

= Roxy Ann Peak =

Roxy Ann Peak is a 3 @, @ 576 @-@ foot @-@ tall (1 @, @ 090 m) mountain in the Western Cascade Range at the eastern edge of Medford , Oregon . Composed of several geologic layers , the majority of the peak is of volcanic origin and dates to the early Oligocene . It is primarily covered by oak savanna and open grassland on its lower slopes , and mixed coniferous forest on its upper slopes and summit . Despite the peak 's relatively small topographic prominence of 753 feet (230 m) , it rises 2 @, @ 200 feet (670 m) above Medford and is visible from most of the Rogue Valley . The mountain is Medford 's most important viewshed , open space reserve , and recreational resource .

The peak was originally settled 8 @, @ 000 to 10 @, @ 000 years ago by ancestors of the Latgawa Native American tribe . In the early 1850s , a sudden influx of non @-@ indigenous settlers resulted in the Rogue River Wars . After the wars , the Latgawa were forced away from the region onto reservations . The peak was named in the late 1850s after one of its first landowners , Roxy Ann Bowen .

In 1883 , the city of Medford was established to the west of the mountain , and became incorporated two years later . After acquiring a large amount of land from the Lions Club and the federal government between 1930 and 1933 , the city created the 1 @, @ 740 @-@ acre (704 ha) Prescott Park in 1937 . The park protects much of the upper slopes and summit of the peak and remains largely undeveloped . The peak 's southern foothills have some quickly expanding single @-@ family residential subdivisions .

= = Geology = =

Roxy Ann Peak is part of the old and deeply eroded Western Cascades , along with nearby Pilot Rock , Grizzly Peak , and Baldy . It is composed of several distinct geologic layers . The oldest layer , the 35- to 50 @-@ million @-@ year @-@ old Payne Cliffs Formation , forms the base of the peak and consists of sedimentary sandstone , shale , and conglomerates . Most of the rest of the mountain is made up of 30- to 35 @-@ million @-@ year @-@ old volcanic basalt , breccias , and agglomerates , known as the Roxy Formation . These rocks are some of the oldest in the Cascades . At the summit , younger basalt dikes and intrusions K ? Ar dated to 30 @. @ 82 ± 2 million years ago form a relatively erosion @-@ resistant cap , likely contributing to the peak 's isolation and familiar conical shape . Much of the lower slopes of Roxy Ann are covered by a 4 @-@ to @-@ 5 @-@ foot @-@ thick (1 @. @ 2 to 1 @. @ 5 m) layer of dense , sticky clay . Due to the clay 's low shear strength , the soil is prone to creep , earthflows , and landslides . Several large subdivisions lie on top of these deposits , some of which are up to 20 feet (6 @. @ 1 m) thick .

The peak stands 3 @, @ 576 feet (1 @, @ 090 m) above sea level with a topographic prominence of 753 feet (230 m) , and rises 2 @, @ 200 feet (670 m) above the surrounding Rogue Valley . The unique rounded top , location , and height of the peak create a landmark distinguishable from as far away as Shady Cove , 15 @. @ 5 miles (24 @. @ 9 km) to the north , and the Siskiyou Summit , 23 @. @ 5 miles (37 @. @ 8 km) to the south .

= = History = =

= = = Early history = = =

Humans have lived in the vicinity of Roxy Ann Peak for the past 8 @, @ 000 to 10 @, @ 000 years . The first inhabitants were semi @-@ nomadic , most likely living off edible bulbs and large mammals such as mastodons and giant bison . Within the last millennium , the region became home to the Latgawa Native American tribe , who called the peak Al @-@ wiya . They probably used the mountain for gathering acorns and hunting black @-@ tailed deer and small birds , animals which are still abundant there .

The first European Americans to visit the area were a group of fur trappers led by Peter Skene Ogden who traveled north through the Rogue Valley on February 14 , 1827 . The first non @-@ indigenous settlers arrived a few decades later . The sudden increase in population created conflicts with the Latgawa , which ultimately led to the Rogue River Wars of 1855 and 1856 . After the wars , the remaining Latgawa were forced hundreds of miles north to the Siletz Reservation on the central Oregon Coast .

