

BOOK REVIEWS

In Search of Ancient Oregon: A Geological and Natural History

by Ellen Morris Bishop.

2003. 288 pages, 219 color photos, 4 color drawings, map and geologic timeline, glossary, index. ISBN 0-88192-590-X Timber Press, Inc., \$39.95, hardcover.

You might buy this book just for a reference to look up specific details about the geologic base for the landscapes and soils that so profoundly influence plant life in Oregon. But be careful, because once you get it you will undoubtedly want to read the entire book. Either way, this volume is definitely worth owning. Those who attended the NPSO annual meeting in John Day last summer know from Ellen Bishop's presentation that the depth of her knowledge is exceeded only by her passion for Oregon's geologic history. Combine that with her dedication to photography, and the result is a book that is not only fascinating to read, but beautiful to behold. What particularly impresses me is that it is not just a coffee table book of pretty pictures. Although each photograph is a work of art, it also brings to life the story in the accompanying text. I can only begin to imagine how many mornings she rolled out of a sleeping bag long before dawn, and delayed supper until after dark to capture the lighting of these photographs.

I guarantee that you will never feel the same way about driving through eastern Oregon after learning that the Wallowa Mountains began as islands off the Pacific coast and that they still harbor remnants of coral reefs. This book is a perfect cure for the complaint that a travel route is boring. It is only the mind of the traveler that is boring; the landscape is fascinating if one only knows how to read it! However, you do not need to travel to experience the wonders of Oregon's geologic history. As Bishop pointed out, every place has a geologic history, from Mt. Tabor in Portland to the far reaches of the Owyhee country and Steens Mountain.

One of the author's goals was to make decades of scientific research available to the public, and she has definitely succeeded. Although she tried to avoid professional jargon, there is a language of rocks (e.g., serpentine) that one must know in order to understand geology. These terms are fully defined in a nine page glossary at the back of the book. A comprehensive index allows you to quickly turn to sections on specific topics or locations, making *In Search of Ancient Oregon* a perfect companion to this issue of *Kalmiopsis* in exploring Oregon Plants and Places.

—Cindy Roché, SISKIYOU CHAPTER

The Rogue River Trail Flora Guide

by Rachel Showalter.

2003. 106 pages. Maps, key, photographs, glossary, index. BLM/OR/WA/GI-03/052+1792 Bureau of Land Management, Medford District, \$5.00, spiralbound, waterproof paper.

As winter wanes and warmer temperatures coax out the early emerging wildflowers, I like to head to the Rogue River trail for easy day hikes or, better yet, for a longer backpacking trip. In addition to the pleasures of hiking along the Wild and Scenic portion of the Rogue River, here one finds one of the earliest and most spectacular wildflower displays in southwestern Oregon.

Rachel Showalter has developed a highly useful flora guide for helping hikers identify plant species that grow near the trail. The pocket-sized guide, printed on waterproof paper, includes an excellent map of the Rogue River Recreation Trail from Grave Creek to Illaha, nearly 40 miles away. Distance in miles is given between various landmarks along the trail.

The plants are grouped by flower color, with a dichotomous key for each group (color) at the beginning of each section. Users can quickly flip to the desired color by following the colored band displayed at the top of each page. Plant species are depicted with an excellent photograph along with common name, family, flowering time, habitat description, plant characteristics, and ethnobotanical notes, a special feature of this flora guide. Botanical jargon is kept to a minimum. In addition, there is a well-illustrated glossary of botanical terms. It is followed by a second glossary of ethnobotanical terminology, and lists of references for further reading.

If you are thinking about hiking the Rogue River Trail, especially during the spring or early summer, I highly recommend this handy, well-designed flora guide. You'll be ready to quickly identify the more common wildflowers, trees, shrubs, ferns, grasses, rushes, and sedges. Although designed for use along the trail rather than the river, this waterproof guide is likely to become popular with those floating the river as well. Flora Guides can be purchased at the BLM office in Medford, the Visitor Center at Rand, and selected other locations.

—Bob Korfhage, SISKIYOU CHAPTER

A Crater Lake National Park Vascular Plant Checklist

by Peter F. Zika.

2003. 92 pages, index. ISBN 0-9642124-3-9 Crater Lake Natural History Association, \$14.95, spiralbound paper.

The first "Flora of Crater Lake" was compiled by F. Lyle Wynd in 1929 and contained 433 species. Ten years later, Elmer Applegate expanded the list to 564 taxa, which, until now, remained the most complete checklist for Crater Lake National Park (see biography by Frank Lang in *Kalmiopsis* 10:1-10). Although the title indicates a checklist, Zika's compilation, published by the Crater Lake Natural History Association, is more than just a list of species. All 682 taxa, arranged by family, are documented by voucher specimens. Notes for each species give the accepted name, synonyms, locations where it has been found in the park, ecological information, and miscellaneous tidbits. Tucked away in the narrative on rare plants is a challenge by the author to botanists: can they find 54 native plants that have not been seen in the park in the last 40 years?!

While there are no keys or descriptions for plant identification, various plant illustrations decorate the publication. Pumice grapefern (*Botrychium pumicola*) appears both on the cover (color photo by Frank Lang) and at the beginning of the section for Ferns and Fern Allies (line drawing by David Wagner). Among the remaining illustrations, some might be useful for identification, such as the silhouette of *Sorbus* leaves for *S. sitchensis* var. *grayi*, *S. californica*, and *S. scopulina* var. *scopulina*.

The 8½ x 11 format is fine for carrying with a flora in a vehicle, but not ideal for slipping in a pocket or a pack. Still, since casual plant collecting is prohibited in the park, the checklist is a valuable tool for anyone interested in the flora at Crater Lake. Order from Crater Lake Natural History Association, PO Box 157, Crater Lake, OR 97604 (<http://www.nps.gov/crla/nha.htm>. 541-594-3111).
—Cindy Roché, SISKIYOU CHAPTER



Oregon fawnlily (*Erythronium oregonum* Applegate) grows in three of the ACES: Hunter Creek, Beatty Creek, and Horse Rock Ridge. Illustration by BLM botanist Rachel Showalter, Medford District.

“Anyone who thinks geology and natural history are dull will change their minds after glancing through this book. It’s accessible, well designed, thorough, accurate and easily calls forth vivid visions of Oregon in the distant past.” Salem Statesman Journal. From the Publisher. In Search of Ancient Oregon is a beautifully photographed, expertly written account of Oregon’s fascinating geological story; a book for all those interested in Oregon’s landscapes and environments. About the Author. Ellen Morris Bishop received her PhD in geology at Oregon State University and studied photography at the San Francisco Academy of Art. Bishop has taught at Whitman College, Lewis and Clark College, and the University of Arkansas.