



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

Port Orford Heads State Park

and Lifeboat Station

Year-round camping nearby:

Cape Blanco State Park, 9 miles north of Port Orford, has 52 campsites with electrical and water hookups and four cabins (cabins reservable by calling 1-800-452-5687).

Humbug Mountain State park, 6 miles south of Port Orford, has 39 electrical and 56 tent sites (reservable).



Port Orford Lifeboat Station Museum and Interpretive Center, Port Orford Heads State Park

Open April–October

Wednesday–Monday, 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Port Orford Lifeboat Station Museum is operated through a cooperative agreement between the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Cape Blanco Heritage Society.

For more information, visit:
www.capeblancoheritagesociety.com
or www.oregonstateparks.org

Phone: 541-332-0521



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So beautiful to view...

Some of the most dramatically pleasing sights on the Oregon coast are visible from the trails at Port Orford Heads State Park. Here you can see the Pacific Ocean splashing against miles of southern Oregon coastline. Vistas extend north toward the Cape Blanco Lighthouse and south to Port Orford and Humbug Mountain, and beyond.



... so perilous to navigate

On a stormy day, when ocean waves are battering the shoreline, it is easy to see why Port Orford Heads was the site of one of the first lifeboat stations on the Oregon coast. From 1934 to 1970, U.S. Coast Guard surfmen, as they were called, kept watch over a 40-mile stretch of coastline between Cape Blanco and Cape Sebastian. Stationed atop a 37-foot-high lookout tower perched near the westernmost tip of the head, they watched for distress signals from out at sea, ever ready to launch search and rescue missions from their boathouse in Nellies Cove, 280 feet below.

Frequent shipwrecks on the south Oregon coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s prompted the U.S. Coast Guard to select Port Orford Heads as the site of a lifesaving station. Besides the observation tower and boathouse, the compound included an Officer-in-Charge residence and a two-story building housing an office and quarters for the crew. A steep stairway with more than 500 steps connected the Crew Quarters with a boathouse.

Take time to inspect the station's legendary, unsinkable 36-foot motor lifeboat. Inside the museum, you can see historical artifacts and interpretive accounts of the station's history that help make the past come alive.



Remnants seen from the trails

The park's main trails—the Cove, Tower and Headland trails—begin at the museum. From a viewpoint on the Cove Trail, watch for remnants of the stairway to Nellies Cove. The boathouse, which sheltered two 36-foot motor lifeboats, burned down in the late 1970s. You can still see its pilings and breakwater structures as well as portions of a rail-mounted carriage used to launch the boats into the cove.



A photograph of a wooden observation tower or look-out post situated on a hillside, surrounded by dense vegetation. The tower has a small, enclosed upper section with windows and a flat roof, supported by a tall, open wooden frame. The surrounding area is filled with trees and bushes, suggesting a natural or park setting.

An aerial photograph showing a steep, rocky mountain slope. At the base of the slope, there is a small, light-colored building. The surrounding area is covered with dense evergreen forests. The terrain appears rugged and mountainous.

View north from headland trail viewpoint to Cape Blanco.

