



Reflections

CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK WINTER 2003-2004



Ski Patrol Wins Award

by Martha Hess, Park Ranger

THE GREATEST NUMBERS OF VISITORS TO CRATER LAKE come in the summer, enjoying the spectacular views of our country's deepest lake, learning about volcanic processes, hiking trails and enjoying beautiful wildflowers in bloom. However, summer is actually a brief season at Crater Lake, one of the snowiest places in the Pacific Northwest. Snow blankets the landscape more than eight months of the year, averaging 44 feet annually. While it may be more of a challenge to make the trip this time of the year, stunning scenes await those who brave winter and see the lake surrounded by snowy cliffs and pines draped in white.

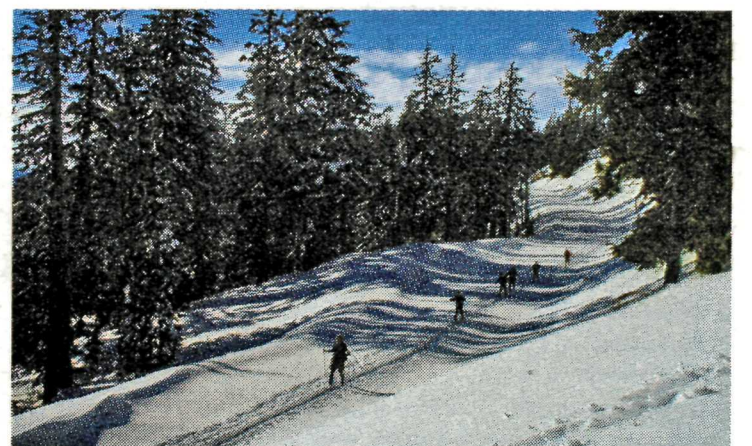
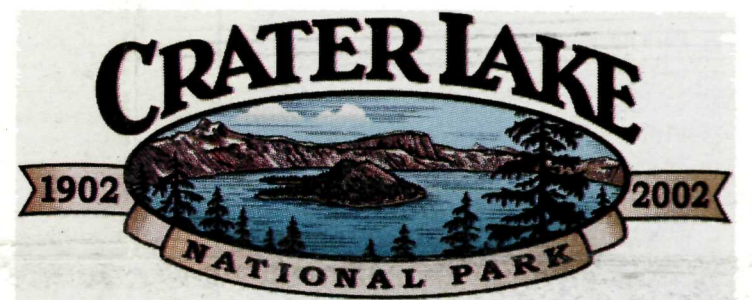
The first big snowstorm of the season, usually in late October or early November, closes Rim Drive for the winter. But the south entrance and access to the rim for lake viewing remain open except during heavy snowstorms. Park road crews fire up the huge graders, plows and rotary blowers that make it possible to see the lake in winter. Crater Lake then becomes a destination for winter outdoor enthusiasts from skiers to snowboarders. Scouts and other groups learn winter camping skills on trips to the park. School groups come to learn about winter ecology on a snowshoe hike with a ranger. Planning ahead and awareness of winter safety issues becomes paramount. One particular group of visitors has been coming to Crater Lake each winter for many years. Since 1977, the all-volunteer Crater Lake Ski Patrol has assisted the park staff with providing for the education and safety of winter visitors.

The volunteer patrol grew over the years, increasing in personnel, and expanding its training and time commitments. Each weekend

from December through April, six to ten of a group of more than fifty patrol volunteers make the drive to the park, often traveling several hours after work. The patrollers practice backcountry ski skills, collect and report weekly avalanche data, do snow pack surveys, and educate the public about safety and regulations. Patrollers mark ski trails, assess potential new routes and are available to respond in case of an emergency. Ski patrol candidates spend a great deal of time training in winter backcountry safety skills and technical search and rescue. Once they have put in their time as candidates and met a checklist of necessary skills, they become certified patrol members. This special group of people was recognized in 2003 as the top volunteer group in the National Park Service and awarded the First Annual George B. Hartzog, Jr. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

The Crater Lake Ski Patrol epitomizes the spirit of volunteerism, meeting an important need, with a high level of professionalism and commitment. Watch for them on the ski trails this winter. Stop and greet them. Patrollers are hard to miss in

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2 Exploring

Explore quiet forests and spectacular views of Crater Lake! Numerous trails are available for visitors with crosscountry skis or snowshoes.

