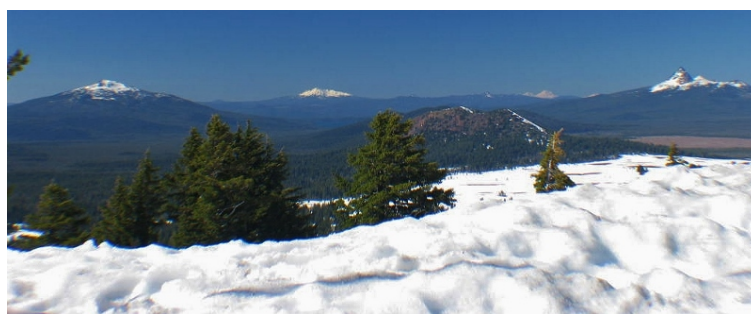
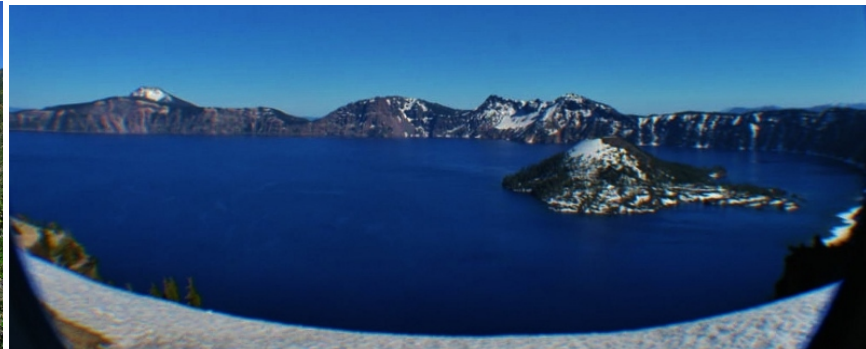


## The West Coast – Oregon

I've reserved a spot for a few nights at Indian Mary Park which is located in the Hellgate Canyon area, northeast of Grants Pass. Indian Mary Park is a nice county park located on the Rogue river. A great location for exploring the southwest portion of the state and Crater Lake National Park will be a nice day trip to enjoy. Hellgate Canyon is a popular recreation area and has been a popular location for movie and TV productions. Fishing, boating and scenic views of the Rogue River attract visitors. It heads north and west from Grants Pass area making its way to the Pacific Ocean. I'll have a number of opportunities to enjoy the river as I travel through this section of the state. My first destination is Crater Lake National Park, part of the Chain of Fire.

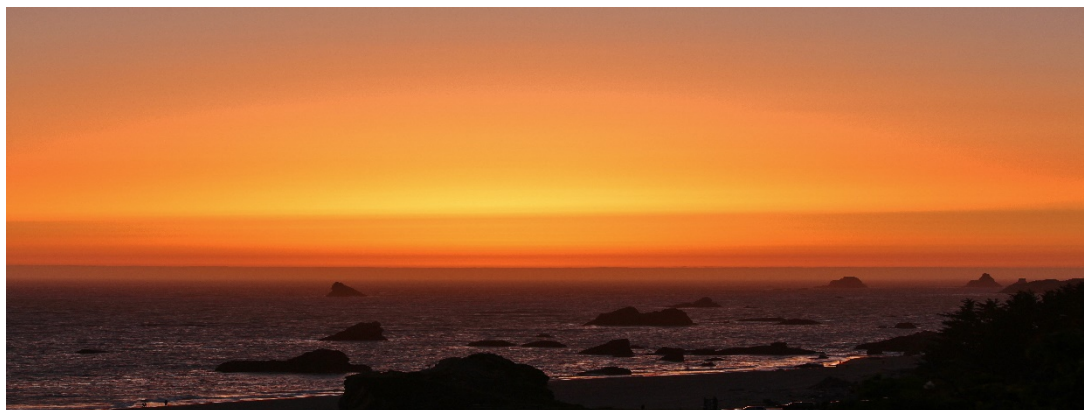
I could not have asked for nicer weather on my day trip to Crater Lake. First a stop at Natural Bridge and a section of the Rogue river referred to as the Hidden River. The river flows through a lava tube seeming to disappear. A short walk down the path and it exits the 200 foot tube with a stronger flow. The Natural Bridge area was a bonus visit. The paths are easy to follow with excellent signage to describe the area. Well worth the stop to stretch my legs and walk the dog. Crater Lake is not much further and I continue on. Soon the scenery includes snow covering the ground and I find out that a good portion of the road around Crater Lake is still closed due to snow cover. It's June 4<sup>th</sup>. The portion of the road that is open is clear but sections give me a good idea of how much snow fell over the winter and I've been told this was a below normal winter. One of the views provides a good sense of the Chain of Fire. Crater Lake is the caldera that formed when Mount Mazama, a massive volcano, collapsed. The chain extends from northern California into British Columbia. This portion of the chain shows Union Peak (7709ft) or the far right, Mt McLoughlin (9495ft) to the left and in the far distance is Mt Shasta (14,162ft).

Photos include: Hellgate Canyon, Crater Lake caldera, Snow!, Chain of Fire.



It's time to head over to the coast and I have to travel south through Northern California and Redwood National Park to get there. I'm spending a few nights at Harris Beach State Park right outside of Brookings. One day is reserved for a jet boat trip up the Rogue River – a fantastic way to spend a day. Plenty of coastline to explore and enjoy. The west coast is very different from the east coast in this area. There are huge rock formations and sometimes only narrow beaches. Cliffs along the coast provide dramatic views. And often there are patches of beautiful flowers to enjoy. And the bonus – a beautiful sunset over the ocean.

Photos include: One of the boats on river – Chinook, river wildlife, coastline and sunset.



Next stop is Sunset Beach State Park and Coos Bay. More coastline to explore and I spend two long days traveling the coast to visit as many lighthouses as I can. Oregon's coastline is beautiful. There are stretches of beach that remind me of the Outer Banks – wide strips of sand to enjoy nice walks, treasure hunting and maybe a bonus sand dollar shell. And then a short drive down the road there are dynamic views from cliff tops looking over huge rock formations dotted with birds and sea lions. A trip from Coos Bay area up to Tillamook with a visit to the Tillamook Cheese factory and a nice big ice cream cone. Delicious!

Photos include Haceta Head – strongest light can be seen 21 miles from land, Aquina Head, Umpqua River – emits a distinctive red and white flashing light, rare sighting of a pod of orca whales in state park cove at Sunset Bay.



Time to head inland and continue north to Washington. I've decided on a route that follows the Umpqua River and am rewarded with beautiful scenery to enjoy as I make my way to Cottage Grove for a quick stay before heading to the Portland area. I enjoy I'll have a few days here to explore and plan a day trip to see Mt Hood and another day trip to the Columbia River Gorge area with beautiful views and waterfalls to enjoy.

Photos include Umpqua River, Mt Hood, Columbia River Gorge, Multnomah Falls.

