



Wild Rivers Ranger District

The Wild Rivers Ranger District is known for its rivers, botanical diversity, majestic forests, and rugged landscape. Located in beautiful Southwest Oregon, it extends from west of the city of Grants Pass to the middle of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, from northern California to the Illinois River and Rogue River and the lower portion of the Applegate Valley. The Kalmiopsis Wilderness Area is to the north and west, the Siskiyou and Red Buttes Wilderness Areas to the south, and many sparsely roaded acres rest in between.

The terrain varies from 1000'-6000' elevation, with much of the diverse landscape resulting from the Siskiyou Mountains' geologic age and unique qualities. Douglas-fir, incense cedar, white oak, madrone, black oak, white fir, ponderosa pine, and sugar pine dominate the forested slopes at lower elevations, with western hemlock, Douglas-fir and several kinds of cedars abundant in the higher areas.

Recreation

The district includes a wide array of outdoor recreation opportunities, including camping, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, backpacking, rafting, kayaking, swimming, hunting, scenic drives, and plenty of roadless open space.

[Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve](#) is within one hour in the mountains above Cave Junction.

The Pacific Coast is about a one-hour drive from Cave Junction and the Wild Rivers Ranger District. The coast boasts tide pools, beautiful beaches, and plenty of lodging and restaurants. On

the way, travelers will pass through [Redwoods National and State Parks](#).

Climate

Southwestern Oregon summer weather is Mediterranean in feel, with warm, dry summer days and cool evenings. Precipitation increases during the fall and spring, with an average yearly rainfall of 45 inches. Winter temperatures fluctuate widely, but tend to be relatively temperate, between 45 and 60 degrees. It does snow in the higher elevations, and the valley floor typically gets snow once or twice in the winter, rarely lasting more than a day or two.

- [More information](#)

Communities

Southern Oregon offers good quality of life, with cultural and recreational opportunities, friendly people and mild climate.

Grants Pass (population 39,468)

Location: Along Interstate 5, in Josephine County, approximately 60 miles north of the California border.

Downtown Grants Pass has earned a National Historic District distinction for its historic buildings and homes. It's the gateway to the legendary Rogue River, one of the eight original Wild and Scenic Rivers designated in 1968. Folks who love to fish, raft, jet boat, and kayak will enjoy the diverse recreation opportunities in the area.

The town has a variety of educational options for all ages, as well as daycare opportunities. Southern Oregon University is located nearby in Ashland.

A wide array of medical services are offered at [Asante Three Rivers Medical Center](#).

- [More information](#)

Cave Junction (2,092)

Location: Approximately 12 miles north of the California border and 30 miles southwest of Grants Pass.

Cave Junction is the gateway to the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, and is a small community that has long-embraced its small-town vibe and attention to community. It is home to the Illinois River, with its green waters meandering through the south end of town. Whether you're an avid angler, a water sports enthusiast, or simply seeking a tranquil escape in nature, the Illinois River Valley's breathtaking scenery provides the perfect backdrop for various outdoor activities.

Medical care is available at the [Siskiyou Community Health Center](#), with Asante Three Rivers Medical Center in Grants Pass providing hospital services.

- [More information](#)

Medford (population 86,301)

Location: Approximately 277 miles south of Portland, OR, and 385 miles north of San Francisco, CA.

Medford is Jackson County's county seat, and is the industrial, medical, and service center for southern Oregon and northern California.

The [Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport](#) (MFR) serves the Rogue Valley, in addition to seven other counties. The airport provides connections to many of the major hubs in the western states.

[Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center](#) has repeatedly been included on the list of the top 100 Heart Care Hospitals in the United States, the only hospital on the west coast with that distinction.

- [More information](#)

Top: Cobra lilies are one of many species that illustrate the unique plants and soils that make the Wild Rivers Ranger District magical. Forest Service photo by Chamise Kramer.

Middle: Descending the Illinois River. Photo courtesy of Chris Chambers.

Bottom: Bolan Mountain Lookout is one of the most iconic buildings on the district. Photo courtesy of Siskiyou Mountain Club.