3 Wilderness

Winter turns most of Crater Lake National Park into a snowy wilderness. Breathtaking scenery and opportunities for solitude abound.

4 Services

Winter is a quiet time at Crater Lake National Park. No overnight lodging and limited food services are available in the park.

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Crater Lake National Park

For generations, people have been awed by the spectacular beauty and intense blue color of Crater Lake. Five miles wide and ringed by cliffs almost 2,000 feet high, the lake rests in the shattered remnants of an ancient volcano, which erupted and collapsed into itself 7,700 years ago. It is one of the deepest lakes in the world, 1,943 feet deep at its deepest point, and contains some of the world's purest water. Pristine forests and deep canyons blanket the mountain's outer slopes.

Superintendent
Charles V. Lundy

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 7
Crater Lake, OR 97604

Park Information
541 594-3000

Visitor Center
541 594-3100

Emergencies
Dial 911

Web Site
www.nps.gov/crla

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

The mission of Crater Lake National Park is to forever preserve the beauty of Crater Lake and its unique ecological and cultural heritage, and to foster understanding and appreciation through enjoyment, education, and inspiration.

Friends Support Crater Lake National Park

Crater Lake Natural History Association

The Crater Lake Natural History Association is a private, non-profit organization that supports interpretive programs and research at Crater Lake National Park. The Association derives its funds through the sale of interpretive, educational and informational publications at visitor centers. For information and orders, write to the Crater Lake Natural History Association, P.O. Box 157, Crater Lake, OR 97604; or call 541 594-3110.

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Exploring on Skis or Snowshoes

Ski trails at Crater Lake are marked with blue diamonds and orange metal flags on trees. Ski routes are unmarked.

FOR BEGINNING SKIERS:

West Rim Route to Discovery Point

The most popular ski route in the park, this gently rolling route follows the park's West Rim Drive and provides spectacular

views of Crater Lake.

Round-trip: 2 miles (3.2km)

Mazama Village Loop Trail

This loop through Mazama Village, where the campground is during the summer, provides easy, flat skiing conditions overlooking Annie Creek. The trail begins just north of the park's entrance station.

Round-trip: 1 mile (1.6 km)

FOR INTERMEDIATE SKIERS:

Hemlock Trail

This rolling trail wanders through an ancient Mountain Hemlock forest, and features views of Crater Lake and the Klamath Basin. The trail begins near the cafeteria at Rim Village.

Round-trip: 2 miles (3.2 km)

East Rim Route to Sun Notch

This is a good alternative to skiing along the caldera rim when the winds are strong. Sun Notch offers a spectacular view of Crater Lake, and directly overlooks the Phantom Ship. During high avalanche danger, use the marked avalanche bypass route.

Round-trip: 9 miles (14 km)

FOR ADVANCED SKIERS:

