

Be a Part of Columbia Hills Trail Days

Columbia Hills State Park, which includes the Horsethief Lake area and Dalles Mountain Ranch area, is a 3,338-acre camping park with 7,500 feet of freshwater shoreline on the Columbia River. Horsethief Butte dominates the skyline, standing over the lake like an ancient castle.

The lake is about 90 acres. It is an impoundment of the Columbia River. The lake was flooded into existence by the reservoir created by The Dalles Dam. Lupine and balsam root bloom in mid-April, making spectacular fields of purple and gold. Rock climbing is available.

Visitors are invited to enjoy some guided experiences in the diverse landscape of Columbia Hills State Park. Seeking to replace the Wagons and Wildflowers event with a more sustainable program, staff at the park has put together a series of tours to highlight some of the park's gems.

On May 4, a member from the Department of Natural Resource provided a guided walk featuring peak blooms of the native wildflowers in the Dalles Mountain Ranch portion of the park. The hike began at the ranch building cluster located on the Dalles Mountain Road about 3.4 miles up from SR 14.

On May 11, Washington State Parks'



Columbia Hills State Park offers spectacular views, wildflowers, rock climbing, hikes and more. Call Maryhill State Park to reserve a spot on an upcoming weekend tour.

Photo by Tom Foster

Interpretive Program Manager Ryan Karlson led a hike around Horsethief Butte titled, "Floods and More Floods: Exploring the Ice Age History of Horsethief Butte." Ryan has a background in park interpretation and the Ice Age floods. He met with participants at the Horsethief Butte Trail head.

On May 18, Craig Holstine, a historian for Washington state and author and researcher of the historic district nomination for the Dalles Mountain Ranch, accompanied participants on a riding trailer tour of the ranch's historic district. The group visited some of the homestead sites in the park and learned about the various homestead acts and those who sought to capitalize on the federal government's bet against their filing fee that they couldn't settle on a piece of land and live

on it for long enough to claim the property. Participants met at the ranch cluster on Dalles Mountain Road, 3.4 miles up from SR 14.

The park's picto-petroglyph tours are every Friday and Saturday. The tours are free with an annual Discover Pass or with a daily parking permit. Passes and permits can be purchased ahead of time wherever Washington hunting and fishing licenses are sold, at the park, or online at www.discoverpass.wa.gov.

All tours are scheduled for 10 a.m. and reservation numbers are limited. Call Maryhill State Park at (509)773-5007 to reserve a space. Bring a camera, water, sunscreen and a snack. ■

Check out www.stateparks.com/columbia_hills.html for more information.

Upcoming events

- ▶ June 1—Free day pass (day use), National Trails Day
- ▶ June 8-9—Free day pass, National Get Outdoors Day
- ▶ June 19-22—Bluegrass Festival activities at the Goldendale Observatory, 8 p.m.