folks here,” Rose said. “There’s not now, and there’s a reason for that.”

The reason is the Chinese Exclusion

Act, an 1882 law that prohibited the immigration of Chinese workers to the United States. It was the first law ever passed that was aimed at blocking a specific ethnic group’s entry into the U.S.

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