Raven Trail

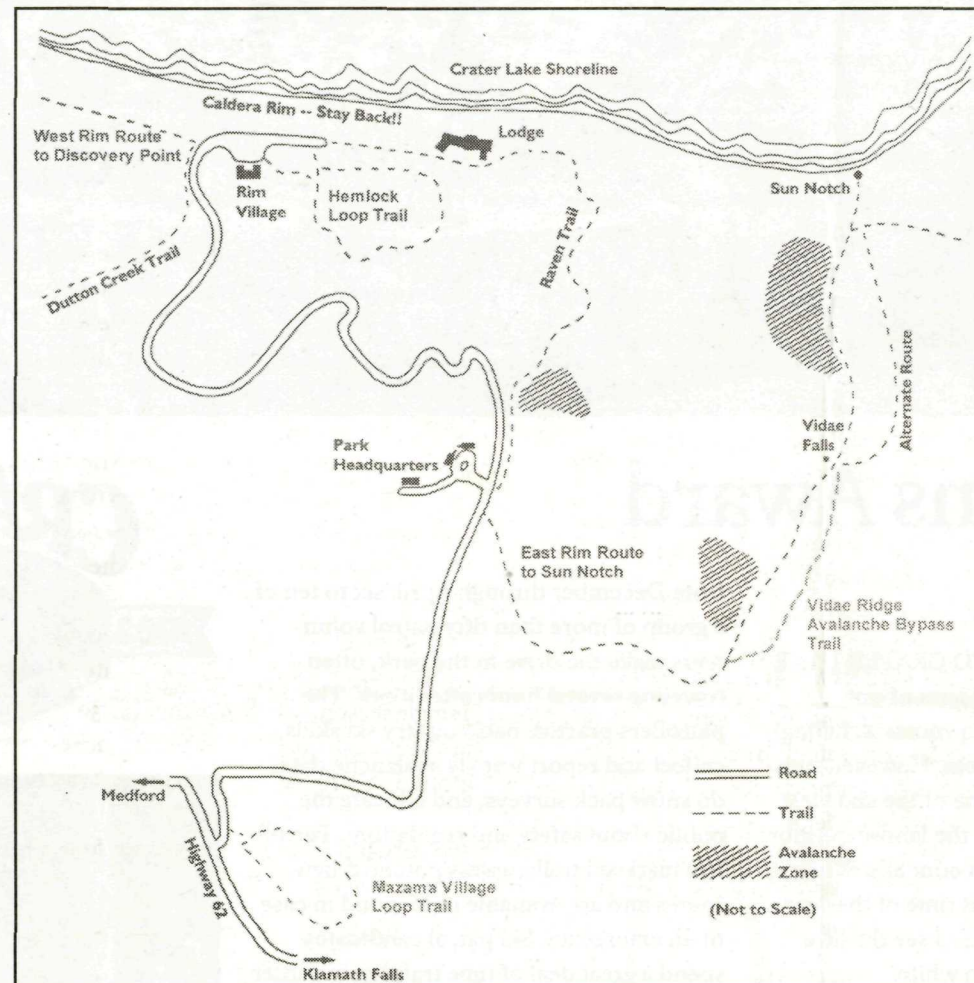
Beginning immediately east of Crater Lake Lodge at Rim Village, this trail is a favorite with telemark skiers as it descends steeply to park headquarters. Exercise caution on the avalanche slope near the bottom.

One-way: 1 mile (1.6 km)

Dutton Creek Trail

This trail descends steeply through the forest and includes several sharp turns as it winds from Rim Village to Annie Springs and Mazama Village.

One-way: 4.5 miles (7.2 km)



The Friends of Crater Lake National Park

The Friends are a non-profit organization that cooperates with the National Park Service in the stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Crater Lake. Members build and maintain trails, staff information desks and fire lookouts, and assist with community events. For information or to join the Friends, write to The Friends of Crater Lake National Park, P.O. Box 88, Crater Lake, OR 97604; or visit their web site at www.drizzle.com/~rdpayne/foclnp.html.

The Crater Lake Ski Patrol

A group of dedicated volunteers from local communities assists park staff with trail patrol, search and rescue, and emergencies. Members of the Ski Patrol can be identified by their red parkas and hats with the ski patrol emblem. Feel free to contact them for help with any problems or questions you might have. For information on activities or volunteering, write to the Crater Lake Ski Patrol, P.O. Box 7, Crater Lake, OR 97604.

Winter Can Be Hazardous. Be Prepared!

Be Safe!