Early settlers named the peak Skinner Butte , after Alonzo A. Skinner , the Rogue Valley Indian agent between 1851 and 1853 . The current name of the mountain originates from one of its first residents , Roxy Ann Bowen . Two couples ? Roxy Ann and her husband John McKee and Stephen and Mary Taylor ? claimed almost the entire peak in 1853 , and by the late 1850s , it came to be known as Roxy Ann Peak .

In November 1883 , the Oregon and California Railroad was built through the center of the Rogue Valley , bypassing Jacksonville , the county seat . The railroad company also constructed a train depot halfway between Central Point and Phoenix , and platted 82 city blocks around it . The townsite was named Medford in December . In 1884 , residents celebrated the town 's first Independence Day by firing 38 cannon blasts ? one for each U.S. state ? from Roxy Ann Peak 's summit . Medford grew quickly , and was incorporated on February 24 , 1885 .

Beginning in the early 1900s , the mountain 's foothills were predominantly used for pear orchards and lignite mining . Mining ceased at the onset of World War I , and many of the orchards were abandoned during the Great Depression , but some still remain .

= = = Prescott Park = = =

In 1929 , the Lions Club purchased two sizable portions of land on the peak , and deeded 200 acres (80 @.@ 9 ha) to Medford for recreational use the following year . In 1931 , the city acquired another 1 @.@ 500 acres (607 @.@ 0 ha) via the Recreation and Public Purposes Act , and 40 acres (16 ha) more in 1933 . The park was dedicated in 1937 to George J. Prescott , a Lions Club leader and Medford police officer who was killed on duty on March 16 , 1933 .

Starting in 1933 , the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) made the first improvements to Prescott Park , including constructing 18 miles (29 km) of trails and a 16 @-@ foot @-@ wide (4 @.@ 9 m) access road (Roxy Ann Road) , creating several picnic areas and overlooks , and digging drainage ditches . The CCC stopped work in 1942 , soon after the beginning of World War II . Park maintenance ceased due to municipal budget problems , and gasoline rationing caused the number of visitors to drop markedly . By 1956 , the CCC 's improvements had suffered \$ 110 @,@ 000 in damage . The trend of disrepair continued for several decades .

During the late 1990s , the park experienced a surge in vandalism , littering , and wildfires caused by off @-@ roading , and Roxy Ann Road became nearly impassable because of lack of maintenance . Medford police officers had to devote much of their time to patrolling the mountain , made difficult by the park 's remote location . To alleviate these problems , the city regraded Roxy Ann Road in 1998 , and installed two gates near the park entrance two years later . By 2006 , vandalism had decreased by 70 percent .

At 1 @,@ 740 acres (704 @.@ 2 ha) , Prescott Park is Medford 's largest park , covering much of the upper slopes and summit of Roxy Ann . It is two and a half times larger than the city 's other parks combined .

= = = 21st century = = =

Prescott Park and Roxy Ann Peak 's upper slopes remain relatively undeveloped , being outside of Medford 's city limits and urban growth boundary . The summit of the peak is home to a 180 @-@ foot @-@ tall (54 @.@ 9 m) radio tower built in 2007 ; the new tower replaced three of four existing 80 @-@ foot (24 m) towers . Roxy Ann Peak and nearby Baldy are the only two primary transmitter station sites in the Rogue Valley .

Residential development of the mountain 's southern foothills has been on the rise for several years

, primarily in the form of single @-@ family residences . Construction costs have continued to rise as well , in part because of a bill passed in 2003 . Oregon House Bill 3375 required that new construction on slopes of 20 percent or greater with unstable soil undergo increased regulation and an extended approval process . The bill doubled the cost of new foundations to around \$ 20 @,@ 000 to \$ 30 @,@ 000 , and the cost of retrofitting an existing structure approached \$ 100 @,@ 000 .

Roxy Ann Peak 's southern foothills are also home to the RoxyAnn Winery , a Rogue Valley AVA winery founded in 2002 . On the opposite side of the mountain is the first bioreactor landfill in Southern Oregon , the Dry Creek Landfill , which began a program in 2006 to generate power from collected methane .

