

# Lake Cascade State Park

**Introduction:** Lake Cascade is a very large reservoir situated in the west-central Idaho mountains. It sits in a very scenic valley surrounded by mountains, forests, and green valleys. The Idaho State Park System has 4 state parks that focus on aquatic access and recreation on significant reservoirs. But Lake Cascade State Park is the only one in which the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation manages all of the developed recreation sites that are located over a huge area on the reservoir's shoreline. So its not just one park, there are 15 different parks to enjoy.

**Getting There:** To get to the Van Wyck and Ridgeview units of Lake Cascade State Park, proceed north on Hwy. 55 into the Town of Cascade. When you get to "Old State Highway" turn left and follow it for about .4 miles and the Old State Highway ends at the Van Wyck unit parking lot. Turn right on Shore Dr. and proceed for .3 mile to the left turn entrance into the Ridgeview unit. A left turn on to Lakeshore Drive from the Old Highway will take you to the Sage Bluff unit in about .8 mile. Another 500 feet on Lakeshore Drive will bring you to the Big Sage unit. Another 1/2 mile on Lakeshore Drive will bring you to the Blue Heron unit. Another 500 feet on Lakeshore Drive will bring you to the Snowbank unit. Another .3 mile on Lakeshore Drive will bring you to the Carbarton unit.

To get to the Crown Point unit, go north on Hwy. 55 past the Old State Highway for about .3 mile and make a left turn on Lake Way. Follow Lake Way for about .5 mile and it will take you to the entrance to the Crown Point unit.

To get to the Sugarloaf unit, go north on Hwy. 55 about 6 miles north of Cascade to Stonebreaker Rd. Follow Stonebreaker Rd. for about 1.3 miles until it ends at the Sugarloaf unit.

To get to the Boulder Creek unit, go north on Hwy. 55 about 14 miles north of Cascade to Loomis Lane. Turn left on Loomis Lane and follow the signs to the Boulder Creek unit. There will be several turns, but the signs will get you there.

The units on the west side of the lake must be accessed by proceeding north on Hwy 55 all the way to the Town of Donnelly. Upon entering Donnelly, you will need to take a left turn on County Rd. 422 (West Roseberry Rd.). Follow West Roseberry Rd. and the signs for the Tamarack Resort for about 3.2 miles to West Mountain Rd. Turn left on West Mountain Rd. and proceed for 1.1 miles to the Huckleberry unit. Another 1 mile on West Mountain Rd. will bring you to the Buttercup unit. Another 1/2 mile on West Mountain Rd. will bring you to the West Mountain unit. Another .4 mile on West Mountain Rd. will bring you to the Poison Creek unit. Another 2.6 miles on West Mountain Rd. will bring you to the Osprey Point unit.

The park office and visitor center is located just east of Hwy. 55 on the road that leads to the Kelly Whitewater Park in Cascade.

## Major Features:

The Lake: There are 26,307 acres of surface water at Lake Cascade and 86 miles of shoreline. The reservoir extends along 21 miles of the North Fork of the Payette River and is 4.5 miles wide at its widest point. Lake Cascade is situated at an elevation of 4,828 feet above mean sea level. The reservoir has only an average depth of about 26 feet. The seasonal drawdown of the lake can be as much as 12 feet. The lowest water levels are typically reached in October, the highest in

June or July.

The Park: The IDPR website lists the size of this state park as 500 acres. However, after consulting with the IDPR staff at their headquarters it was determined that the actual amount of acreage that is leased under an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is 1,498 acres. The total amount of land managed by the Bureau of Reclamation at Lake Cascade (including what is leased to the IDPR) is about 4,450 acres. Only 15 of the primary developed recreation sites are managed and operated by the IDPR and the total acreage of these is closer to the 1,498 acre figure. Since all of these sites are located on the shores of Lake Cascade, they are situated at the full pool elevation of 4,828 feet. The IDPR has classified Lake Cascade State Park as a recreation park. A description of the units and facilities available is as follows:

Carbarton: The Carbarton unit is a day use area on the southeast shore of the lake. It sits on a bluff with great views of the lake. There is a paved trail that leads to each of the 12 picnic tables available. There is a small paved parking lot and one vault toilet. The unit is landscaped with lawns and mature ponderosa and lodgepole pine trees.

