

DRAFT SISKIYOU COUNTY ACCESSIBLE RECREATION

**THIS IS A DRAFT WORKING LIST OF POSSIBILITIES, NOT GUARANTEED TO BE ACCESSIBLE BY WHEELCHAIRS. Basically, it's a rough working list of places I'd like to go to and see just how 'accessible' they actually might be. So, if you use this list, keep in mind the location may turn out to be obstacle-filled and unsuitable.*

Siskiyou County is one of the most beautiful counties in California. It is rural and remote. For people who need wheelchair accessible opportunities, it means good pre-planning is essential for a successful trip. You'll fall in love with the beautiful spaces and places!

I have not personally visited or reviewed every location for wheelchair access. You'll need to do your homework to see if a particular destination or activity is suitable for you and your mobility device. When in doubt, call ahead to the managing agency.

Mount Shasta is iconic in its year-round beauty. It's a popular vacation spot. The McCloud Recreation Area near Mount Shasta is fabulous for waterfalls, camping, hiking and abundant wildlife. Medicine Lake Highlands offers unique volcanic scenery. In Siskiyou County every direction you choose offers something to see or do. The Klamath and McCloud Rivers attracts fishermen and white water rafters. It's handsome but rugged country.

Regional events offer much to visitors. The Montague Balloon Fest, McCloud Quilt Show, local Rodeos, Great Pumpkin Festival, Bike Rides, Lumberjack Fiestas, the County Fair and a whole lot more that will give you opportunities of a lifetime!

[<http://visitsiskiyou.org/events/annual-festivals-events/>]

SCENIC DRIVES: Siskiyou and Beyond

Scenic drives can be enjoyed by everyone. Often you don't even need to get out of the car to admire the view. You'll find parking spots and pullouts to stop and take stock of your surroundings. So, do just that – stop and enjoy the views, vistas and wildlife. Your vehicle can also act as a phot blind if you love taking pictures.

Remember to allow extra driving time. Mountain roads are not 'speedy' to begin with. Trying to drive 400 miles a day and 'enjoy' this area is ridiculous. Whatever time you plan to allow, double it. That way you can focus on the scenery, not on how fast you can get to your destination. Enjoy the JOURNEY!

Siskiyou Scenic Drives: <http://visitsiskiyou.org/what-to-do/scenic/drives/>

There is no doubt that there is spectacular scenery in Siskiyou County. Go east and take in the Tule Lake Wildlife Refuges (Highway 97). Go west down the Klamath River's Big Foot Scenic Byway (Highway 96) or the State of Jefferson Scenic Byway (Highway 97 then over Grayback to Oregon). Go Southwest and take the Trinity Heritage Scenic Byway (Highway 3). Go south to Mount Shasta or take Volcanic Legacy Byway. The Siskiyou segment runs from McCloud on Highway 89 to I5, up to Weed then east on Highway 97 to the Oregon border.

<https://scenicbyways.info/byway/2480.html>

Mount Shasta Cascade Loop:

<https://www.myscenicdrives.com/drives/california/mount-shasta-cascade-loop>

Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway: Shasta County, Siskiyou County and Southern Oregon

Highway roadways unless you take a side road trip.

<http://www.volcaniclegacybyway.org/>

If you are driving up Interstate 5, you might take a stop at Dunsuir. The Botanical Gardens have told me that much of the garden area is accessible: <http://dunsmuirbotanicalgardens.org/>

Castle Crags State Park is also just off Interstate 5. Vista Point Trail (accessible) is a 0.25 mile trail leading to views of three distinct volcanic features: Castle Crags, Mount Shasta, and Gray Rocks. Accessible parking and an accessible vault restroom are located at the large parking area at the end of Vista Point Road.

https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=454

Feeling adventurous? Here are some more ideas for driving in the Mount Shasta area:

<http://www.californiadriving.com/destinations/mt-shasta/>

<https://visitmtshasta.com/faq/>

TRAILS

Slow-wheelers want to get OUT of the car! So where could you reasonably expect to be able to take a wheelchair hike or rolling walk in Siskiyou County? There are several great options.