The park's winter weather can be beautiful, but dangerous. Sudden snowstorms, cold temperatures, and icy road conditions may create hazards for unprepared visitors. Following park regulations will help to ensure you a safe visit:

- ❄ Keep a safe distance from the rim of the caldera. Hazards include steep, slippery slopes and hidden snow cornices. Entering the caldera is extremely dangerous and is strictly prohibited.
- ❄ Please use plowed parking lots and do not park along the roadways. Overnight car camping in parking lots is not permitted.
- ❄ Do not use roadside snow banks as snow play areas.
- ❄ Do not feed or disturb wildlife.
- ❄ Pets must be on leash, and are not allowed beyond plowed roads and parking lots.
- ❄ Free backcountry permits are required for all overnight trips.

Proper Planning Can Save Your Life

Proper planning and preparation are important before heading into the backcountry. Inquire at park visitor centers for current weather, avalanche, and snow conditions.

It's easy to get lost during snowstorms. White-out situations may occur and rapidly falling snow can quickly cover your tracks. Be self-sufficient when entering the backcountry. Rely first on saving yourself in emergency situations.

Carry extra gear necessary to survive an unplanned night out. Always include the following in your daypack:

- ❄ Map and compass
- ❄ Waterproof clothing
- ❄ Extra gloves and socks
- ❄ Plenty of water
- ❄ High energy food

Planning a Winter Backcountry Trip

Winter turns most of Crater Lake National Park into a snowy wilderness from November through May. For the well-prepared, winter offers skiers and snowshoers occasions of unique beauty and unparalleled opportunities for solitude.

Opportunities for wilderness overnight camping are abundant during the winter. Snow camping is required, as there are no shelters anywhere in the backcountry. Advanced skiers may even consider skiing around Crater Lake. Most people take three days to complete this 30-mile (48-km) loop, if not delayed by storms. Only experienced and properly equipped skiers should attempt this trip.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS

All overnight campers must obtain a free backcountry permit, available from a ranger at the Steel Information Center or the Ranger Station in the Park Headquarters area during regular hours of operation (*see back page*). The ranger on duty will inform you of the current weather forecast, avalanche hazards, and parking information. You will need to provide a detailed itinerary, list of supplies, and emergency contact information.

HAZARDS AND LOGISTICS

Winter can be a hazardous time in the backcountry. Be prepared for any type of weather, including blizzards with white-out conditions which may require you to extend your trip.

Snow avalanches are a very real danger in many places. The National Park Service recommends that you carry snow shovels, probe poles, and avalanche cords or beacons if you plan to circle the lake or travel in other areas with high avalanche danger. Designated avalanche bypass routes are available around many hazardous areas; ask a ranger for details.

The route behind Watchman Peak is often windswept and icy; be especially cautious in

this area, and ask about current conditions. Blowing snow forms fragile cornices along the edge of the caldera. Stay well back from the edge to avoid a collapse.

None of Crater Lake National Park's ski trails are groomed, and route-finding in the backcountry is often difficult. Bring a detailed topographic map and compass.

Emergency telephones are located on the outside of the cafeteria building at Rim Village and on the snow tunnel leading into the administration building at Park Headquarters. It's also a good idea to bring a signal mirror or whistle for emergency use.

The road from Headquarters to Rim Village is plowed regularly. However, due to heavy snowfall this section of road is often closed for hours or days at a time. You may need to ski along the Raven Trail to get to Rim Village or to return to your car.

Note that no running water is accessible in the backcountry during the winter. Bring a camp stove for melting snow.

BACKCOUNTRY REGULATIONS

Winter camping regulations are intended to ensure your safety and minimum impact on Crater Lake's resources. Please observe the following guidelines:

- * No camping or travel is permitted within the caldera.
- * Pack out all trash.
- * Campers must pack in wood for a fire or bring a camp stove.
- * Parties are limited to eight people. Larger groups must split up.
- * Pets are not permitted in the backcountry.
- * No camping is permitted within a mile of any plowed road, within 100 feet of any meadow with less than one foot of snow cover, or within sight or sound of any trail or other camping party.