Snowbank: The Snowbank unit is a group tent campground on the southeast shore of the lake. Persons camping in RVs that are affiliated with the group may park their RV in the parking lot, but there are no hook-ups. A paved trail leads to 20 walk-in tent sites. There is water and a vault toilet available. The unit is popular for weddings and reunions. The unit is landscaped with lawns and mature ponderosa pines. There is a shoreline area that is suitable for swimming, but it is not a designated swimming beach.

Blue Heron: The Blue Heron unit is for camping and day use and is located on the southeast shore of the lake. There is a large parking lot with a paved trail that leads to 17 walk-in tent campsites and 10 picnic sites. There is water and two vault toilets available. The unit is landscaped with lawns and mature ponderosa and lodgepole pines. There is also a large boat lot capable of parking trailers with their towing vehicles and Blue Heron has the deepest boat ramp in the state park with two courtesy docks. Just north of Blue Heron is a small undeveloped site called Pelican Cove. It has a small gravel parking lot with a portable toilet provided. There are three picnic tables available. A dirt path links this site with the Big Sage unit. It is sunny with no trees.

Big Sage: The Big Sage unit is a fairly new development in the park. It is located on the southeast shore of the lake. What used to be a barren piece of shoreline is now an attractive campground with 17 campsites with water hook-ups. Four of these sites have both water and electric hook-ups. There are two vault toilets in the campground. The adjacent day use area has one vault toilet and a group shelter. Because the site is recently developed, the trees that have been planted are still rather small. There is paved trail that runs along the shore. There is a beach area suitable for swimming. The site is popular with sailing groups due to the prevailing breezes.

Sage Bluff: The Sage Bluff unit is a fairly new development in the park. It is located on the southeast shore of the lake a few hundred yards north of Big Sage. It is a campground with 11

campsites with water hook-ups. There is one vault toilet in the campground. Because the unit is recently developed, the trees that have been planted are still rather small. There is a beach area suitable for swimming.

Van Wyck: The Van Wyck unit is one of the oldest recreation facilities on the lake. Because of that, it is somewhat laid out in manner that is well suited to some recreation management practices of the past. It is commonly known as Van Wyck Park and is located on the lake shoreline adjacent to the City of Cascade. It includes a large boat launching facility with a large paved lot for parking trailers and their towing vehicles. The boat ramp has two courtesy docks. There is a designated swimming beach here that is marked with buoys. There is one improved restroom (flush toilets and sinks) and one vault toilet. This is also where the state park provides an RV dump station. The park area has landscaped lawns with a few shade trees. There are three gravel roads which traverse the lawn area. There are about 23 picnic tables dispersed throughout the area. The area is allowed to be used for both day use and dispersed camping at the same time. But there are no designated or numbered sites and campers are free to park their RVs or pitch their tents anywhere they can find a piece of unoccupied grass. At the north end of the site, there is a large gravel pull-out that can be used for additional parking. This dispersed style recreation management is somewhat of a nightmare for park staff who must go through the area to determine who has or has not registered and paid for their use. However Van Wyck Park is extremely popular for small group and extended families gatherings. The adjacent Shore Drive is poorly maintained by local authorities. But it is the primary access road for the Van Wyck unit and the Ridgeview unit. The IDPR tries to at least keep the pot holes on this road filled in. This unit in need of redevelopment.

