

# The Tam-a-láu Trail



The Tam-a-láu Trail is an experience of a lifetime. The hike is a total of six miles round trip from the campground, and seven miles round trip from the day-use area trailhead. From the trailhead to the top of the high plateau

(called The Peninsula), the trail gains 600 feet in elevation. On the way up, you will pass through areas rich in wildlife and unspoiled native vegetation, as well as three unique geological formations. At the top, the trail makes a 3.5-mile loop around The Peninsula, which affords spectacular views of the high Cascade Mountain peaks and the Deschutes and Crooked River canyons. Imagine what it was like for early homesteaders trying to live off this harsh and unforgiving landscape. Remember not to disturb or remove any rock structures you encounter while on The Tam-a-láu Trail.



The north tip of The Island viewed from the Tam-a-láu Trail.

# History of the Tam-a-láu Trail

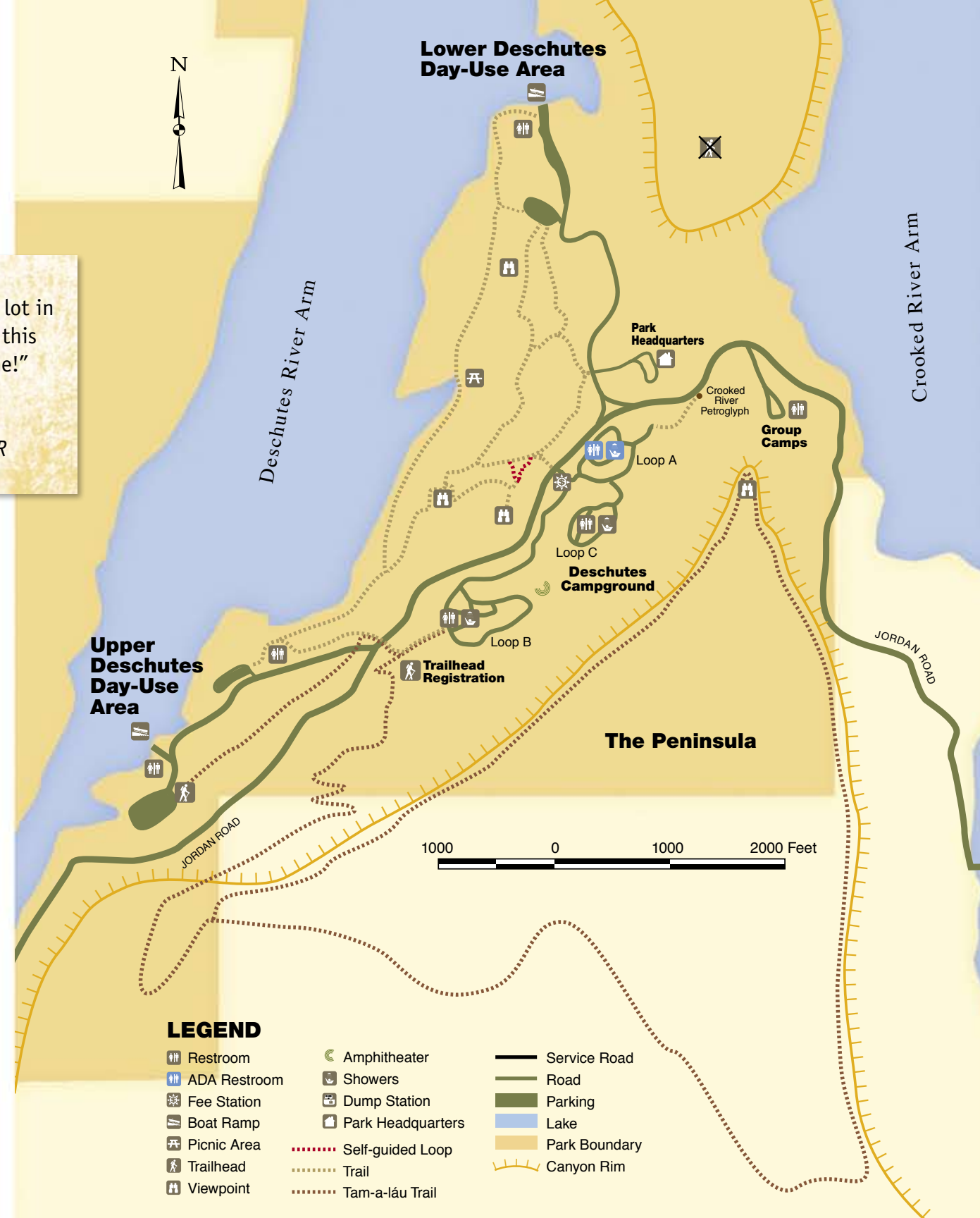
The Tam-a-láu Trail derives its name from a Native American phrase meaning “place of big rocks on the ground.” This also was the name of an ancient trail that passed through the area as part of a trade route to the Columbia River. Local tribal elders named the trail because of their long history and association with this area.