“There's a new $\frac{3}{4}$ mile accessible trail near Mt. Shasta! Completed October 30, the Gateway Accessibility Trail is a component of the larger Gateway trail system and was constructed this year using funds from the Mountain Thin timber sale. The trail takes off directly from the parking lot $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the city limits of Mt. Shasta on the Everitt Memorial Highway (heading up the mountain). The trail is goes out approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile before it creates a loop that ties back in with itself (a.k.a. lollipop loop) for a total of $\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Two accessible park benches were installed on the loop trail that meanders through ponderosa pine stands into an opening of mazanita with amazing views of Mt. Shasta to the east and Mt. Eddy to the west. The trail is comprised on compacted decomposed granite with grades less than 5% (one 35 ft. section does have a 9% slope, but levels back out to meet grade requirements). Through our partnership with the [Mount Shasta Trail Association](#), and their dedication to maintaining the Gateway trail system, MSTTA will be naming the trail for us.” (re-write for web page)

Great Shasta Rail Trail: <http://greatshastarailtrail.org/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bmTTRLzmKY>

This is a fairly new addition to Rails to the Trails system. Like all Rail Trails, this one has minimal grades. One end of the trail starts near McCloud and the other is near Burney with many access points in between. It's best enjoyed with an all-terrain mobility device (wide tires) as the path is packed cinder and thin wheels tend to bog down. Note that bicyclists are advised to use wide tires, too. There are no restrooms along the trail, so plan ahead.

Just try a short section. I suggest doing the first segment near McCloud going from east to west. Start west up the trail from the Esperanza Road to Pilgram Creek. It's roughly a 2 mile segment and by heading west, first, it will be downhill coming back. Or if your party has 2 vehicles, then park one at each

trail head and start at Pilgram Creek and head east (downhill) and drive back. Take water with you as there isn't much shade. [photos]

McCloud Falls

McCloud Falls is actually a series of Three falls along the McCloud River. Each waterfall has a short paved wheelchair-accessible trail to an overlook, a parking area and Accessible restroom. There is also a paved accessible trail from Fowlers Campground down to Lower McCloud Falls Day Use Area. Note that while there is a trail connecting all three falls, this connecting trail is NOT wheelchair accessible, alas. But you will be impressed with the view from the overlooks, and the lovely McCloud River. The water is cold, cold, cold so let the youngsters freeze their tails while you watch from shore. And remember, strong current can carry people downstream and over the falls – which could be fatal. Keep people and pets out of the river except in designated swimming areas.

Mount Shasta City Trails (in the town of Mount Shasta)

<https://hikemtshasta.com/mount-shasta-city-area-trails/mount-shasta-city-short-trails/>

There are several trails within the city. The most wheelchair friendly one is supposed to be the Sisson Meadow Trail, which is paved and/or boardwalk. (Note: do not confuse this city trail with the Sisson-Callahan National Recreation Trail which is NOT wheelchair friendly, and not near here).

Lake Siskiyou Trail (Mount Shasta area, west side)

<http://mountshastatrailassociation.org/trails/west-of-mt-shasta/lake-siskiyou/>
and <https://hikemtshasta.com/mount-shasta-city-area-trails/lake-siskiyou-trail/>

This trail around lake Siskiyou has a length of 6.5 miles, but you can do it in sections. It has a couple of spectacular bridge areas and some simply fabulous scenery. The map [http://mountshastatrailassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LakeSiskiyouTrail_06-01-11.pdf] is particularly useful in that it shows where there may be some short steep grades. Overall, the trail should be do-able for most wheelchair users, or large wheeled mobility walkers, but I suggest you really study the map and plan how to see the most desirable trail features. You'll enjoy it more with an all-terrain device. There are at least two handicap parking areas identified on the map. This is a very popular lake with great views of Mount Shasta.

Greenhorn Park and trail, Yreka: (A LOVELY PARK)

If you are traveling up Interstate 5, why not stop over in Yreka? Yreka is a good choice to stay if you plan to go to the Montague Balloon Fair, or fish the Klamath River. Yreka has been quite progressive with their trails at Greenhorn Park. There is a Day Use picnic area, ADA restrooms and fishing platform. In Spring and Fall it's a lovely spot for a hike on the paved trail around the reservoir and then a picnic [<http://yrekachamber.com/greenhorn/>] with the map shown here:

https://ci.yreka.ca.us/sites/ci.yreka.ca.us/assets/files/GH_Trail_Use_Map.pdf

The map shows 3 wheelchair accessible' trails around Greenhorn Reservoir: Gold Pan Trail is .1 mile, Miners Trails is .4 mile and Veteran's Memorial Trail is .6 mile.

<http://ci.yreka.ca.us/parks-and-facilities/parks>

Klamath National Forest – Forest Activities

Klamath National Forest - forest Activities

Klamath National Forest Supervisor's Office (Headquarters)
1711 South Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097-9549
(530) 842-6131

If you call Klamath National Forest, they will mail you or email a copy of their accessible recreation features. However, this list may be quite old and may not be current. Just keep that in mind during planning.

