CEDAR CREEK TRAIL
Upper interpretive trail ½ mile
Lower interpretive trail ½ mile
Total trail length 3 miles one-way.
We invite you to explore the entire trail in every season!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO:
Stay on the trail to protect plants and animals.
Respect other users on the trail.
Take trash home with you.
Keep pets on a leash.

UPPER TRAIL
Get to know the Warner Mountains by exploring one of its vegetation zones—the white fir zone. Although white fir is the most common tree, you will discover a changing landscape that includes meadows and aspen groves. You will also find that the landscape has many moods as the seasons pass.

1 WHITE FIR: THE "THIRSTY" CONIFER
Tiny openings called "stomata" cover each needle of conifer trees. Through stomata, trees "breathe in" carbon dioxide, and "breathe out" oxygen and water vapor. Unlike most conifer trees, the stomata of white fir do not shrink to prevent water loss when conditions are dry. Where do thirsty white fir trees grow best? The next stop will give you a clue.

2 HOW SLOPE DIRECTION AFFECTS WHITE FIR
Compare the south-facing slope across the valley to the north-facing slope where you stand. Here, there is less direct sunlight. The air is cooler in summer, and winter snow lingers longer. This cool, moist, north-facing aspect is perfect for thirsty white fir trees.

3 MOISTURE CREATES THE MEADOW
Meadows are moist habitats where the soil is too damp even for thirsty white fir trees. This meadow gets its moisture from Cedar Creek, snow melt, and a high water table. Grasses and aspen groves thrive in the wettest parts of the meadow. Look for white fir and sage growing along the drier edges.

4 BRINGING THE ASPEN BACK
Aspen groves are important wildlife habitat, but as time passes, white fir trees may crowd out aspen trees. Years ago, wildfires renewed aspen groves. After a fire, new aspen sprouted quickly from a spreading root system, while fir trees grew slowly from seed. Here, aspen groves are being renewed through removing fir trees by hand.

5 PRESERVING THE WHITE FIR FOREST
Dead and dying white fir trees have been removed from this hillside to reduce the risk of wildfire. White fir trees provide food and homes for many animals. Mule deer feed on buds and needles in winter. Grouse eat seeds that have fallen from cones. In March, goshawks nest high in the branches.

6 SPRING AND SUMMER CHANGE THE MEADOW
Each season brings a new story to the meadow. In spring, fawns are born and songbirds arrive to nest among the aspens. Look for western tanagers, robins, and warbling vireos. Goshawks hunt for birds, as well as small mammals like weasels. In summer, butterflies sip nectar from a succession of wildflowers.

7 THE MEADOW IN FALL AND WINTER
In fall, chipmunks scurry by with their cheeks full of seeds. Listen for scolding Douglas squirrels and rustling aspen leaves. When winter arrives, some animals leave tracks in the snow, while mice forage for plants and seeds in tunnels beneath the snow. Come back to see the meadow again as it changes with the seasons.
10 FLOODS BRING CHANGE
On January 1, 1997, a rare winter rain melted mountain snows. Cedar Creek was a torrent that scoured the stream banks and washed away part of the old roadbed. The creek deposited gravel in the small floodplain and around the trunks of some ponderosa pine trees downstream. Although new sediment killed several big pines, it opened a way for new willow and cottonwood trees to sprout.

11 THE RIPARIAN AREA ATTRACTS WILDLIFE
Aspens, willows, and cottonwoods flourish in the damp soil of the riparian area along Cedar Creek. Birds nest in the dense foliage, and use the branches as hunting perches. In summer, watch for cordilleran flycatchers darting from the branches to catch insects in midair. Many kinds of animals are attracted to the riparian area, where dense vegetation creates an environment that is cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

12 ANCIENT VOLCANOES SCULPTED THE LAND
Lava from ancient volcanoes created the rock formations along this section of the trail. Now, these old volcanic flows are fracturing and eroding. Notice the large rock below the trail. Do you think it could have sheared off the rock wall above?

13 VULTURES ROOST ON THE RIDGES
Look for a snag atop the nearest ridge across Cedar Creek. Vultures use ridge-top snags as morning roosts. There, they wait for warm air to begin rising in thermals that help them soar high and glide far and wide looking for their food: dead animals. You are most likely to see vultures on the snags in the morning or early evening from spring through fall.

14 A TRANSITION IN THE FOREST
You are passing between the sage steppe and juniper woodland zone and the ponderosa pine zone. Scientists use forest zones to describe how plant patterns change as climate and elevation change. But forest zones only tell part of the story of this complex landscape. You will find surprises like aspen and white fir growing in damp places along the trail.