



TALUS SPECIALISTS

Staying **ON** the trails and **OFF** the talus in the Gorge is critical to protect rare plants and animals

Loose pile of rocks on a slope

Mosses and lichens take *decades* to grow, and are easily killed by both crushing them and by knocking them off of the rocks.

Other plants are also delicate and easily damaged, including small ferns and rare wildflowers especially adapted to the rocky habitat.

Two very different types of wildlife also inhabit talus slopes and are at risk of disturbance and death:



The **Pika** is a small relative of rabbits that lives only in talus.

Pikas in the Gorge are very special because they are the lowest-elevation population of pikas in the country!

Climbing on the talus can damage the mosses, lichens, ferns and rare wildflowers that pikas depend on for food.

The **Larch Mountain Salamander** lives only in rocky areas in and near the Columbia Gorge.

Because it is very small, active only at night, and hides under rocks during the day, it is defenseless against being crushed and killed by hikers and climbers stepping on the talus rocks.



Please think about these talus specialists and stay on the trails

Thank you for your expertise ---

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for the greatest good