



Deschutes National Forest | June 2023

## Recreating in the Cedar Creek Fire Area

**Please use caution when recreating in areas that were impacted by the 2022 Cedar Creek Fire.** A burned landscape presents a number of safety hazards that either did not exist prior to the fire or have been exacerbated by the effects of the fire. In some cases, these hazardous conditions may persist for several years after a fire. Be very aware of your surroundings, follow warning signs, area closures and directions from agency personnel, and pay particular attention to these potential safety hazards. **Be especially wary of hazard trees after rain events or during wind.**

When recreating in a burned area:

- **LOOK UP** for upslope burned areas, snags, and exposed rocks that may fall.
- **LOOK DOWN** for debris from falling rocks, erosion – especially at road and trail edges, and ash pits (which may form from root pockets or stumps of burned trees).
- **LOOK AROUND.** Be situationally aware. Check the weather before you travel, including at higher elevations. Wind, rain, ice and snow can increase the risk of tree fall, rock fall, slides and other hazards. Flash floods and landslide risks are elevated below severely burned areas.
- **LOOK BELOW** the surface of standing water and moving water for floating logs, submerged trees and other debris, which can strike or entangle swimmers and boaters and damage other infrastructure.

**Soil erosion increases after a fire due to lack of ground cover.** Many shrubs will re-sprout and many trees will regenerate after a fire. However, where plants were burned and will not recover, their roots are also dead and will decompose over the coming months and even years. As these old roots decompose, they will cease to bind the soil which will allow the soil and rock to shift and move under foot. Storm-triggered landslides and rockfall may make trails and roads impassable. In some cases, the existing trail prism and trail markers may also be obliterated making route finding difficult.

**Hazard trees will exist throughout the burned area.** It is often hard to assess the long-term survival of scorched trees, some of which may subsequently die while others may recover. Assume that a dead or defected tree may fall and impact an area up to two times its height. Even isolated green trees that are surrounded by a heavily burned area are very prone to breakage and uprooting. Allow yourself some extra room and consider the potential fall zone when choosing a travel route and especially where you choose to rest or camp. Be especially wary of hazard trees after rain events or during wind.

**Burned stumps may create rather obvious large holes, but these holes may actually be bigger than you think.** In many cases, the fire may have traveled through the root chambers and consumed the woody root material leaving vacant chambers where solid wood used to be. Over time, these root chambers will collapse. Your body or vehicle weight on the root chambers may cause them to collapse and open up holes under your feet. Large trees have particularly large root chambers that can also be very deep. Be especially wary after rain as the moisture may travel through the root chambers and make collapse easier.

### Roads –

Roads within the Cedar Creek Fire area on the Deschutes National Forest are open to the public. The Forest road crew will be making repairs on some road segments. Expect to encounter road work this summer and fall. Please slow down and use caution when you see “Road Work Ahead” signage.

### Recreation & Trails –

Recreation staff are working to repair and reopen trailhead kiosks, damaged trail segments and recreation sites. Trails in the burned area received a mix of burn severity: some places may appear untouched by fire while other areas experienced a complete loss of vegetation. Our trail crew and partners are working to clear downed trees, reduce hazards and restore trail tread and drainage features; however, please note that in some places trail segments may have entirely disappeared. If you’re planning to hike the trails listed below, please be sure you are comfortable with

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navigation skills and are carrying a map and compass to navigate through sections of trail that are difficult to identify on the landscape.

There may be short periods of closures on roads and trails during the repair work process over the next few years. Please respect closure signs and/or reroutes for your safety.

**The following trailheads and trails fall within the 2022 Cedar Creek Fire burned area:**

**Trailheads –**

- Charlton Lake Trailhead:
- Irish & Taylor Lakes Trailhead:
- Lemish Lake Trailhead:
- Many Lakes Trailhead:
- Johnny Lake Trailhead:

**Trails –**

- Charlton Lake Trail:
- Clover Meadow Trail:
- Johnny Lake Trail:
- Lemish Lake Trail:
- Many Lakes Trail:
- Metolius-Windigo Trail:

**Pacific Crest Trail –**



The Pacific Crest Trail is open; however, as noted above the severity of damage to the trail varies. Our recreation staff and partners are working on clearing downed trees, improving navigability and repairing trail tread; however, the work is extensive and will take a significant amount of time to complete.

The [Pacific Crest Trail Association](#) is a great resource for staying up to date on active fire closures and suggested re-routes.



**Closures may still exist on the Willamette National Forest’s portion of the Cedar Creek Fire.** Please visit their [website](#) to learn more and obey all posted signs denoting closed areas.