



# FRIENDS OF DOUGLAS-FIR NATIONAL MONUMENT

Dispatch, July 2025: Wildflowers!



June and early July are great times to go see wildflowers in the Cascades. Iron Mountain is widely known as perhaps the best spot for them. Iron Mountain has lots of wildflowers at this time of year, and it offers great views of the National Monument. I think that for the greatest spread and variety of wildflowers you should visit the saddle between Iron Mountain and Cone Peak.

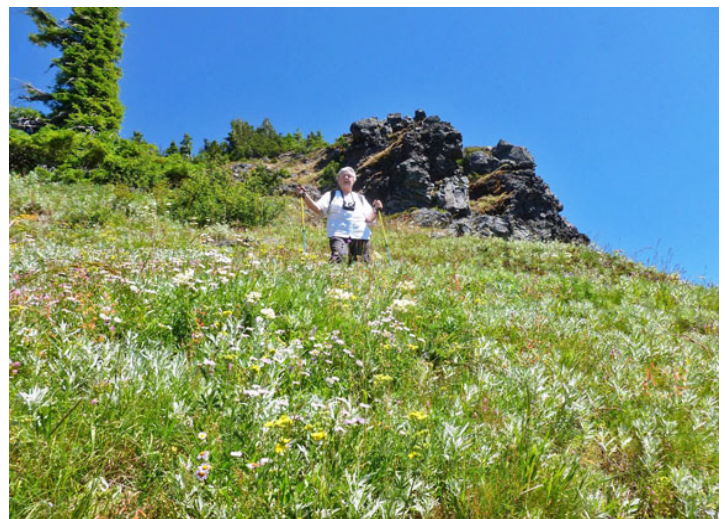


There are two trailheads that can take you up to Iron Mountain. Both involve driving on Forest Roads for a ways, then hiking up a steep hill to Iron Mountain itself. You can get the details at the Friends Iron Mountain Trail web page, <https://www.douglasfirnationalmonument.org/ironmtn.html.html>



There is an alternative trail, which starts from the Tombstone Ski Park off Highway 20. This is known as the Cone Peak Trail, although it does not go all the way up Cone Peak, just to the saddle, where it turns and goes on to Iron Mountain. This trail is a little hard to find at the start and involves going partway along the Tombstone Pass Trail, where the Cone Peak Trail branches off and heads uphill across Highway 20. See <https://www.douglasfirnationalmonument.org/cone>.

If you can make the additional length and elevation gain, this trail is worth the investment. You will hike through an old-growth forest, see a variety of flowers in the woods, and then you can gain great views of the flowers and parts of the proposed National Monument.



Rebecca Hazen . Iron Mt. Linn Co. OR. 22July2017 Lori Humphreys

Now is a great time to get out in the National Monument and, if you want, stop and smell the flowers.

Milo Mecham, President

## RES(ILIENCE)ISTANCE

I recently had an opportunity to visit the area up the Breitenbush River that has, until recently, been closed because of the Lionshead fire. It is, of course a somber thing to see the aftermath of an intense forest fire. There is a great debate going on now about how to “save” the forest from such fires. The dominant view among those who think of the forest as a commodity, is that we should increase logging of the forest, because that would “solve” the problem of wildfires. They would like to change the idea attributed to Smoky Bear to one that says: “Only logging can prevent wildfires.”

Of course this view is flat wrong. The major wildfires of 2020 burned wilderness areas and private, clear cut areas equally. Wildfires are a natural part of the Northwest Cascades. They occurred before there was any logging, and they occur in private, “sustainably logged” areas as well as in federal lands. We are now in a situation where the regular dry cycle of the weather is exacerbated by the increased temperatures of climate change. Between 2003 and 2023, the global frequency of extreme fire events has escalated to 2.2 times its original rate, and the average intensity of major fires has risen to 2.3 times its previous level. (Zhang, et al. 2025 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/17/6/2680>) This has nothing to do with levels of “treatment” (logging). As a matter of fact, studies show an inverse relationship between forest management (logging) and fire severity: more severe fires occur in more managed forests. Bradley, et.al.2016, (<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/ecs2.1492>).

Logging is carbon intensive. Some of the carbon in the cut trees is saved and stored in the lumber used for construction, but more carbon is added to the atmosphere than is saved in the lumber. A recent comprehensive study by Oregon State University researchers found that “harvest-related emissions are five to seven times that of the fire emissions in Oregon.” Beverly Law, quoted in <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/12/14/oregon-scientists-urge-forest-protection-to-fight-climate-change/>

Compare these two pictures of “devastation.” Which is more devastated?





You may not be surprised to hear that the Trump administration and the Republicans in Congress have all sorts of proposals to make it easier to do more logging on federal land. Whether it is gutting the laws and rules such as NEPA (<https://www.vaildaily.com/news/trump-national-environmental-policy-act-big-changes-colorado/>) or the Endangered Species Act (<https://www.opb.org/article/2025/05/22/think-out-loud-endangered-species-act-harm-definition/>) that help protect parts of the forest, or invoking national security to justify more logging, or planning on selling away federal land (<https://www.yahoo.com/news/changes-senate-republicans-budget-proposal-120219087.html>), or the proposal to abolish the roadless rule (<https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/06/23/secretary-rollins-rescinds-roadless-rule-eliminating-impediment-responsible-forest-management#:~:text=Rescinding%20this%20rule%20will%20remove,prevention%20and%20responsible%20timber%20production.>), there are a boatload of proposals to end even the present limited protections for federal land. I live in a wooden house, so I am not proposing an end to logging, any more than I am suggesting that it is possible to end wildfires. I accept science-based logging, as I accept wildfires. I just want moderation in all things, which we are not seeing presently.

When you visit a burned area, even the most severely burned area within a wildfire area, you can usually find unburned areas. It may be only a few trees in acres of dead trees (stored carbon), but you can find them throughout every burn.

The next few years may seem like there is a major wildfire coming. Those of us who love the woods as something more than a stored lumber, who support the idea of a Douglas-Fir National Monument need now to think of those small saved areas remaining after the most intense wildfire. We need to resist the wildfire now and remain alive for that day when we can start a new forest. Write to your Congress persons. Even though they may be in the minority, the volume of opinions helps them establish or firm up their resistance. Write to the agencies working to change the rules. They may not listen to common sense, but common sense in the record may help entities who choose to sue to block the rule changes. If you can, provide financial support to groups who will sue to block the changes. We will be sending out Alerts on some of these issues when there is a specific target or opportunity to attack, but you don't have to wait for word from us to get involved.

Milo Mecham, President