Ridgeview: The Ridgeview unit is a beautifully redeveloped site. It is located on the shoreline adjacent to the City of Cascade. It has 24 campsites with 17 sites with water and electric hook-ups and 7 sites with water, electric, and sewer hook-ups. The campground also has an improved restroom with flush toilets, sinks, and showers. An adjacent day use area has a small paved parking lot with a vault toilet, a designated swimming beach and 4 picnic tables. The site is nicely landscaped with some lawns, a few shade trees, and is partially forested. The access route to the site is the decrepit Shore Drive. There is no turn around for RVs and trailers available on Shore Drive past this point.

Crown Point: The Crown Point unit is located on the shoreline just north of the Lake Cascade Dam. It must be accessed via Lake Way from Highway 55 as RVs and trailers cannot get through the narrow passage on the Cascade Dam. The Crown Point site is one of the most natural type sites in the park. It has an 28 campsite campground situated in a thick ponderosa pine forest with great views of the lake. However, there are no hook-ups available at this campground. There are two vault toilets available in the campground. There are two mooring docks available. There is an adjacent day use parking lot with one vault toilet. This parking lot provides a staging area for use of the Crown Point trail. This is a 2.7 mile gravel trail that sits on the old railroad bed. It has a smooth packed sand surface. It is suitable for hiking and biking in summer, and nordic skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. Snowmobile use is also allowed. There are benches and interpretive panels along the way. The trail provides great access to undeveloped portions of forested shoreline that are rich in wildlife.

Sugarloaf: The Sugarloaf unit is located on a peninsula that juts out into Lake Cascade on the eastern shore. It is somewhat far removed from the maddening crowds of the other Lake Cascade sites. It has 43 standard campsites, but no hook-ups. There are two vault toilets in the campground. There is an adjacent day use area with a boat ramp with two courtesy docks. A large parking lot is provided here with spaces for trailers and their towing vehicles. The day use area has 2 vault toilets and 5 picnic tables. The day use area parking lot and boat ramp were recently refurbished. The Sugarloaf unit has mature ponderosa and lodgepole pines that were planted when the site was developed. The unit is named for Sugarloaf Island that sits off-shore just north of the unit. It is often windy here in the late afternoons.

Boulder Creek: The Boulder Creek unit is perhaps the most scenic of the Lake Cascade State Park day use areas. It is located on the east shore of the Boulder Creek arm of the lake. It is situated in a thick mature stand of lodgepole pine. There are 12 picnic sites scattered amongst the forest. There is easy access from the picnic sites to a really nice sandy beach that is designated and buoyed for swimming. It is a popular site and sometimes the day use parking lot fills up. Two improved restrooms (flush toilets) are available at the site. There is also a boat ramp with two courtesy docks here. A parking lot for trailers and their towing vehicles is also here.

Huckleberry: The Huckleberry unit is the furthest north of all the Cascade Lake State Park units. It is located on the western shore of Lake Cascade along West Mountain Rd.. It has a campground with 26 standard sites with no hook-ups. There are two vault toilets available. There is an adjacent tent camping area called curlew with 5 first come, first served sites. The Huckleberry unit has landscaped lawns situated in a forest of ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas fir. The north end of the campground has several old growth trees.

Buttercup: About a mile south of Huckleberry is the Buttercup unit. This site has 28 standard campsites with no hook-ups. There are two vault toilets available in the campground. The site is landscaped with lawns and some planted trees, but several sites are more sunny. The adjacent day use area has a boat ramp with two courtesy docks. There is a paved parking lot with spaces for trailers and their towing vehicles. There is a vault toilet at the day use area.

West Mountain: About ½ mile south of Buttercup is the West Mountain unit. This site has 26 standard campsites with no hook-ups. There is an improved restroom (flush toilets) available. The unit has landscaped lawns situated in a forest of mature ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and Douglas fir. There are some beautiful old growth ponderosa pines as well. Just north of the campground off of West Mountain Rd. is an RV dump station to serve this side of the state park.