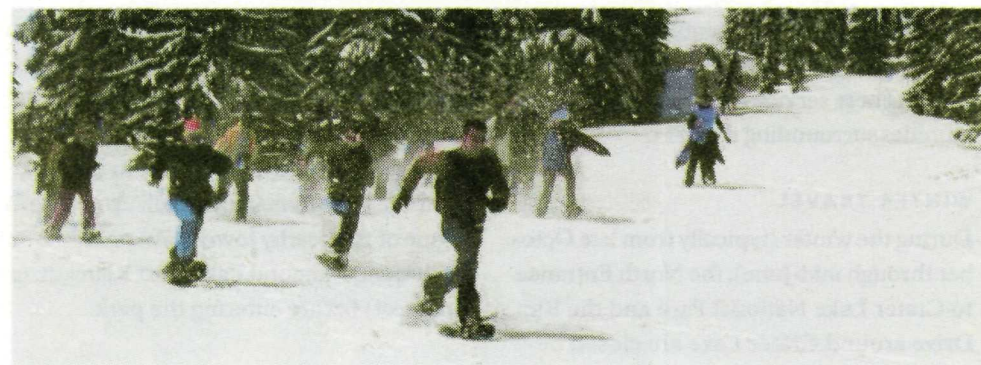
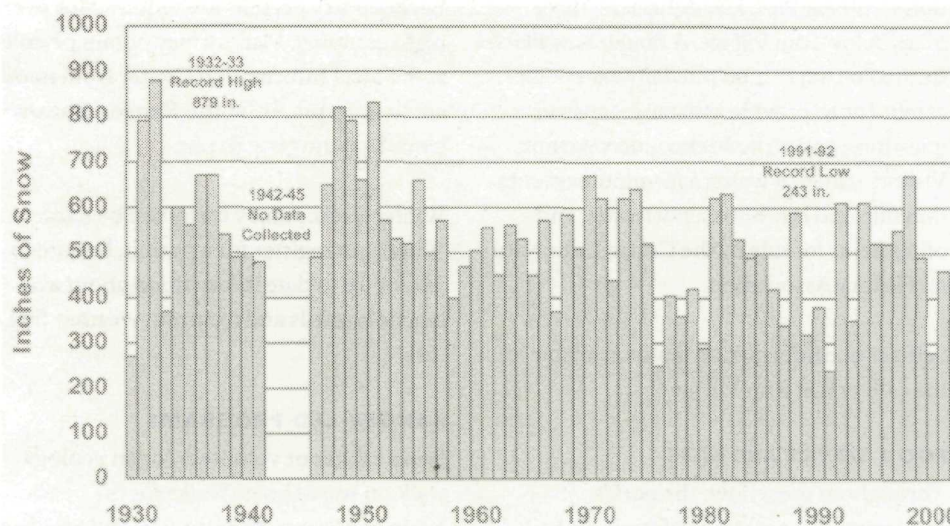
Winter Weather

From October to June, Crater Lake National Park is a snow-covered wilderness. November through April are frequently snowy with poor visibility and poor driving conditions. At the same time, winter provides excellent skiing and snowshoeing opportunities and, on clear days, some of the most magnificent scenery of the year.

With snowfall still lingering on the ground in early July, winter defines Crater Lake National Park more than any other season. Snowfall averages 533 inches (1,350 cm) annually, and by early spring, it is typical to have ten to fifteen feet (4 meters) of snow on the ground. While snowfall is common in the Cascade Mountains, Crater Lake National Park is one of the snowiest areas in the Northwest where regular records are kept.

The National Park Service began recording weather information at Crater Lake National Park headquarters in 1926. The winter of 1932-1933 still holds the record for total snowfall in a single season, with 879 inches (2,230 cm). In 1950, Crater Lake set a state record for snowfall in a single calendar year, with 903 inches (2,294 cm). The most snow ever recorded on the ground at Park Headquarters was 21 feet (6.4 meters), on April 3, 1983.

Typical winter temperatures range from a high of about 35°F (2°C) to an overnight low around 19°F (-7°C).