The story of the modern Tam-a-láu Trail originates at The Island. An isolated 200-acre plateau that is one of the few remnants of pre-settlement ecology in the West, The Island is home to one of the last nearly pristine ecosystems of its type in the United States.

Because of its ecological significance, The Island was designated as a Research Natural Area (RNA) in 1986 and then closed to recreational use and casual visits in 1997. This closure was due to a noticeable decline in The Island’s ecological well-being, which stemmed from a dramatic increase in visitors during the 1990s.

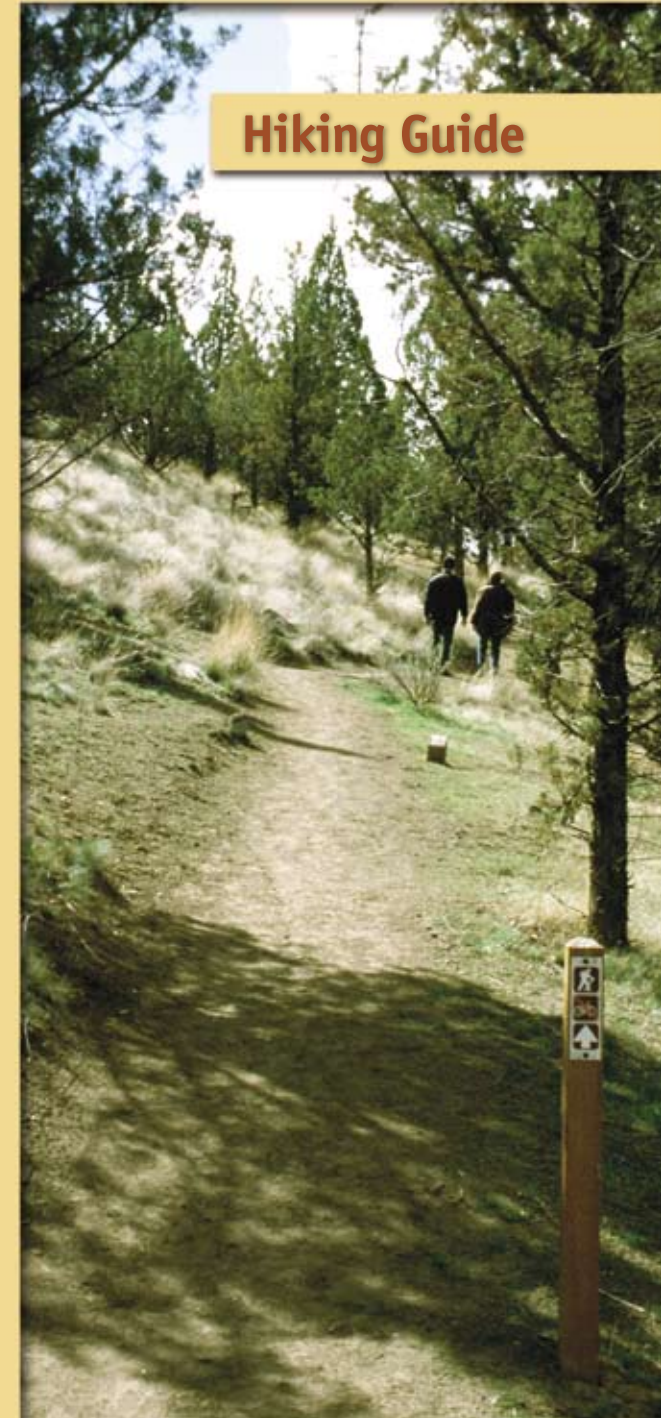
To preserve the unique significance of The Peninsula, The Tam-a-láu Trail was created in 1997 through the joint efforts of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Portland General Electric, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The Tam-a-láu offers visitors the same terrain as The Island once did, and from the tip of The Peninsula, visitors have an inspiring view of The Island.

“I’ve seen a lot in my life, but this was awesome!”  
— Visitor, Dallas, OR



# The Cove Palisades State Park

## Hiking Guide



# Welcome to The Cove Palisades

The Cove Palisades State Park has a brilliance no other area in Oregon can claim. Its steep, rocky plateaus launching into the refreshing and placid Lake Billy Chinook give this park a dramatic feel that is hard to resist.