Poison Creek: In 2011, the campground at Poison Creek was redeveloped into a full service campground. It has 21 campsites that have water, electric, and sewer hook-ups. There is also an improved restroom with flush toilets, sinks, and showers. There are two other toilet buildings also available. There is an adjacent day use area that has a boat ramp that was refurbished in 2013 and has two courtesy docks. There is a large parking lot for trailers and their towing vehicles. There is a vault toilet and 4 picnic tables in the day use area. The Poison Creek site also has a group shelter. The Tamarack resort operates a beachfront cabana marina here where

they rent boats, kayaks, and paddle boards. The Poison Creek site is landscaped with lawns in an area that is forested with ponderosa pine, western larch, and lodgepole pines.

Osprey Point: Osprey Point is significantly removed from the rest of Lake Cascade State Park. The site is not generally open to the public, but it does have 3 yurts with an improved restroom (flush toilets) for rent by groups of up to 30 people. It is located off of West Mountain Rd. on the west side of Lake Cascade. However, it is not located next to the shoreline.

**Geology:** The Lake Cascade area has two dominant geologic features, the Idaho Batholith and the Columbia River Basalt. The Idaho Batholith consists of a large intrusive complex of igneous rocks formed from 40 to 100 million years ago. Rocks of the Idaho Batholith consist primarily of coarse-grained granitic rocks such as granodiorite and quartz diorite. Near the western edge of the batholith, existing rocks were metamorphosed into schists and gneisses by intrusion of the batholith. Large portions of West Mountain are composed of these metamorphic rocks.

The Columbia River Basalt is found throughout western Idaho, eastern Oregon, and Washington. The Columbia River Basalts erupted from fissures to the west and formed an extensive plateau that lapped onto the western edge of the Idaho Batholith. Rocks of the Columbia River Basalt group consist of Miocene-age (5 to 17 million years old) basalt flows that are thousands of feet thick. Basalt is visible at the surface north of Cascade Dam near Crown Point.

The structural geology is dominated by the Long Valley Fault System. This fault zone formed north-trending linear valleys and mountain ridges in west central Idaho. Lake Cascade is located in a structural graben (valley) formed by down-dropping along the Long Valley Fault. The sedimentary basin fill in the area is more than 7,000 feet deep as a result of down-faulting of the valley floor. The steep, linear mountain front along West Mountain was formed by uplift on the Long Valley fault that began between 14 and 10 million years ago. Glaciers that advanced down from the crest of West Mountain deposited moraines and out-wash. Much of the valley surrounding Lake Cascade is filled with glacial outwash. Some of these outwash terraces have since been incised by more recent stream activity.

### **Ecosystems and Plant Communities:**

The Lake: Cascade is a reservoir and not a natural lake and it is fairly shallow, so it has more characteristics of a warm water lake. The reservoir provides a mixed fishery (both cold water and warm water species) and is one of the most heavily fished waters in Idaho. At one time, the reservoir had some of the most productive yellow perch fishing in the state. However predation by pikeminnows and suckers have taken their toll. The IDFG has struggled with trying to keep this lake as a balanced ecosystem.

The Land: Grasses occur along the North Fork arm in drier upland areas above high banks and on gentle slopes leading up from the bottomlands of the reservoir. Ponderosa and lodgepole pine often occur in association with the shrubs and grasses in this area. Grasses also predominate in the Crown Point area in association with open stands of lodgepole and ponderosa pine. Vegetation at Sugarloaf is an upland community of a mixture of grasses and sagebrush.

The montane sagebrush steppe ecosystem consists of shrub communities on the east side

of the reservoir and drier portions of the west side are characterized by big sagebrush, low sagebrush and bitterbrush. This ecosystem is dominant around the southern units of Carbarton, Snow Bank, Blue Heron, Big Sage, and Sage Bluff.

