

Oregon's Botanical Landscape

Native Plants Painted in Their Home Environments in Eight Ecoregions of Oregon

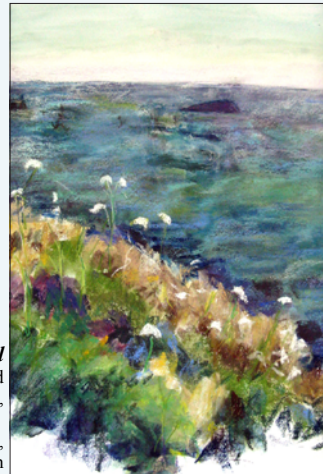
An Opportunity to Imagine Oregon Before 1800

An Exhibition of Artwork by M. Frances Stilwell
 May 6th - June 4th, 2011
 Tuesday - Saturday, 10AM - 4:30PM
 Benton County Historical Society and Museum - Moreland Gallery
 1101 Main Street, Philomath, Oregon 97370
www.bentoncountymuseum.org
 Phone 541-929-6230

Opening Reception: Friday, May 6th, 5:00 PM - 7:00PM

Coast Range

The low mountains of the Coast Range are covered by rain-drenched evergreen forests. Sitka spruce originally dominated the fog-shrouded coast, while a mosaic of western redcedar, western hemlock, and Douglas-fir blanketed inland areas. Hemlock is often the climax species unless fire opens the canopy for shade-intolerant Douglas-fir. Coast redwood is found in the far south. Volcanic and sedimentary rocks occur.



Sentinel
 Pastel and watercolor, 18x12 inches, near Bandon, Oregon



Tiger Lilies and Doug-Fir Giants
 Pastel, 13x12 inches, near Coast Range/Willamette Valley ecoregion boundary

Willamette Valley

The Willamette Valley contains terraces and floodplains of the Willamette River, as well as some scattered hills, buttes, and adjacent foothills. Originally, it was covered by prairies, oak savanna, coniferous forests, extensive wetlands, and deciduous riparian forests. Elevations and relief are lower, annual rainfall is less, and the vegetation mosaic is different from the coniferous forests of surrounding ecoregions.

The Willamette River historically meandered across the broad floodplain, and had numerous braided shallow channels. Riparian gallery forests contained ash, black cottonwood, alder, and bigleaf maple. Set fires helped maintain the prairies and Oregon white oak savanna.



Wetland Under an August Sky
 Oil, 14x25 inches, Near Corvallis, Oregon

Cascades

The Cascades are volcanic, with some areas glaciated. Oregon Cascade peaks reach elevations up to 11,239 feet. The western Cascades are dissected by many steep-sided stream valleys. They have a moist, temperate climate and extensive coniferous forests. Subalpine meadows and rocky alpine zones occur at high elevations.



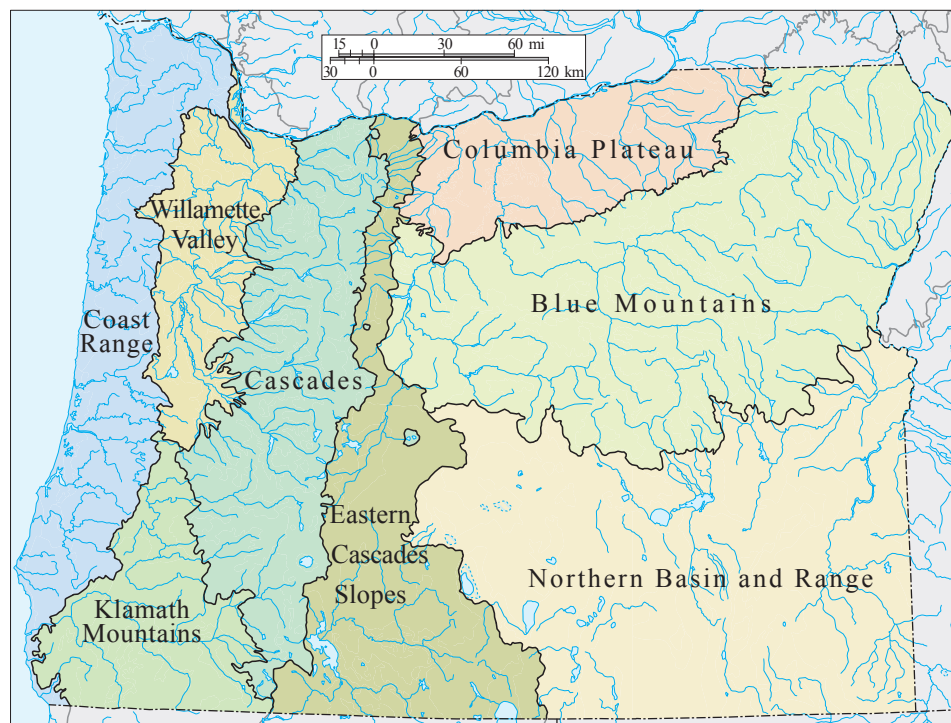
Mt. Washington: South-Side Path on McKenzie Pass, Oregon
 Pastel and watercolor, 8x11 inches

Columbia Plateau

This dry, sagebrush steppe and grassland is flanked by mostly forested, mountainous ecoregions. It is underlain by volcanic basalt rocks up to two miles thick. Some areas are covered by thick loess soils that once supported lush prairies.