Ski Patrol Wins Award

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their bright red parkas and caps, proudly wearing the emblem of the Crater Lake Ski Patrol. They care a great deal about this special place.

The National Park Service cares for special places, saved by the American people, so

that all may experience our heritage. Crater Lake is indeed a special place and maybe more so in winter. It wears a blanket of white, masking the evidence of tremendous geologic forces which transformed a volcano into one of the world's deepest lakes. We hope you can visit this winter.



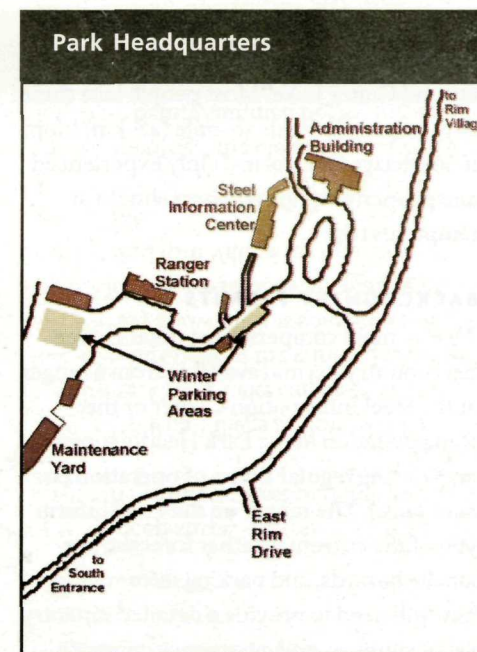
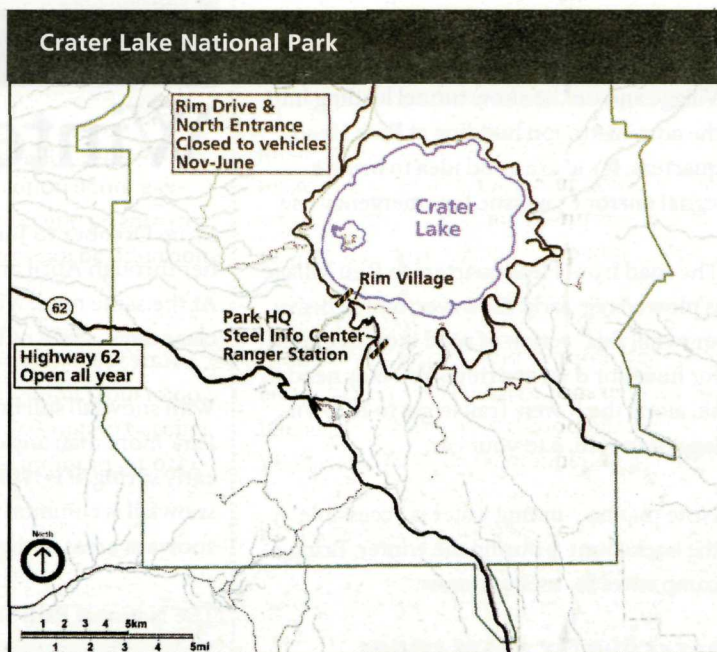
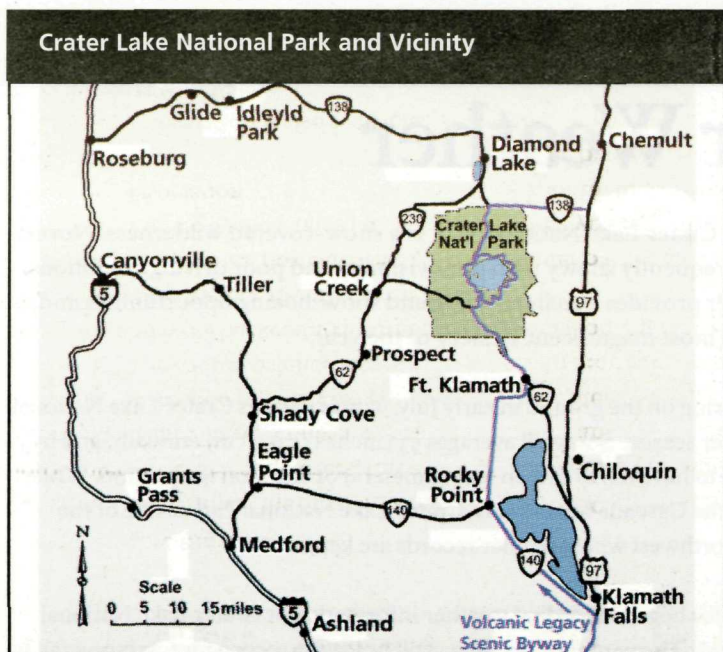
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Crater Lake National Park
P.O. Box 7
Crater Lake, OR 97604