The ponderosa pine forest consists of the lower elevation forest stands around the reservoir that are dominated by ponderosa and lodgepole pine with a grass/forb understory. There are a few places on the west side of the reservoir where the forest cover extends all the way to the shoreline. This community has a fairly open forest canopy dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, and some lodgepole pine. The shrub understory is comprised of common chokecherry, snowberry, syringa, mountain ash, shinyleaf spirea, bitter cherry, and buckbrush. Stands of quaking aspen, Rocky Mountain maple, alder, and red-osier dogwood are common in the moister gullies. In the more open areas, forbs such as arrowleaf balsamroot, bracken fern, and a variety of grasses also occur. The Crown Point area is moderately forested with young and mature ponderosa pines and other conifers. An open pine forest is common on the slopes and hills on the east side of the reservoir. This forest is characterized by a widely dispersed, open tree canopy of ponderosa pine on the drier sites and of lodgepole pine on the wetter sites. Many of the shrubs, forbs, and grasses described above also dominate this community; however, shade-tolerant or moisture-requiring shrubs such as wild rose, ninebark, chokecherry, snowberry, elderberry, and syringa are more numerous.

Elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*) is the keynote species. This medium height scrub is rather common around the park and is easily recognizable in the spring with its bright yellow flowers that look little bouquets placed on top of the plant. The flowers are shaped somewhat like umbrellas. The flowers eventually form a cluster of bluish berries that are cherished wildlife food. The scrubs grow along streamsides, in thickets, moist forest and clearings. The blue berries are popular for jelly and wine. The berries were a staple food item for Native Americans. The bark, leaves, and twigs were also used for medicinal purposes. The stems were hollowed out to make pipestems, whistles, and toys.

## **Wildlife:**

Mammals: Mammals present in the park include: mule deer, white tail deer, elk, red squirrel, golden mantled ground squirrel, Columbia ground squirrel, beaver, otter, muskrat, mink, badger, raccoon, coyote, skunk, mountain lion, black bear, moose, red fox, bobcat, fisher, skunk chipmunk, raccoon, long-tailed weasel, red fox, yellow-bellied marmot, and porcupine.

Birds: Birds present in the park include: bald eagle, gull, American avocet, osprey, long-billed curlew, white pelican, mallard, pintail, western grebe, common merganser, American wigeon, great blue heron, common loon, black-necked stilt, tundra swan, Canada goose, snow goose, killdeer, lesser yellowlegs, spotted sandpiper, dipper, tree swallow, gray jay, junco, mountain chickadee, mountain bluebird, belted kingfisher, Stellar's jay, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, pileated woodpecker, red-tailed hawk, harrier, American kestrel, great-horned owl, bald eagle, sandhill crane, loons belted kingfisher, and Swainson's hawk.

The osprey is the keynote species in this park because they are fairly easily to find and observe. They are frequently seen along the Crown Point trail. The osprey is commonly known throughout the country as the fish hawk. This is a good name for it since its food consists of fish.

The osprey is the only hawk in the world that dives into the water for fish like a pelican. But unlike a pelican which uses its pouch-like mouth, the osprey uses its talons (or claws) to secure and capture fish. The osprey usually hunts in relatively shallow water because it lacks the ability to dive into deeper water. Unlike the bald eagle, the osprey is not a scavenger and will not touch dead fish that have washed up onto shore. The osprey has a wingspan of four to six feet, are blackish above and white below. The largely white head suggests a bald eagle, the osprey has a broad black patch through its cheeks. Where the osprey and bald eagle are both found, they can be differentiated at a distance by their manner of soaring. The bald eagle soars with flat wings while the osprey soars with a kink or crook in its wing. The osprey can often be seen hovering over a body of water before it plunges feet first for fish. The nest is a large bulky mass of sticks usually in a snag (a dead tree that is still standing). Where birds are left unmolested, the nest may be used for many years and is constantly being added to. It can become a massive structure sometimes reaching a diameter of five feet. Osprey lay 2 to 4 eggs. Incubation lasts for about 28 days and is performed solely by the female. Nesting season is between April 1 to September 30. Young birds remain in the nest for about 8 weeks. Ospreys usually mate for life. Population declines occurred during the 50s and 60s due to cumulative DDT, which the osprey obtains from its prey. This insecticide affects the bird's calcium metabolism causing the osprey to lay thin egg shells which are then accidentally crushed by the incubating females. The chemical DDT has been banned for some time but the osprey is still continuing to recover from its affects. Several pairs of osprey nest each year on the shores of Lake Cascade and they prefer the undeveloped areas like along the Crown Point trail where they can be readily seen by the park visitor.

