



## Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

Located in southwestern Oregon and extending into California, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest ranges from the crest of the Cascades Range, west into the Siskiyou Mountains, and includes southern portions of the Coastal Range, extending nearly to the Pacific Ocean.

The forest itself is composed of two distinct geological provinces: the Cascade Range and the Klamath and Siskiyou Mountains. The Siskiyou area embodies the most complex soils, geology, landscape, and plant communities in the Pacific Northwest. World-class wild rivers, biological diversity, remarkable fisheries resources, and complex watersheds define the Siskiyou. The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is the most floristically diverse National Forest in the country, with an abundance of extraordinary botanical resources.

### Fast Facts

- The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest covers nearly 1.8 million acres, and includes lands in seven counties in both Oregon and California.
- The national forest is home to eight Congressionally-Designated Wilderness Areas.
- Six Wild and Scenic Rivers travel through the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

### History

The Rogue River National Forest (until 1932 called the Crater National Forest) was established by President Theodore

Roosevelt in 1908. The name “Rogue River” commemorates the Takelma tribe, whose defense of their homeland led early-day French-Canadian trappers to call them *les Coquins*, which translates to “the Rogues.”

The Siskiyou Forest Reserve was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905, and the Reserve was designated as the Siskiyou National Forest in 1907. The name “Siskiyou” is a Cree word for “bob-tailed horse,” and was bestowed in 1828 by French Canadians working for the Hudson Bay Company.

The Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forests and their nine ranger district offices were administratively combined in 2004, and became what is today known as the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

In 2007, the nine ranger districts were consolidated to form five:

- **High Cascades Ranger District**
- **Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District**
- **Wild Rivers Ranger District**
- **Gold Beach Ranger District**
- **Powers Ranger District**

Those five Ranger Districts are located in or near the communities of Prospect, Jacksonville, Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Gold Beach, and Powers. The forest also is home of the J. Herbert Stone Nursery, located near Central Point, while the Supervisor’s Office is located in Medford, Oregon. In addition to the districts, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National

Forest includes the J. Herbert Stone Nursery, serving national forest units across the country in their restoration needs.

## Recreation

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest is known for its recreational opportunities with multiple trail systems offering hiking, mountain, gravel and road biking, off highway vehicle use, backpacking, and horseback riding.

- [More information](#)

## Climate

Climate on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest changes with elevation and as you move inland from the coast. The Coast Range is a temperate rain forest where rainfall ranges from 60 inches to more than 100 inches at higher elevations. Rainfall occurs mostly from October through June. Further inland, annual precipitation is approximately 30 inches at the lower elevations of the Siskiyou Mountains. Much of the precipitation comes from October to April in the form of rain at the low elevations, and snow in the higher elevations. Snow is infrequent at the lower elevations. Late spring, summer and early autumn tend to bring clear, sunny days with moderate temperatures. Temperatures near the coast seldom exceed 75 degrees in the summer and snow is rare in the winter. Inland, the ocean influence diminishes, and summer temperatures frequently reach the 90s.

- [More information](#)

## Communities

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

### Ashland (population 20,935)

*Location: Approximately 11 miles south of Medford and 16 miles north of the California border, in the southern part of the state.*

Repeatedly named as one of Oregon's premier outdoor recreation towns and arts hubs, Ashland is home to the [Oregon Shakespeare Festival](#), [Mt. Ashland Ski Area](#), [Southern Oregon University](#), and is the only place where the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest interfaces directly with the city limits of a community. More than 45 miles of multi-use, non-motorized trails begin above Lithia Park, and travel all the way to the top of the watershed and Mt. Ashland Ski Area.

- [More information](#)

*Top: Mt. McLoughlin, located in the Sky Lakes Wilderness, is visible across the Rogue Valley and the Hight Cascades Ranger District. Forest Service photo.*

*Middle: 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.*

*Bottom: Mt. Ashland Ski Area operates under a permit from the forest. Photo courtesy of Mt. Ashland Ski Area.*



Forest Employees conduct a prescribed burn on Gold Beach Ranger District. Forest Service photo.



### **Brookings (population 6,493)**

*Location: Just across the Oregon/California state border in Oregon, along Highway 101, and approximately 40 miles south of Gold Beach.*

Brookings is a scenic city on the southern Oregon coast known for its mild climate, stunning coastline, abundant outdoor recreation like hiking, fishing, and beach combing, and its designation as an “Azalea City.” It’s a popular stop on Highway 101, offering access to the rugged [Samuel H. Boardman State Scenic Corridor](#) and the mouths of the Chetco and Winchuck Rivers for boating and fishing.

The small city offers a mild climate, small-town coastal charm with a vibrant downtown and friendly locals, attracting those seeking outdoor access and a tight-knit community, though it’s a smaller city with fewer big-city amenities, blending visitor appeal with full-time residency for nature lovers and retirees.