Crater Lake Natural History Association
P.O. Box 157
Crater Lake, OR 97604

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



Winter Services, Facilities, and Travel

VISITOR INFORMATION

For information, stop at the Steel Information Center at Park Headquarters, three miles below Rim Village. A ranger is available from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm daily except December 25 to provide assistance, answer questions, and write backcountry permits. Visitors may also watch a 16-minute orientation film and buy books, postcards, and other items for sale by the Crater Lake Natural History Association.

Self-service information is also available in the cafeteria at Rim Village.

FOOD SERVICE AND GIFTS

Throughout the winter, the park's concessioner operates a cafeteria and gift store at Rim Village. They are open daily from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. When the road to Rim Village is closed due to heavy snowfall, no food service is available within the park.

CRATER LAKE LODGE

The historic Crater Lake Lodge will open for the summer season in May 2004. Reservations can be made by contacting Xanterra Parks and Resorts at (541) 830-8700.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS

Backcountry permits are required for overnight camping. Visitors may obtain permits at the Steel Information Center from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, or at the Ranger Station from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Winter backcountry travel can be hazardous. When you register for a permit, be sure to ask for up to date information about avalanche hazards and a current weather forecast.

RANGER-LED PROGRAMS

Join a ranger or volunteer for an ecology walk on snowshoes! Walks for the public begin at 1:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays from Thanksgiving through the end of March. Meet at the Rim Village information desk inside the cafeteria. If the road to Rim Village is closed due to heavy snow, meet at the Steel Information Center.

Walks last about 1½ hours, and are limited to 30 people. Sign up at the Steel Information Center, or at the Rim Village information desk if it is staffed. Snowshoes for the guided walks are provided free of charge

by the National Park Service.

Snowshoeing requires minimal skills, but participants should be in good physical condition. Due to the strenuous nature of the walk, we recommend children be at least eight years old.

In addition to the regularly scheduled walks, school groups and other organizations may make reservations for walks at other times by calling (541) 594-3093.

OTHER VISITOR SERVICES

A U.S. Post Office, located in the Steel Information Center at Park Headquarters, is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

No lodging, gasoline, or equipment rentals are available in the park during the winter. These services may be found in communities surrounding the park.

WINTER TRAVEL

During the winter (typically from late October through mid-June), the North Entrance to Crater Lake National Park and the Rim Drive around Crater Lake are closed be-

cause of deep snow. Entrance to the park is from the south or west on Highway 62.

The road to Rim Village is plowed daily. From there, Crater Lake can be viewed on clear days throughout the winter. However, due to heavy snowfall, it is sometimes necessary to close the road between park headquarters and Rim Village for hours or even days at time.

"Spring opening," the clearing of snow from Rim Drive before summer, begins in mid-April. Road crews usually reach the park's north entrance about mid-June. The Rim Drive is usually open all the way around Crater Lake by sometime in July.

DRIVE CAREFULLY!

Road conditions vary, but can often be icy or snowpacked. Be alert for snowplows working on park roads. Know the current conditions and be prepared with traction tires or chains. Gasoline is not available in the park until late May. Remember to fill up your tank at one of the nearby towns (Chemult, Chiloquin, Diamond Lake, Fort Klamath, or Prospect) before entering the park.