

# Pacific Crest Trail Access Points: West I-5

West of Interstate 5

Mt. Shasta Ranger Station - Shasta-Trinity National Forest



## Brief history and background

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) extends from Canada to the Mexican border, a distance of 2,699 miles.

It was one of two trails named to the national system of recreation and scenic trails when the National Trails System Act was passed in 1968. The Appalachian Trail, extending from Maine to Georgia was the second trail.

A 154 mile section of the PCT runs in an east - west direction across the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. That portion of the PCT on the Mt. Shasta District covers almost 60 miles.

There are three designated trailheads for the PCT developed on the Mt. Shasta District, and additional access points at Castle Crags State Park and the Soda Creek exit off I-5.

## About the access points

### Parks Creek Trailhead (6850 feet)

This popular trailhead is reached via a paved road approximately 30 miles from the Mt. Shasta Ranger Station. Heading south on the PCT, hikers will enjoy a relatively level 2½ mile section of trail to Deadfall Lakes and the intersection of the Sisson-Callahan National Recreation Trail. From this intersection it is 4.5 miles south on the PCT to the Toad Lake overlook and side trail. From Toad Lake it is 6½ miles along the crest of the Trinity Divide to the next designated trailhead above Gumboot Lake.

**Directions to Parks Creek Trailhead.** From Mt. Shasta City, drive north on I-5 to the Edgewood exit north of Weed. Cross under the freeway and turn right on Highway 99 toward Gazelle. In 0.3 mile, turn left on Stewart Springs Road and drive 5 miles. Just before the resort, turn right on Road 17 and cross over Parks Creek. Stay on this narrow paved road for approximately 10 more miles to the summit of the divide. The trailhead is signed and located on the left side of the road. The PCT begins at the south end of the parking area adjacent to the road.

**Side trip to Mt. Eddy.** Hikers interested in an astounding view from the summit of Mt. Eddy (at 9,025 feet, the highest point in Trinity County) can take the Sisson-Callahan Trail east from where it intersects with the PCT and ascend 600 feet elevation in 0.6 mile to the uppermost Deadfall Lake. The

trail continues to ascend another 200 feet in 0.2 mile to Deadfall Summit where a side trail branches off and switchbacks one mile up the southwest side of Mt. Eddy gaining 1000 feet in elevation.

### Gumboot Trailhead (6500 feet)

This trailhead is the most popular on the district and is located 16 miles southwest of Mt. Shasta City. The access road is paved to the trailhead. It is 13½ miles north on the PCT to Parks Creek Trailhead. Hikers traveling south on the PCT from Gumboot Trailhead will enjoy alternating views of Mt. Shasta and the Trinity Alps. In 2.3 miles, the trail abruptly turns east toward Castle Crags and I-5. Directly below the trail at this point is the Seven Lakes Basin, a popular day hike and fishing destination. To reach the upper lake, follow the old jeep trail that is visible to your right. Beyond Seven Lakes Basin, camping and water sources are very limited. Continuing east on the PCT it is 22.4 miles to I-5 at the Soda Creek exit and trailhead. To shorten the hike by 7 miles, hikers can depart the PCT at Dog Trailhead.

**Directions to Gumboot Trailhead.** From Mt. Shasta City, head west on Lake Street over the freeway and to the stop sign at Old Stage Road. Turn left (south) and drive .2 mile to the fork in the road. Stay to the right and continue on this road, W.A. Barr Road. In 2 miles you will cross the dam at Lake Siskiyou. Drive around the lake and continue on this paved road (Road 26) for approximately 12 miles. The road follows the canyon of the South Fork of the Sacramento River. It is narrow in places so use caution and watch for oncoming vehicles. There will be a fork in the road with a sign for Gumboot Lake, ½ mile to the left. Staying right at the fork and continuing for 2½ miles will bring you to the top of the Trinity Divide. The trailhead is signed and located on the right side of the road.

### Dog Creek Trailhead (2500 feet)

This trailhead is actually an old borrow pit and is not maintained or signed. Facing north, the trail (which is an old jeep trail) begins off to the left and climbs 500 vertical feet in 0.7 mile and intersects the PCT. Turning left (north) onto the PCT, the trail is easy and level for about 1½ miles to the Burstarse Creek crossing. Past the creek, the trail begins to climb and the views improve. Granite spires rise above and in the springtime Burstarse Falls are visible. This makes a nice and short early season day hike. Past the crossing of North Branch Creek, the trail ascends steeply (over 2000 feet in the next few miles) through brushy south facing slopes with no water. Summertime hikers should avoid this section during