Salmon/Scott River RD: Kangaroo Lake Campground: Kangaroo Lake Campground provides accessible facilities, including a **1/4 mile paved trail right down to the mountain lake**. The lake itself covers 25 acres, and is 110 feet deep. There is no boat ramp but motorless boats are permitted.

Kangaroo Lake Campground has 18 sites, 13 of which are drive-in and 5 are walk-in. The campground provides two fully accessible campsites and wheelchair accessible restrooms. There is a **1/4 mile paved trail right down to the lake**. The lake itself covers 25 acres, and is 110 feet deep. There is no boat ramp but motorless boats are permitted. I haven't personally visited this location, (I've been told this is an extremely scenic location and well worth the trip.) The nearest community is Callahan.

To Get There: From Callahan, take the Callahan-Gazelle Rd for approx. 10 miles to the Rail Creek Rd. There is a sign for Kangaroo Lake, and this road will take you the 8 miles to the campground.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13114&actid=29>

<http://siskiyountycamping.blogspot.com/2012/07/kangaroo-lake-campground.html> gives a pretty good description of the campground and vicinity.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2A6SIA-6Oo> while you won't be able to hike up to the top where these guys are droning, this certainly gives you a good idea why you want to come to this lake to camp or just for a photo day.

Goosenest Ranger District: Juanita Lake Trail, Campground and Day Use Area On [review]

Juanita Lake provides a variety of recreation opportunities. The campground has 23 campsites and one 50 person group camp. The lake (55 acres) with 2 fishing jetties for easy access, is stocked with trout, bass and catfish. **There is a 1.5 mile paved, barrier free trail** that circles the lake. This is an absolutely lovely lake, excellent trail and wonderful area for fishing or photography. All sites are first come, first serve.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13165&actid=29>

<http://siskiyountycamping.blogspot.com/2013/07/juanita-lake-campground.html>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXdSKC4ofRU>

To Get There: From I-5 at Weed, CA travel northeast on State Hwy 97 approx 35 miles Ball Mtn Road. Turn west (left) on Ball Mtn Road approx 4 miles to Forest Service Road 46N04. Turn right on 46N04 and continue to Juanita Lake and Campground. From the North, traveling south on Hwy. 97, turn west (right)

approximately 3.8 miles south of the town of Macdoel on the Ball Mtn. Road approx 4 miles to Forest Service Road 46N04. Turn right on 46N04 and continue to Juanita Lake and Campground.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13165&actid=29>

Scotts River RD: Tree of Heaven: Some campsites are accessible to wheelchairs with assistance. There is a concrete ramp to the river. Some tables and restrooms will accommodate wheelchairs with assistance. Fishing possible. [Klamath River]

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13064&actid=29>

Video: Kayaking from Tree of Heaven to Gottville River Access: This gives you a great feel for the area. Note that I myself would be taking pictures from somewhere along the river roadway from a pullout, NOT from the kayak ROTFL! But that's just me. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_LBr9o6Lm0

Scotts River RD: Gottville River Access: The Gottville River Access has a sandy road and a concrete ADA accessible side walk to the water's edge. There is a ADA accessible restroom, parking area and dispersed camping area. Fishing possible. [Klamath River]

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/klamath/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=13070&actid=34>

Ukonom RD [Six Rivers National Forest]: **Oak Bottom Campground** is located near the Salmon River as well as the Klamath River. The campground is popular with whitewater enthusiasts in the spring. Many challenging rapids ranging from class 3 to 5 on the Salmon River which means in spring there could be some great photo opportunities. The campground has at least one wheelchair accessible site.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/srnf/recarea/?recid=11560>

Video: kayakers running whitewater in the Salmon River: I am not sure where you could position yourself for a photo, but I can certainly see why kayakers would come here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDYk8hNgpUI>

Shasta Trinity National Forest: Siskiyou County Portion

Wheelchair Accessible Campgrounds/Campsites: McCloud area

McCloud Falls is a wonderful area to visit. All three falls have wheelchair accessible viewpoints, great for photography. The upper falls has a short trail, one picnic table and an accessible restroom. Lower falls has a large picnic/day use area and large overlook. There is a trail from lower falls to Fowlers Campground that is paved.

There are two campgrounds in the area. Fowlers is on the reservation system, though it does allow drop ins. They do have wheelchair accessible campsites and accessible restrooms. **Cattle Camp** is first come/first serve and takes trailers, RVs and tents. This is a really nice campground with large spaces and it's all pretty level and looks pretty accessible. I actually think it is much prettier than Fowlers, though it's farther from the Falls.