Fish: Fish that are in the lake include: redband trout, rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, brook trout, kamloops trout, kokanee, Coho salmon (land locked), mountain whitefish, smallmouth bass, black crappie, tiger muskie, yellow perch, channel catfish, black bullhead, pumpkinseed, brown bullhead, northern pikeminnow, and large-scale sucker.

**Cultural History:** Thirty-eight prehistoric (aboriginal) sites and 41 prehistoric (aboriginal) isolated finds have been recorded around the Lake Cascade perimeter. There is reason to believe that the Lake Cascade area contains intact Paleo-Indian sites dating to at least 10,000 years ago. Long Valley lies at the edges of the Plateau and Great Basin culture areas. The Nez Perce of the Plateau area and Shoshone (especially takedeka or Sheepeaters) of Great Basin affiliation visited the area and resided nearby. Long and Round valleys were popular hunting and council grounds, and the tribes frequented the area to hunt and to dig and dry camas roots. Many traces of Indian campgrounds can still be found today, but none are known to exist in the park.

The Sheepeater War of 1878-79, was a series of skirmishes involving soldiers tracking Sheepeater, Weiser, and Bannock people who refused to be relocated to reservation life. The operation lasted three months with the Indians moving throughout the region in and around Long Valley.

Some horses were stolen by local Indians from William Monday. Monday and three friends went in search of the thieves. They were ambushed by the Indians on August 20, 1878 near Cascade Falls. (Near the base of Cascade Dam) This became known as the Long Valley Ambush. William Monday, Jake Groseclose, Tom Healy and "Three Finger" Smith were ambushed in a rocky basin. Monday and Groseclose were killed immediately and Healy wounded. Smith was able to escape and made it 40 miles to Salmon Meadows. Infantrymen

buried the three, marked the spot, and took up the Indian trail. Smith estimated there were 75 Indians; army trackers finally concluded there were only five, but they never caught them. The pursuit involved two units of the U.S. Cavalry. One came from the Grangeville area and one from the west. The pursuit of the Cavalry covered two or three years and ranged over a wide area. The Indians involved belong to the Sheepeater Band. The conflict affected white settlers in the area. Homes were burned and lives were lost.

Then there is the account of Chief Eagle Eye, a Weiser leader who also resisted removal to reservation life for years after the Sheepeater War. He succeeded through peaceful avoidance of contact with his white adversaries. When pursued by army troops, Eagle Eye and his small group stayed hidden in Indian Valley (adjacent to Long Valley) where some of the Weiser people had traditionally maintained winter camps.

**History:** Several Euro-American trappers likely came through Long Valley during the fur trade era. The early history of Valley County centers around Long and Round Valleys and begins with the 1860s gold rush. Packer John Welch, a contractor who hauled supplies from Umatilla Landing on the Columbia River to miners in Idaho City, blazed a trail through the wilderness and entered Long Valley at Payette Lake. He established a way station near what later became the Town of Cascade. During the 1870s prospectors and miners followed in his footsteps.

As gold sources dwindled, a few miners began to take up squatters rights. By the mid-1870s, some southern Idaho ranchers began to rely on Long Valley's natural lush hay fields for summer range. Historic records indicate that Euro-American settlement of Long Valley began in 1883, substantially aided by the appearance of the Oregon Short Line railroad. By 1890, several towns and a sawmill had been established.

The Town of Van Wyck (now under Lake Cascade) was incorporated in 1882 and regarded as the chief town of Long Valley. The first school and post office were established here. The town provided everything from hotels, drug stores, saloons churches, and even telephone service.