On September 21 , 2009 , a wildfire broke out on Roxy Ann Peak 's western slopes and consumed approximately 633 acres (256 ha) . It left 25 @,@ 000 residents without electricity , forced the evacuation of over 100 homes , and cost over \$ 1 @.@ 3 million to fight , but no structures were damaged .

= = Flora and fauna = =

Roxy Ann Peak 's high biodiversity is due to its wide range of elevations and its location between the Cascade , Klamath , and Eastern Cascade ecoregions . The lower slopes of the peak support chaparral , oak savanna , and open grassland . Scattered California black oak , Oregon white oak , and Pacific madrone trees grow in these areas , as do sclerophyllous shrubs such as birchleaf mountain mahogany , sticky whiteleaf manzanita , buckbrush , antelope bitterbrush , and Pacific poison oak . Common grasses include blue wildrye and prairie Junegrass . Wildflowers including Southern Oregon buttercup , common yarrow , and Tolmie star @-@ tulip also grow in these regions . At higher elevations , the vegetation transitions to mixed coniferous forest , dominated by Douglas fir , ponderosa pine , incense cedar , western juniper , and Pacific madrone trees . Shrubs such as common snowberry , bearbrush , greenleaf manzanita , sticky whiteleaf manzanita , deerbrush , and Pacific poison oak make up the understory of the forest , along with herbaceous plants such as creeping snowberry and Idaho fescue .

The peak is home to many species of birds , including blue @-@ gray gnatcatchers , lazuli buntings , oak titmice , acorn woodpeckers , and California quail on the lower slopes , and mountain quail , mountain chickadees , and red @-@ breasted nuthatches on the upper slopes . Wild turkeys and raptors such as Cooper 's hawks , golden eagles , bald eagles , and prairie falcons are also common . A few species migrate to the peak in the winter , including ruby @-@ crowned kinglets , yellow @-@ rumped warblers , and golden @-@ crowned sparrows . Mammals that inhabit the mountain include black @-@ tailed deer , cougars , bobcats , skunks , raccoons , coyotes , bears , weasels , and squirrels . A large herd of Roosevelt elk frequent the peak 's western foothills . The herd swelled to over 100 individuals in the mid @-@ 2000s , causing traffic problems and severe damage to local pear orchards , but shrank to about 40 members by 2009 after an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife relocation effort . Other common animals on the peak include western rattlesnakes and western blacklegged ticks .

= = Recreation = =

Roxy Ann Peak and Prescott Park serve as Medford 's most important viewshed , open space reserve , and recreational resource . Popular recreational activities on the peak include picnicking and hiking , mountain biking , and horseback riding on the 4 miles (6 km) of designated trails in Prescott Park , which range in difficulty from moderate to steep . In August 2013 , the city of Medford and the International Mountain Bicycling Association released a conceptual plan detailing future improvements to the park 's trail system . The plan would add 30 miles (48 km) of new multi @-@ use trails throughout the park , improve existing trails and trail signage , and add a new trailhead on the mountain 's western slope , at an estimated cost of between \$ 360 @,@ 000 and \$ 720 @,@ 000 . If approved , construction on the first phase could begin by 2015 .

A challenge course opened in Prescott Park in April 2012 , operated by the Tigard @-@ based company Synergo . The course has 15 elements ? eight low and seven high ? each formed by various combinations of ropes , wires , platforms , ladders , and swings . They range from 2 to 40 feet (0 @.@ 61 to 12 m) above the ground .

The peak and park can be accessed via Roxy Ann Road on the southern side of the mountain . There are two gates on the road ; the first is near the base of the peak and is opened and closed on a set schedule , and the second is about one mile beyond it at the park boundary , and is closed to all unauthorized motor vehicles . One mile past the second gate , the road splits into a 2 @.@ 7 @-@ mile @-@ long (4 @.@ 3 km) loop around the summit . Tower Road begins on the north side of the loop and ascends to the summit of the peak . The peak offers expansive views of the surrounding landscape , including the Rogue Valley , Mount Ashland , Mount McLoughlin , Pilot Rock , the Crater Lake rim , and even Mount Thielsen , 66 miles (110 km) to the north , and Mount Shasta , 72 miles (120 km) to the south .