Brookings is served by [Curry Medical Center](#), as well as an array of other medical providers of all sorts.

- [More information](#)

### **Butte Falls (population 433)**

*Location: Approximately 32 miles north of Medford, and 25 miles southeast of Prospect.*

Butte Falls offers a glimpse into an historic Oregon logging town, providing easy access to recreation opportunities on public lands.

Located on the densely forested Big Butte Plateau in the Cascade Range, the town’s name comes from nearby Butte Falls, a ten-foot-high basalt ledge across Big Butte Creek.

Butte Falls is home to schools, a couple of restaurants, a gas station, and a general store for essentials.

- [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](#)

### **Gold Beach (population 2,272)**

*Location: Approximately 45 miles north of the California border, along Highway 101.*

Located on the Wild Rivers Coast of southern Oregon, Gold Beach is situated in Curry County at the mouth of the Rogue River.

The community was originally named Ellensburg in the 1850s, but later took the name Gold Beach after a beach near the mouth of the Rogue River where hundreds of placer mines extracted gold.

Mail boats based in Gold Beach have been delivering mail upstream to Agness since 1895, one of only two rural mail boat routes remaining in the U.S.

The Wild and Scenic Lower Rogue River provides some of the best salmon fishing and whitewater rafting and kayaking opportunities in the Pacific Northwest. Other popular recreational activities include beach combing, surfing, kite boarding, and windsurfing.

The communities in this area are served by Curry General Hospital, known for its staff, and part of the [Curry Health Network](#).

- [More information](#)

### **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](#)

## Jacksonville (population 2,945)

*Location: Approximately five miles west of Medford and 20 miles north of Ashland, in the southern part of the state.*

A historical showcase, the Gold Rush town of Jacksonville has been designated as a National Historic Landmark Community. Located in the foothills of the Siskiyou Mountains, this old west town has more than 90 original brick and wooden buildings that date back to the 1850s. It has a robust downtown that provides various dining opportunities and multiple locally-owned shops. In the summer, Jacksonville is home to the [Britt Festival](#), a music and arts festival that runs nearly half the year and welcomes musical performers of all genres. Miles of trails are accessible directly from town, both at the [Jacksonville Woodlands](#) and [Forest Park](#)

- [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 located along Interstate 5. Surrounding communities and towns include Ashland, Jacksonville, Central Point, Grants Pass, and further to the east, Klamath Falls. It 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, with daily flights to Portland, Seattle, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Denver, among others.

Health care is the number one job producing sector in the Medford area, with two major medical centers and a wide range of clinics and specialists. [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.

Like so many of the communities in southern Oregon, Medford is home to multiple outdoor recreation opportunities, including [Prescott Park](#), [Table Rocks](#), and [county parks](#) like Touvelle Park. [Crater Lake National Park](#) and [Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve](#) are within two hours of driving.

- [More information](#)

## Port Orford (population 1,114)

*Location: 35 miles north of Gold Beach along Highway 101.*

Port Orford is the oldest town on the Oregon Coast and the most westerly in the contiguous United States. Steeped in history and natural wonders, this is a quintessential coast town.

Anchored by its active harbor, Port Orford sees its fishing fleet of 30 boats lowered into the water by crane every morning. Water activities are a popular pastime here, with surfing,

windsurfing, boating, or sea kayaking as options. Scuba diving nearby coves and shipwrecks is also popular, in waters offering high visibility. The town is artsy and eclectic, boasting art galleries, shops, and restaurants with views. The [Wild Rivers Coast Scenic Bikeway](#) begins in Port Orford, with a 61 mile-long route of that travels the coast and the Elk River.

Port Orford is served by [Adapt Integrated Health Care](#), and the hospital to the south in Gold Beach.

- [More information](#)

## Powers (population 703)

*Location: Approximately 75 miles west of I-5, and 50 miles east of the Pacific coast.*

Powers is in the southwestern corner of Oregon, nestled in a valley ringed by steeply forested mountains of the Coast Range, and retains the close-knit, small-town character of a Pacific Northwest logging community. It is 21 miles to the next nearest town, Myrtle Point, and 30 miles from the Coos County seat, Coquille.

Services in Powers include a store, cafe, and several churches. Childcare facilities may not be available. The school system consists of a grade school (grades K-6) and a high school (grades 7-12).

- [More information](#)

## Prospect (population 725)

*Location: Approximately 45 miles north of Medford, along Highway 62.*

Prospect is an historic logging town, serving as a gateway to Crater Lake and the Wild and Scenic Upper Rogue River. Known for abundant waterfalls like Mill Creek Falls and National Creek Falls, Natural Bridge, big trees, and outdoor recreation of all kinds, it's a hub for hiking, fishing, and winter sports, and features historic spots like the Prospect Hotel.

Prospect has local amenities that include a library, fire station, convenience store, and cafes.

- [More information](#)

