Know Before You Go

Restrooms are available and all of the facilities are disabled accessible. There is no fee to visit and the site is open year-round from sunrise to sunset. Hunting is prohibited.

Watchable Wildlife

The Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area is the year-round residence for a herd of about 100 Roosevelt elk. A mild winter climate and abundant food allow the Roosevelt elk to remain at the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area all year.

Roosevelt elk are Oregon's largest land mammals, weighing up to 1,100 pounds and standing as tall as five feet at the shoulder. Antlers of the Roosevelt elk, which are status symbols during the fall rut, can reach spreads of nearly three feet.

The Roosevelt elk are not the only animals that call this area home – the wetlands and the creek hum with life. Beaver, muskrat, mallards, and Canada geese all spend some time here. Visitors may spot a coyote, a great blue heron, or a red-legged frog. Migrating ducks use the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area as a rest stop on their long journeys between winter and summer homes, and resident waterfowl raise their young here during the summer.

Sightseeing

Come to the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area to enjoy wildlife viewing and photography. The Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area stretches along a 3-mile section of Oregon Highway 38, with two designated viewing areas and several observation pull-outs. There is an outdoor interpretive center where you can learn more about the Roosevelt elk, other wildlife, and the area. Spotting scopes near the interpretive center allow for close viewing opportunities. The Roosevelt elk are most active during the morning and late afternoon hours, making these the most likely times for viewings.

History and Management

Before Dean Creek became an elk viewing area, and before Highway 38 was built, marshes and wetlands made up the landscape along the Umpqua River. From the late 1800s to the 1960s, various dikes and roads made it possible for families to farm and graze dairy cows in the pastures of Dean Creek.

The Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, took over management of the site in 1991. Ongoing projects, such as haying and field burns, enhance Dean Creek's pastures and keep forage quality high.

Directions to the Site

From Reedsport, Oregon, and U.S. Highway 101, travel about three miles east on Highway 38 until you see the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area signs. From Interstate 5, Highways 38 and 138, head west to Reedsport and the Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area. Travel time from Roseburg or Eugene, Oregon, is approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

District Contact Information

Coos Bay District

Bureau of Land Management
1300 Airport Lane
North Bend, OR 97459

(541) 756-0100

www.or.blm.gov/coosbay

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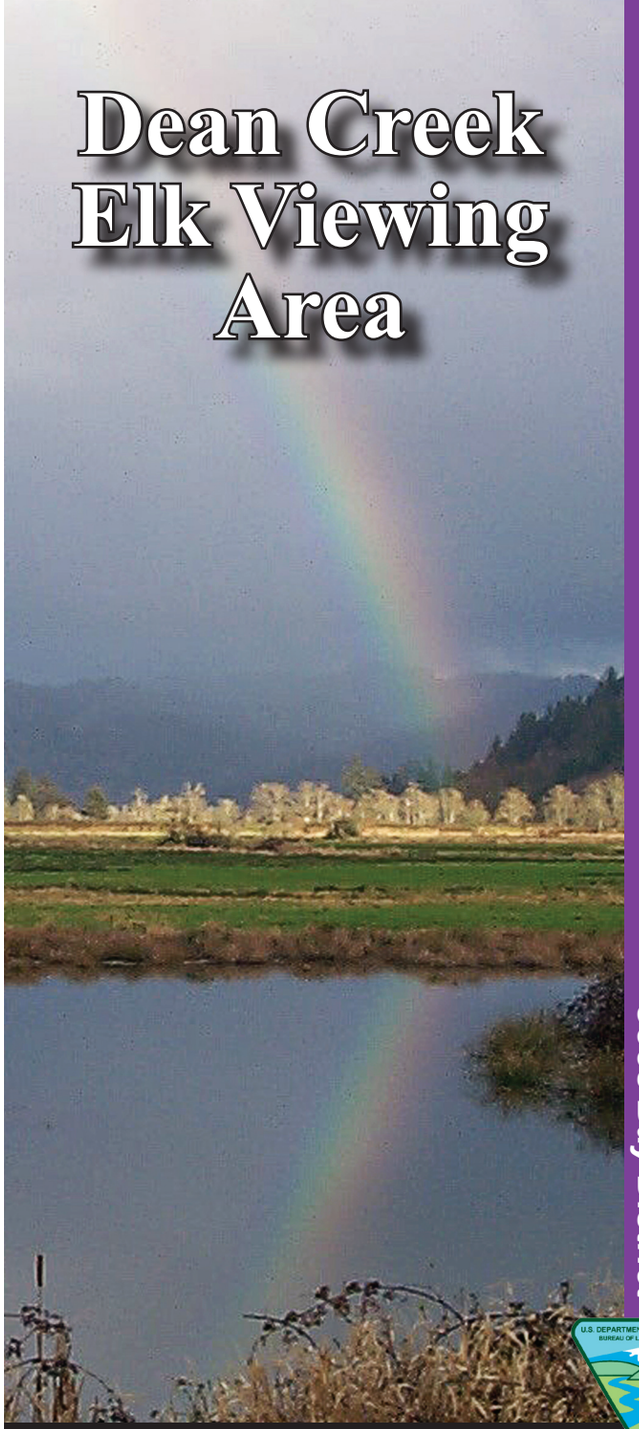
Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area



