



A dynamic landscape

Mount St. Helens

for science education and discovery

Mount St. Helens is a National Volcanic Monument on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Pulse of information and outreach

Every 5 years, students, researchers, writers, and artists from around the world come to Mount St. Helens to conduct a coordinated “pulse” of work to unravel the complexities of massive natural disturbances. 2015 is the next pulse. Hundreds of long-term plots distributed across the volcanic landscape are sampled for mammals, birds, amphibians, fishes, insects, plants, lichens, fungi and soil. Collectively these 5-year measurements chronicle the reassembly of life at the volcano and give land managers information about landscape restoration.

The power of partnership

We are seeking to engage new partners in the knowledge generation and outreach that occurs at the Mount St. Helens’ pulse.

The outcomes of this pulse:

- A benchmark of post-eruption recovery that will lead to new discoveries of plant and animal community development
- Science education curricula that will connect youth with fascinating processes of change
- New creative contributions to art and culture that will raise awareness and appreciation of a unique natural landscape



Informing stewardship

Increasing public understanding

Creating career pathways for the next generation

Engaging local communities in the outdoors

Why Mount St. Helens?

Iconic landscape. On May 18, 1980 Mount St. Helens burst onto the global stage with a highly energized eruption that captured the world's attention. Mount St. Helens is a symbolic part of our regional landscape lore, instantly recognizable and immediately appealing to children as well as adults with its dramatic history, its fascinating story of regeneration, and its opportunities to contribute some of the world's most groundbreaking research on disturbance ecology.

Unique learning opportunity. Mount St. Helens is one of our national gems of landscape change and restoration research. Since the eruption 35 years ago, ecologists have tracked the establishment of plants and animals in many different environments, including forests, meadows, streams and lakes. Scientists have also studied the physical processes of landscape renewal that started from the clean slate created by the eruption's massive upheaval. Information about this large-scale disturbance event and its aftermath has sharpened our understanding of how natural systems recover, and how forests live, grow, and die. The research community here has become the greatest single contributor to the global literature of volcano ecology, and has made discoveries, such as the importance of biological legacies, that have changed the way we manage disturbances.

Building bridges to the community. Mount St Helens is a powerful inspiration beyond the sciences as well. That's why the pulse meshes science, education, and cultural experiences. We are including a program of arts and humanities that brings in storytellers, writers, and other artists to engage with this wild landscape. The science-inspired stories that emerge will provide a vital narrative of appreciation for the natural world and our place in it. By including creative pathways for engagement, we will build a broader community interested in the outdoors, and promote learning about the importance of studying and understanding this beautiful landscape in our backyard.



For more information

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