The Town of Center (now under Lake Cascade), established in 1895, was a community located near what is now called Sugarloaf Island. Most farmers in this area raised various grain and farm animals. Center wasn't very big, but did have a store and a post office. The town received its name because it was near the center of Long Valley.

The Town of Arling (now under Lake Cascade), which was two miles north of Center, was established in 1914 as a shipping point on the railroad for cattle and sheep.

Between 1912 and 1914, The Oregon Short Line Railroad (Union Pacific) laid down track from Smith's Ferry to Cascade. Around 1913, Cascade was chosen as the site of the depot. As a result, much of Van Wyck was moved to this new bustling town. The arrival of the railroad transformed an economy based on subsistence agriculture into a more diversified commercial economy that supplied both agricultural and lumber products to outside markets. The railroad also serviced several local logging operations and mills. After the Cascade Dam was built, the route of the railroad from Cascade to McCall was re-routed to a higher elevation along the lake shore. That roadbed today is the Crown Point trail.

Cascade Dam was authorized by Congress on March 27, 1905. Funds for construction of the dam were appropriated in 1941 and construction of the dam was completed in 1948. The reservoir was first filled to capacity in 1957. With the building of the dam pending, families that lived in Van Wyck, Center, and Arling were required to move. Many of them had lived there

since the ground was homesteaded. The sheriff moved those who refused to relocate. Some families had their homes moved to other places in the valley above the high water mark. The Arling school was moved to Donnelly and is now the Chalet RV Park office.

In the next few decades, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation developed and constructed most of the campgrounds and day use areas managed by IDPR today. The Bureau of Reclamation directly operated these facilities until 1994.

**Park History:** The recreation facilities at Lake Cascade became a state park through establishing an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1994. In 1999, the IDPR signed a 20 year lease for the properties. In 2011, showers, flush toilets, and RV hook-ups were added to several of the campgrounds.

### **Recreation Activities:**

Boating: There is little doubt that Lake Cascade State Park is an aquatic access park. There are seven boat ramps and nine docks available to provide for this use. Motor boating and water skiing are enjoyed by many. The prevailing winds also make this a great lake for sailing and wind surfing. A small “marina” concession is located at the Poison Creek unit where boats, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards can be rented. Currently there is no large general purpose marina available on Cascade Lake.

Camping: There are about 275 campsites in 12 different campgrounds available at Lake Cascade State Park, making this a great park to camp in. There is a great diversity of scenery and landscapes to enjoy in the campgrounds. Services at each site vary. Some have complete hook-ups, some have water and electric hook-ups, some have only water hook-ups, and the rest are standard campsites. There are some sites set aside for walk-in tent camping. There is a group campground at the Snowbank unit. Groups can also rent three yurts at the Osprey Point unit. RV dump stations are provided at the Van Wyck unit on the east side and at the West Mountain unit on the west side.

Picnicking: If you are just looking for a great place near the water to spend the day, Lake Cascade

### **Please Remember**

- There is a \$5.00 per vehicle per day fee required for access to the park. This is required even though there are no entrance stations operated by the park.
- Open fires are not allowed on the beaches.
- There are no lifeguards on duty at the designated swimming beaches.
- Personal floatation devices are required for any water craft on the lake.
- All watercraft must display a current invasive species decal.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times, are not permitted in the buildings and are not allowed on the swimming beach.
- Motor vehicles are to stay on established roadways unless directed otherwise.
- RV and vehicles pulling trailers must not attempt to drive across the Lake Cascade dam as a one way narrow

State Park has 11 day use areas to serve this purpose. There is about 72 picnic tables available for this use and many of these have grills nearby. There is also a group shelter at the Big Sage unit and another at the Poison Creek unit.

Fishing: Lake Cascade is open to fishing all year. Sport fishing activity focuses primarily on rainbow trout during spring and fall. Summer and winter fishing formerly focused on perch. However, since perch populations have declined, summer fishing is now focused on other warm water species. Winter fishing opportunities on the reservoir are limited since the decline of the perch fishery.