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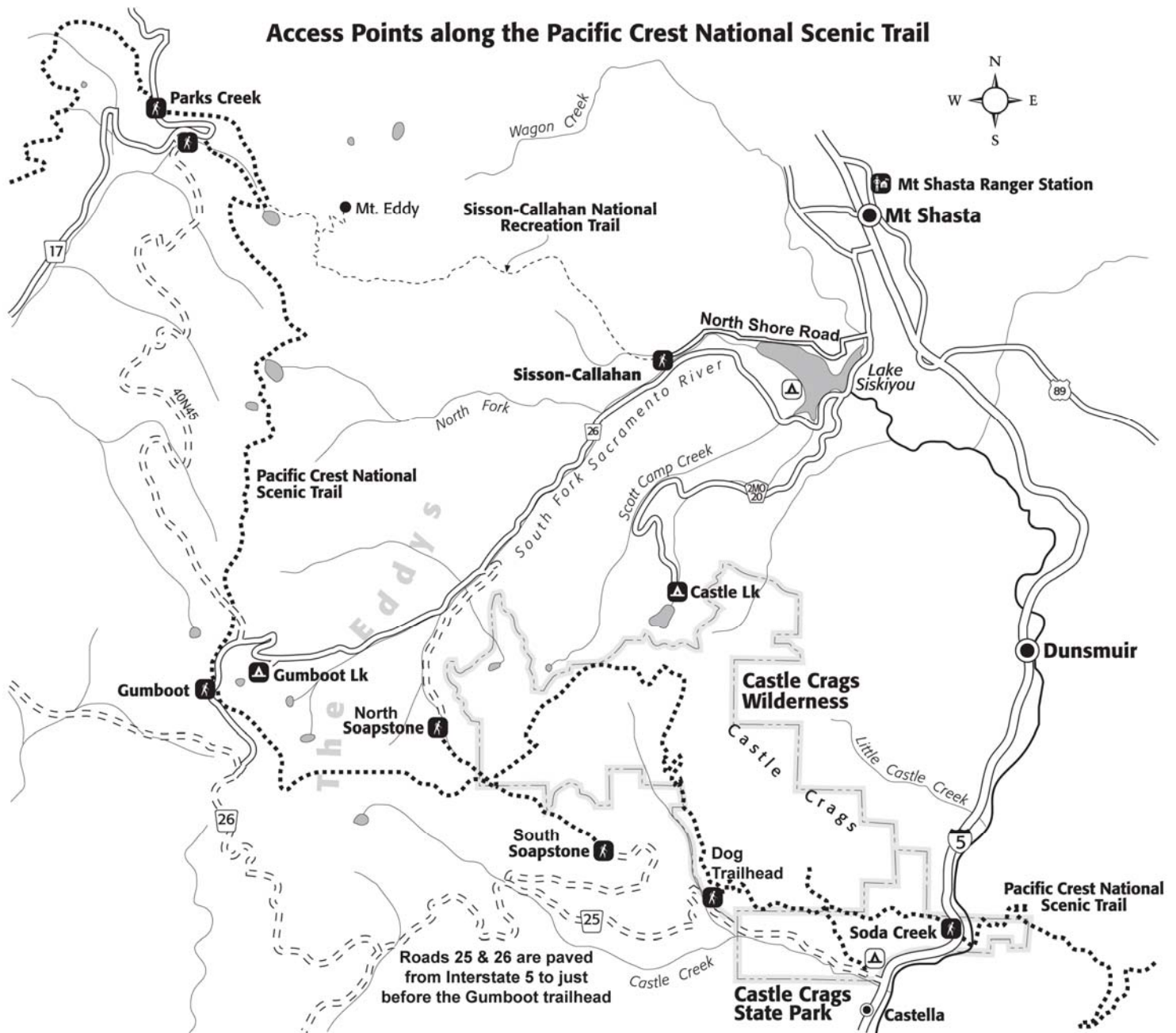
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midday. Watch for snakes! Turning right (south) at the intersection of Dog Trail and the PCT, it is almost 5 miles of easy hiking to the junction with the Castle Dome Trail, the most popular trail in Castle Crags State Park. The PCT then descends 2 miles to cross I-5 at the Soda Creek exit and trailhead.

**Directions to the Dog Trailhead.** From Mt. Shasta City, head south on I-5 for 16 miles to the Castella exit. Turn right (west) and drive past the Castle Crags State Park entrance. Continue on this paved road for 2½ miles. There will be a sign that indicates you are entering the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Approximately ½ mile past this sign is the old borrow pit on the right side of the road.

## Other Pacific Crest Trail Access Points

- North Soapstone Trailhead (Road 39N45) from Road 26 near Fawn Creek.
- South Soapstone Trailhead (Road 39N44) from Road 25 near Castle Creek crossing.
- Soda Creek Trailhead in Castle Crags State Park.
- Bob's Hat Trail or Flume Trail from the Castle Crags State Park Ranger Station.
- Milt Kenny Trail from the Castle Crags State Park Campground.



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