LEGEND HAS IT... According to Indian legend, two brothers, Wy’East and Pahto, were in love with the same beautiful native woman. The brothers grew jealous of each other and began a fearsome battle, stomping the ground and hurling rocks and molten lava at one another. The Great Spirit came down and rebuked the brothers for the terrible damage caused by their fighting. As a symbol of renewed amity between the two, the Great Spirit erected a Bridge of the Gods over the great river that separated them. On the bridge he placed a faithful old woman named Loo Wit to guard it and keep the peace between Wy’East and Pahto.

Soon the brothers were fighting again, and the Bridge of the Gods fell into the mighty river. As punishment, the Great Spirit turned Wy’East into Mt. Hood and Pahto into Mt. Adams. The beautiful native woman hid her face at the feet of Pahto and became Squaw Mountain. Loo Wit, for her service to the Great Spirit, became the beautiful, but distant, Mt. St. Helens.

This legend describes the creation of a land bridge that formed about 500 years ago when half of Table Mountain slid into the Columbia River, damming the river temporarily. Eventually, the Columbia River eroded around the south side of the landslide, a mile south of its original path.

Stories like this one are unfortunately all that remains of many of the tribes that existed in the Columbia River Gorge. There are still a few sites that are open to the public where petroglyphs and other remnants of these societies can be viewed. Visit the Forest Service Desk for more information about these sites.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE
Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
Dispose of Waste Properly
Leave What You Find
Minimize Campfire Impacts
Respect Wildlife
Be Considerate of Other Visitors

The member-driven Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org

GETTING STARTED
You are about to embark on a journey around the property of Skamania Lodge. As you follow the trail you will learn why Skamania Lodge is here, explore the different scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and discover how you can protect and enhance these resources. Start at the Forest Service Desk, and then continue onto the Creek loop, finishing on the Lake Loop. The hike is about 1.5 miles and will take about one hour.

The walking directions in bold will lead you from stop to stop.
STOP 1: FOREST SERVICE DESK

Check out the map on the wall in front of you. What is the white area around the Columbia River that spans from the Sandy River to the Deschutes River?

In 1986 President Reagan signed the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) Act, which was put in place to stimulate the economy of the Columbia River Gorge, as well as protect and enhance the scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resources of the area. When the CRGNSA Act was established, it authorized funds to revitalize the economy of the Columbia River Gorge. The act set aside $10 million for scenic area investments paved the way for over 2 million visitors to the Columbia River Gorge. The act set aside $10 million for recreational facilities, $5 million for the construction of the Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles, OR and $5 million for the development of the Gorge. In 1986 President Reagan signed the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) Act, which was put in place to stimulate the economy of the Columbia River Gorge, as well as protect and enhance the scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resources of the area. When the CRGNSA Act was established, it authorized funds to revitalize the economy of the Columbia River Gorge. The act set aside $10 million for scenic area investments paved the way for over 2 million visitors to the Columbia River Gorge. The act set aside $10 million for recreational facilities, $5 million for the construction of the Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles, OR and $5 million for the development of the Gorge.

STOP 2: FRONT LAWN

Look at the view! An explanation detailing why the Columbia River Gorge is so scenic is not really needed. You can just look at it and drink in the beauty, but the Columbia River Gorge wasn’t created over night. Millions of years of volcanoes, lava flows, floods and rock slides created the Gorge we see today. Check out the interpretive panel for more information.

The Gorge vistas and waterfalls offer great hiking opportunities in this area, so head back inside, through the lobby and out the front door to begin your hike. Take a right and head toward the Golf Shop. Behind the shop you will find a brown sign for the Creek Loop. Begin Stop 3 at the Creek Loop sign.

STOP 3: GOLF SHOP AND CREEK LOOP TRAIL HEAD

The brown sign near the Golf Shop shows where the Creek Loop begins. It is one of the 3 trails on lodge property and offers just a small taste of the hiking trails in the CRGNSA. The longest National Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, passes through the Gorge on its 2,650 mile journey from Mexico to Canada. The Forest Service also hosts 57 trails that add up to 215 miles. The CRGNSA is also the gateway to two national forests: the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington and Mt Hood National Forest in Oregon — which add 1,475 miles and 1,000 miles of trails respectively.

Begin hiking down the hill, following the brown signs and footprints. Once you head into the forest you will see Foster Creek. Where do you think this creek goes?

STOP 4: FOSTER CREEK BRIDGE

Welcome to Foster Creek! Like the other rivers in this area such as the White Salmon and the Deschutes, Foster Creek flows into the Columbia River. These waterways offer recreational activities for everyone. Those who are seeking an adrenaline rush should try their hand at white water rafting, wind surfing or kite boarding. There also are more relaxing water-based activities, like salmon or sturgeon fishing or scenic tours on the historic Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler.

Humans are not the only animals drawn to water. Keep your eyes open for signs of wildlife as you walk to the next stop. Where the Creek Loop and Lake Loop intersect, head to the right. You will be following the blue foot prints and signs. Stop at the scope by the lake.

STOP 5: LILLY PAD LAKE

Did you see any animals as you walked along the trail? Lilly Pad Lake is a great place to look for wildlife. This wetland is just one of the many ecosystems that you will see in the CRGNSA. The Cascade Mountains create a rain shadow, so on the west side you will find soggy rain forests that can get up to 75 inches of rain each year. On the other side of the Cascades it is much drier, and you will find arid savannas and pine-oak woodlands that may accumulate less than 15 inches of rain every year. With these diverse habitats, it's no surprise that over 200 species of birds can be found in the CRGNSA. Over 800 species of wildflowers can be found in the spring and summer, and 15 of those species can only be found in the Gorge.

Many people may be afraid of wildlife, but most wild animals are more afraid of you than you are of them. Deer are actually the most dangerous animal in the CRGNSA, because they cause so many car accidents. Animals that are traditionally thought of as dangerous (like black bears or mountain lions) are a rare sight and usually leave humans alone. If you encounter one of these animals make yourself big and intimidating and give the animal some space – but don’t turn your back or climb a tree.

Skamania County is also a preserve for the mythological animal that made the blue footprints on the trail, and many people believe that Big Foot resides here in Skamania County. Keep your eyes open for evidence, but remember that hunting or trapping Sasquatch is a punishable offense and you could be fined up to $5,000 dollars or spend up to 10 years in jail!

The next lake you will stop at has a name that comes from the indigenous tribes of the Columbia River Gorge: Wy’East Lake. As you continue down the trail think about what this name could mean.

STOP 6: WY’EAST LAKE

This lake’s name comes from the Multnomah word for Mt Hood. Wy’east wasn’t always a mountain, though, and a legend describes an epic battle between Wy’east and his brother, Palto (told on the reverse of this page).

As you follow the trail back up the hill, look for the bald face of Table Mountain and imagine how catastrophic the landslide would have been that caused this. Stop at the gravel road at the top of the hill.

STOP 7: GRAVEL ROAD

As you traveled around the Creek and Lake Loops you discovered the dynamic recreational, natural and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and learned why this is a special place. While you visit help keep it that way by practicing Leave No Trace Principles. One of the easiest ways to do this is by disposing of waste properly. Even things that quickly decompose might make animals sick or can make others think they can leave things that are worse for the environment.

Follow the trail back to the Golf Shop and leave a positive impact on the trail by picking up any garbage you find.