Cattle Camp Swimming Hole is near the Cattle Camp Campgrounds. The water may be accessible to some. The swimming hole is shallow, with a very rocky bottom. Access is through a dirt slope. It's not a 'designed' area, and is not developed. It's a pretty natural location with a single ordinary picnic table. In

2017 the so-called handicap vault restroom at that Day Use area doesn't have a wheelchair ramp for the 6-inch step up, so be advised.

In summer when school is out the McCloud Falls area is a very popular with locals as well as out-of-area visitors. If you want less company to test out a trail, then come in spring, fall or during the week and you'll have more elbow room. Water flows in springtime can be dramatic. In the Fall the falls are still beautiful but with more rocks showing. It's a wonderful area to photograph.

Speaking of photography, **Lake McCloud Reservoir** has the most beautiful water color – a turquoise blue that has to be seen to be appreciated. Be sure to take a little drive over there, too. Kayakers love this area.

<http://www.themccloudblog.com/portfolio-view/lake-mccloud/>

Fowlers Campground (shows 36 sites at Recreation.gov) – McCloud Falls area. You can reserve a site. This location is between Middle and Lower McCloud Falls. It's very popular in summer, partly due to the nice paved trail down to Lower Falls. Lower Falls is a popular swimming hole and jump-off location.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recarea/?recid=6583>

Cattle Camp: McCloud Falls area: There are 27 sites with tables and fire rings, vault toilets, and piped drinking water. Suitable for tents and larger RV's.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/stnf/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=6582&actid=29>

MODOC NATIONAL FOREST – Forest Activities

Medicine Lake Recreation Area: Medicine Lake Highland's volcanic area exceeds 200 square miles in Modoc and Siskiyou counties and encompasses portions of three National Forests including Modoc, Klamath and Shasta-Trinity. Handout:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c133c9e4b0ea0e6b312a4e/t/56ba957701dbae9f52bf0c30/1455068540404/med-lake.pdf>

Video: This is an older video so the resolution isn't that great. Pay attention to the intro and you'll see smoke from wildfires in the background. This is why I tell you to PAY ATTENTION when you are camping somewhere. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYHEybd8w6A>

USFS Info:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/modoc/recarea/?recid=71280>

Medicine Lake is in the caldera of a collapsed volcano. The roads aren't open to the area until June (snow). The Recreation Area lies adjacent to the Medicine Lake Lava Flow which is accessible by a short hike. The Glass Mtn. and Burnt Lava Flow Geologic Areas are located within a 15-minute drive. Note that this whole area is high elevation at 7900' so activities definitely take more energy if you are used to lower elevations.

There are several campgrounds around the lake. Campsites vary between somewhat rugged with limited parking space to larger areas suitable for recreation vehicles. Facilities include vault toilets, water hydrants and garbage dumpsters. Campsites include a picnic table, fire ring and a barbeque grill. USFS

describes accessibility thus: “Some campsites are accessible to persons in wheelchairs with assistance. Some tables and restrooms will accommodate persons in wheelchairs with assistance.” Now what that could mean for you as a wheeler is anyone’s guess. Since there are some RV suitable sites, their features could be accessible. No spaces are identified as ‘accessible’ at Recreation.Gov, but that’s not unusual.

In general, the trails, walkways and roads in this locale hard hardpacked lava soils, hard packed gravel. The surfaces are manageable with a manual wheelchair, but would be much better with an all-terrain wheelchair or large-wheeled electric device. I did fine with my WalknChair, but being pushed in wheelchair mode was a lot more work. So, keep that in mind when trip planning.

A more informational description of the facilities can be found here:

<http://traveltips.usatoday.com/campgrounds-medicine-lake-california-58106.html>

Why not plan a day trip from McCloud (about 48 miles away) and picnic at Medicine Lake? That way you could check out the camping possibilities and see the nearby interesting geological features. If you get lucky you’ll see glass mountain really glisten in the afternoon sun!

Please Note: Collecting obsidian anywhere in the Medicine Lake Highlands is prohibited by law. The Modoc National Forest has 4 obsidian mines on the east side of the forest where it is legal to collect obsidian with a free collection permit.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Lava Beds National Monument

For accessibility information: <https://www.nps.gov/labe/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm>

Lava beds is best known for lava caves and for the Captain Jack Stronghold from the Modoc wars. Alas, not a whole lot of this Monument is wheelchair accessible, but it is an interesting drive through lava country and you will be able to stop at overlooks and viewpoints. There are wheelchair accessible picnic areas and handicap accessible restrooms. Rangers will be able to identify specific areas of interest that you may be able to access. Remember, a lot of people drive through this Monument and just get out of their cars at the viewpoints. And the scenery is quite spectacular.