High Grasslands, Pastel, 8x11 inches, Pendleton, Oregon



Ecoregions are areas of similar ecosystems and contain similar types and quality of environmental resources. They are mapped by analyzing biotic and abiotic features, including geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife distributions, and hydrology.

Oregon is ecologically diverse. The west side of the state has a marine-influenced climate and receives abundant precipitation three seasons of the year. In contrast, eastern Oregon lies in the rain shadow of the Cascades and is drier. The climatic gradient is evident in the state's landscapes: beaches, wetlands, forested mountains, agricultural valleys, glaciated peaks, shrub- and grass-covered plains, and desert playas. Presented here are eight ecoregions of Oregon, and each of these continue into similar parts of adjacent states.

The ecoregion map is derived from a more detailed product developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Oregon Natural Heritage Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Department of the Interior-Geological Survey.

All paintings by M. Frances Stilwell.

Klamath Mountains

The highly dissected ridges, foothills, and valleys of the Klamath and Siskiyou mountains were unglaciated during the Pleistocene epoch, when the region served as a refuge for northern plant species. Its mix of granitic, sedimentary, and extrusive rocks contrasts with the mostly volcanic rocks of the Cascades. The mild, subhumid climate of the Klamath Mountains has a lengthy summer drought. It supports a mosaic of both northern Californian and Pacific Northwestern conifers and hardwoods.



Oregon Grape by the Illinois River, Pastel, 11x15 inches, Cave Junction, Oregon

Eastern Cascades Slopes

In the rainshadow of the Cascade Range, this region has greater temperature extremes and less precipitation than ecoregions to the west. Open forests of ponderosa pine and some lodgepole pine differ from the higher ecoregions to the west where hemlock and fir forests are common, and the lower, drier ecoregions to the east where shrubs and grasslands occur. The vegetation is adapted to the drier, more continental climate and frequent fire.



Antelope-Brush in a Ponderosa Pine Forest
 Pastel, 16x11 inches, Sprague River, Oregon

Blue Mountains

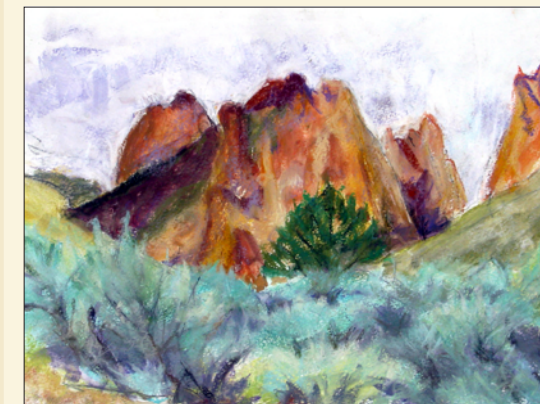
This region is a complex of mountain ranges that are lower and more open than the neighboring Cascades and Northern Rockies. Like the Cascades, but unlike the Northern Rockies, the Blue Mountains are mostly volcanic. However, the core of the Blue Mountains and the highest ranges, the Willowa and Elkhorn Mountains, are composed of intrusive granites, deep sea sedimentary rocks, and metamorphic rocks. The flora is transitional between the Eastern Cascades Slopes and the western Rocky Mountains of Idaho and Montana. Sagebrush and grassland steppes occurred at lower elevations, western juniper and ponderosa pine characterize mid-elevations, and mixed coniferous forests are at higher elevations. Alpine meadows, snowfields, tarns, and glacial rock basins characterize the high Willowa Mountains.



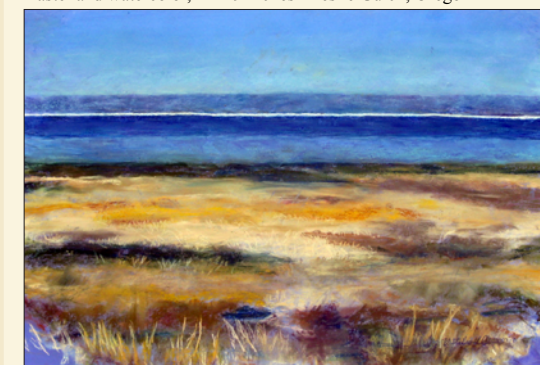
Blue Mountain Lupines
 Pastel, 12x9 inches, Summerville, Oregon

Northern Basin and Range

The Northern Basin and Range contains dissected lava plains, rolling hills, alluvial fans, valleys, and scattered mountains. The natural vegetation is sagebrush steppe, with cool season grasses, such as Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass. Juniper-dominated woodland occurs on rugged, stony uplands. Most of the region is used as rangeland. Minor cropland is found locally, but, in general, soils are less suitable for agriculture than those in the Columbia Plateau. In Oregon, the western two-thirds of the region is internally drained.



Home of the Owyhee Clover
 Pastel and watercolor, 14x19 inches, Leslie Gulch, Oregon



The Alkali Shore, Pastel, 12x18 inches, Summer Lake, Oregon