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Coos Bay District

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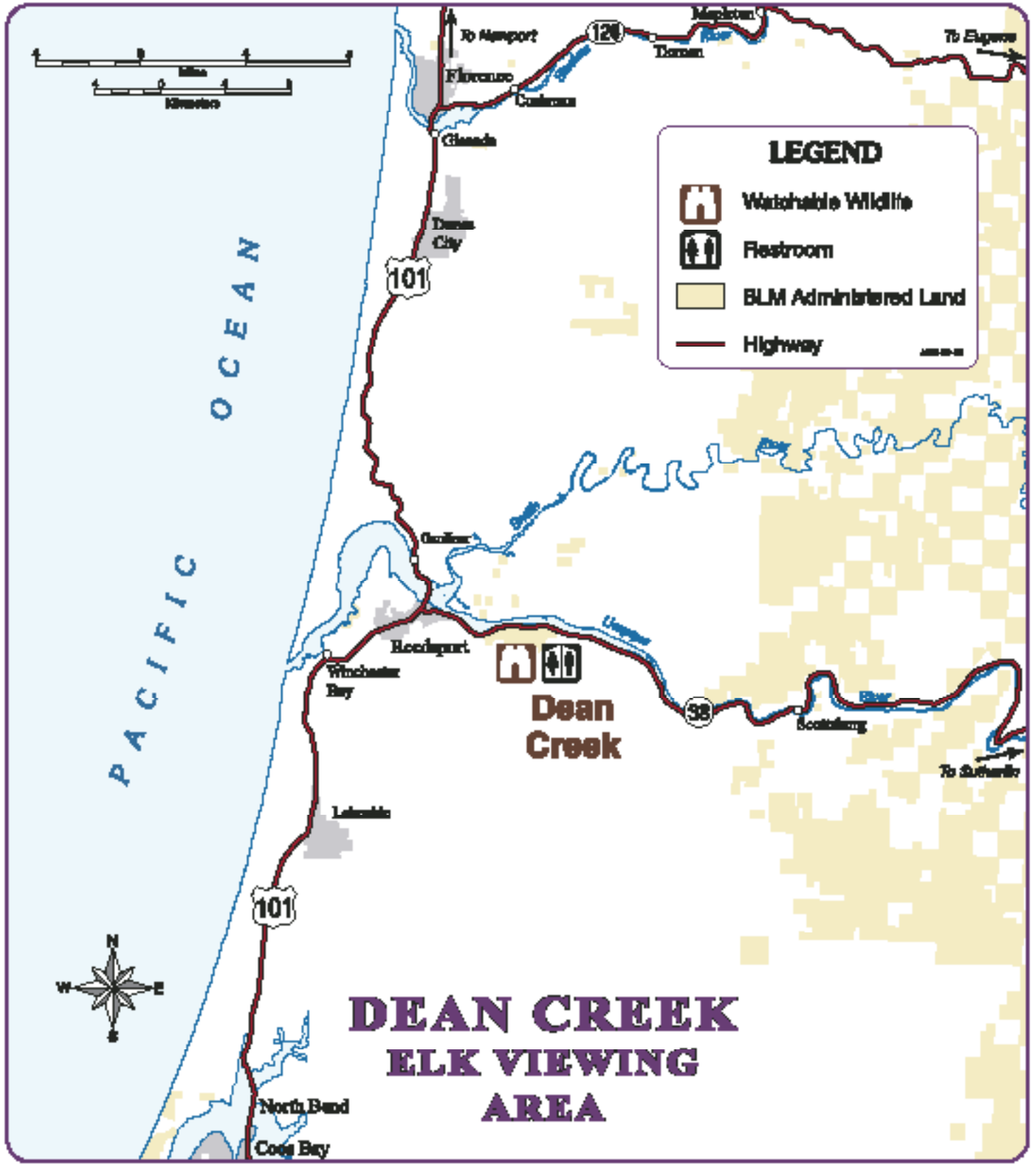
Welcome to Dean Creek Elk Viewing Area

This mosaic of mountains, meadows, and marshes is home to many animals. Enjoy watching the Roosevelt elk and other animals found here.