Swimming: Lake Cascade State Park has three designated swimming beaches located at the Van Wyck, Ridgeview, and Boulder Creek units, respectively. Swimming can also be enjoyed at any of the stretches of suitable shoreline near the recreational facilities. All swimming is at your own risk.

Trails: The only designated trail in Lake Cascade State Park is the 2.7 mile Crown Point trail. The trail is on an old railroad bed and is surfaced with hard packed sand. It is a great trail for mountain bikes, but not so good for skinny tire cycling. It is a great hiking path that leads to isolated coves, scenic forests, and places for viewing wildlife. The surrounding lands are the most natural setting provided in the park. There are benches and interpretive panels along the way. In the winter, the trail can also be used for snowshoeing, nordic skiing, and snowmobiles. Lake Cascade State Park has a limited number of paved walking paths that run along the shoreline at the Big Sage and Sage Bluff units. Skinny tire cycling would necessarily have to be restricted to the numerous paved park and local operated roads.

**Resource Management Issues:** Certain units in the park, such as Van Wyck, suffer from overcrowding. The dispersed camping style may have been workable a few decades ago, but now when Van Wyck fills up it looks like a little RV and tent city with a high degree of recreation density. Many of the users of this unit find the dispersed camping style to be attractive to them as they wish to camp in close proximity in their small groups. They also like the fact that it is first come, first serve. However, that creates a scenario where early arrivers attempt to “reserve” or save space for their expected friends and family. It also creates somewhat of a nightmare for the park staff who must spend several hours sorting out who has and has not registered and paid their fees. Then once the picnic tables have been taken up for camping, day users must be necessarily turned away.

A number of the park's unit have problems with shoreline erosion, especially on the east side where prevailing winds push waves upon the shore.

The park's system of access roads are a mixed bag. Some are park controlled while others are managed by local authorities. Many of the paved surfaces in the park are in need of resurfacing.

**Suggestions for the Future:** The park does not have a General Development Plan available. There are some items that may serve to improve Lake Cascade State Park, as follows:

- There are some immediate plans for boat ramp and dock improvements. These projects

should be completed.

- The Van Wyck unit needs to be redeveloped. Because it is popular with small groups, consideration should be given to designing a campground that is made up entirely of companion sites.
- As part of the Van Wyck redevelopment, something needs to be done about traffic flow and access control to the Van Wyck and Ridgeview units. It is suggested that the IDPR work towards acquiring control of Shore Drive. Once that is acquired, access to the Van Wyck parking lot from Old State Highway should be eliminated. It is suggested that the new access and entrance to the Van Wyck and Ridgeview units be re-routed via the Dam Road. This may require IDPR to acquire control over Dam Road as well as Shore Drive. Then a piece of Bureau of Reclamation property that is located right across Dam Road from the current park office should be leased from the Bureau of Reclamation to be developed into an entrance complex with a entry kiosk and a new RV dump station. In that manner the old dump station at Van Wyck can be abandoned in favor of more room for camping. With this re-routing all visitors coming for camping or day use at Van Wyck or Ridgeview would have to make contact with park staff at the entry kiosk to register and pay their entry fees.
- All paved roads and parking lot surfaces controlled by IDPR in the park need to be resurfaced. This should be done in a manner similar to the recent improvements made to the boat parking lot at the Sugarloaf unit.
- Lake Cascade State Park does not have a marina. This improvement has been recommended in previous Bureau of Reclamation reports. The most ideal location for a marina would be adjacent to the City of Cascade. However, much of this shoreline has already been taken up by other developments. If adjustments could be made to the City's golf course (which is leased from the Bureau of Reclamation) next to the Van Wyck parking lot, this would be a great place for a marina. A small marina store and service building could be built and docks with slips be positioned just south of the Van Wyck boat ramp.