When we were there a number of years ago, we did hike to Captain Jack’s Stronghold and I am glad we did. But when we were there most of the caves were closed to protect the bat population so we looked at the various cave entrances. It’s a memorable area, and worth a trip to see.

Geology is most interesting: <https://www.nps.gov/labe/planyourvisit/upload/GEOLOGY.pdf>

Fishing, Kayaking, White Water Rafting

Not being a fisherman, it’s somewhat difficult to say where a good ‘accessible’ fishing area will be in Siskiyou County. However, it’s been stated on fishing web sites that both Kangaroo lake and Juanita Lake are good fishing locations.

This pdf file shows some accessibility along various rivers on the Klamath National Forest, though I'd cross check with the USFS for current status as this appears to be an older list.

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5110485.pdf

For whitewater experiences, the Klamath and Salmon Rivers are both known for good runs. For persons needing accessible put-in and take-out locations, I suggest talking to the USFS Recreation Officers, and with whitewater rafting groups while trip planning. While I do not personally kayak or raft, I love taking photos of people who do. Finding the best spots to watch whitewater runs can be an exciting adventure on its own.

Wildlife Refuges

Skip state Wildlife Areas. I don't like saying it, but State Wildlife Areas in northern California are not particularly 'visitor' friendly unless you are actually hunting or fishing. If you are a non-hunter, the new permit system to get into an area will make the whole experience of trying to visit such an area both daunting and discouraging. Plus, the state refuges have little to no wheelchair accessibility and do not plan to improve that situation anytime soon. If you want to photograph scenery or wildlife, go somewhere else, as the Wildlife Refuge Officers view everyone with a camera as someone needing a commercial photography permit. My impression from talking to staff is, 'don't go here if you are disabled or want to take photos'. Clearly there is a misunderstanding of the rights of handicap persons and how the ADA affects this state agency. So while the bigshots sort it out, simply go a little farther to the Federal Wildlife Refuges, which are glad to have visitors.

Federal wildlife refuges are much, much friendlier towards the full range of visitors and uses such as viewing wildlife, birding watching, hiking and hobby photography as well as annual hunting and fishing activities. Plus, the federal refuges have established at least some wheelchair accommodation at their facilities and encourage hobby photographers. Should you be doing a professional photo shoot (crew, models, props, sets), then you'd need a federal permit, but no permit is needed if you are an amateur photographer or taking stills with a tripod.

Federal Refuges often involve large wetland areas, lakes and marshes. This may be an 'auto tour' more than a hiking opportunity, and some areas may be restricted during hunting seasons. They are greater opportunities for using blinds for photography, though.

Lower Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge(federal): Northeastern Siskiyou County

The Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge located in rural northeastern California and Southern Oregon, is the Nation's first waterfowl refuge. The Lower Klamath Refuge is managed out of Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge's visitor center as a part of Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex which is comprised of 6 different refuges located in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

The Klamath Basin is renowned for bird photography. There is an auto route inside the Refuge as well as bird blind locations. Bird Blinds Brochure: <https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/PhotoBlind2010.pdf>

General Refuge Information: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/lower_klamath/

Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge (federal):

The refuge is a significant staging area for migrating waterfowl during spring and fall migrations. It is used primarily by White Fronted, Snow, Ross, and Cackling Canada geese, all of which nest in the Arctic tundra. The Refuge trails (which are not necessarily wheelchair accessible) are open every day from sunrise to sunset. Many visitors, especially birders, have found that it is best to plan a visit to the Refuge according to the seasons. Many of the bird species will be most visible and active within two hours after first light in the morning and in late afternoon near sunset. Mailing address: 4009 Hill Rd, Tulelake, California 96134 Phone (530) 667-2231, E-mail: r8kbwebmaster@fws.gov

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tule_lake/

On a special note for the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, they do not currently have a truly wheelchair accessible restroom. According to staff they have repeatedly requested funding to make the Refuge Office's restrooms ADA compatible, but have been denied the necessary funds. If you need a fully wheelchair accessible restroom, you'll need to venture down to the Lava Beds National Monument just south of the Tule Lake Refuge as their picnic areas at Captain Jack's Stronghold and Canby Cross both are fully handicap accessible.