Located in the heart of central Oregon and encompassing the Deschutes and Crooked River canyons, this park epitomizes the majesty of central Oregon's semiarid environment. From the peaceful waters of Lake Billy Chinook to the peak of Mt. Jefferson looming in the distance, this park offers breathtaking views that visitors never forget. Extensive hiking trails allow visitors to experience the beautiful scents, sounds and scenery of Oregon's high desert.



Left: Crooked River Petroglyph.  
Below: Lake Billy Chinook.



Tribes of Warm Springs named the reservoir in honor of their famous ancestor, Billy Chinook.

The Cove Palisades was once a place where Native Americans traveling along the rivers could rest and visit with each other. One of these Native Americans was Billy Chinook, a local Wasco Indian who guided John C. Fremont, a famous pioneer, through the area in 1843. In 1878, Clark Green Rogers, one of the first settlers in the area, named a refreshing swimming hole on the Crooked River "The Cove." The name stuck and in 1940 became part of the park's official name.

Round Butte Dam was completed in 1964 to impound the flow of the Crooked, Deschutes, and Metolius Rivers. Engineers estimated that the reservoir would take over a year to fill, but heavy rainfall and snowmelt in 1964 finished filling it in one week! The Confederated

## Camping at The Cove Palisades

The park has two campgrounds complete with full hookup RV sites, tent sites and group areas. Campsites are reserved 2 days to 9 months in advance by calling 1-800-452-5687.

## Take A Hike

The Cove Palisades State Park is home to more than 10 miles of hiking trails.

More than three miles of hiking trails are available near the Deschutes River campground. Traveling over gentle hills and through shallow gullies near Lake Billy Chinook, these trails are perfect for those family strolls and quick trips to and from the lake. Viewpoints and rest-stations are featured at various locations.

## Self-Guided Trail

A short, self-guided loop trail with eight visitor stations offers insights into the plants and animals of the high desert. Below are descriptions of each interpretive station.

### 1. World's Largest Juniper Forest

Central Oregon's western juniper forest forms a distinct zone between eastern Oregon's sagebrush and western Oregon's ponderosa pines.

### 2. "Desert Skin"

A crypto-biotic crust covers undisturbed areas of the high desert. This quarter-inch layer is a mixture of lichens, microorganisms, algae and mosses. It minimizes wind and water erosion and prevents non-native plants from growing.

### 3. Playing Dead

Plants in the high desert have adapted to little or no rainfall. The moss found on these rocks dries up and dies during periods of little moisture. When the rains do come, though, the mosses rapidly turn green and become alive.

"Best sunset I've ever seen!"

— Visitor,  
Washington  
State

### 4. Mule Deer's Favorite Browse

Although bitter to humans, these bushes, known as bitterbrush, are essential to a mule deer's diet.

### 5. Palette of Color

Wildflowers highlight the high desert with their seasonal blooms. Some of the flowers are arrowleaf balsam root, desert paintbrush, mariposa lily, and lupine.

### 6. Desert Mosaic

The colorful scaly lichens attached to these rocks are living organisms—algae and fungus—living in a symbiotic relationship. Algae produce the food and fungus provides the roots.

### 7. Holding Things Together

Grasses are the single most important plant in the high desert. A major source of food for all grazing animals, they are also instrumental in preventing soil erosion.

### 8. Nature's "Rain Barrel"

A sagebrush's long roots allow it to draw water from deep underground reservoirs, while its small, hairy leaves prevent moisture loss through evaporation. American Indians and pioneers regarded an abundance of large sagebrush as a sign of an available water supply.

## Kayaking

When you're finished hiking the trails, try exploring Lake Billy Chinook. The Cove Palisades offers naturalist-guided kayak excursions around the lake seasonally. For details and a schedule, check with park staff or [www.oregonstateparks.org](http://www.oregonstateparks.org).

## Don't forget to:

- Always carry water with you when hiking.
- Dress properly.
- Time your hike to avoid darkness. The Tam-a-láu Trail is day-use only, and camping is not permitted.
- Stay on the trail at all times.
- Keep dogs on leashes at all times.
- Leave vegetation where it is.
- Have a great time!

"Great hike and spectacular views. We'll be back!"

— Visitor  
Stuttgart,  
Germany

## Thank you!



### Come experience it!

The Cove Palisades State Park  
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[www.oregonstateparks.org](http://www.oregonstateparks.org)



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