

GLASS BUTTE AND LITTLE GLASS BUTTE THAT'S SHARP!

SUMMER 2023

Have you ever wanted to collect obsidians, or volcanic glass? If so, we have a place for you: Glass Butte. The site is located on Federal land managed by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Federal government allows access to the land for collection of obsidian.

As of the date of this writing (Summer 2023), Glass Butte is the only spot in Oregon where the collection and removal of Obsidian is legal. The per person limit is 25 pounds daily and 250 pounds annually. **If you are planning a visit for collecting and removing obsidian, please check the internet to make sure that collection and removal is still legal.**



LOCATION AND TRIP INFORMATION

Glass Butte is located 85 miles southeast from Bend on Highway 20, Milepost 77 in the Oregon High Desert. The access road into the BLM area is a dirt road with cattle guard crossings and high dirt speed bumps. We recommend a 4x4 with a high clearance. The road is



narrow, and occasionally, there is traffic coming towards you. Cattle graze on this property; during our visit, they walked (and sometimes ran) on the road (picture on left). Please be observant and drive slowly

- you might spot obsidian from the side of the road to collect.

We visited during the summer, and it was hot. Because of the high altitude ranging from 5,000 to 6,400 feet, the sun's rays are very intense. Sunscreen, bug repellent, and sturdy hiking shoes are a must for this visit. For obsidian collection, please bring gloves, as the obsidian is very sharp. We wished we had brought a bucket to carry the obsidian.



Road, Pond, and Glass Butte

GEOLOGY AND GEORAPHY

Glass Butte and Little Glass Butte volcanos formed about 5.8 million years ago. The lava flow from several volcano eruptions had a



combination of silicon dioxide and magnesium/iron that solidified without crystallization to form obsidians (volcanic glass). The obsidian on this site come in different colors based on

what material it contains - black, rainbow, black, midnight lace, pumpkin, mahogany, gold sheen, and double flow. Glass Butte is considered to have the largest deposits of obsidian.

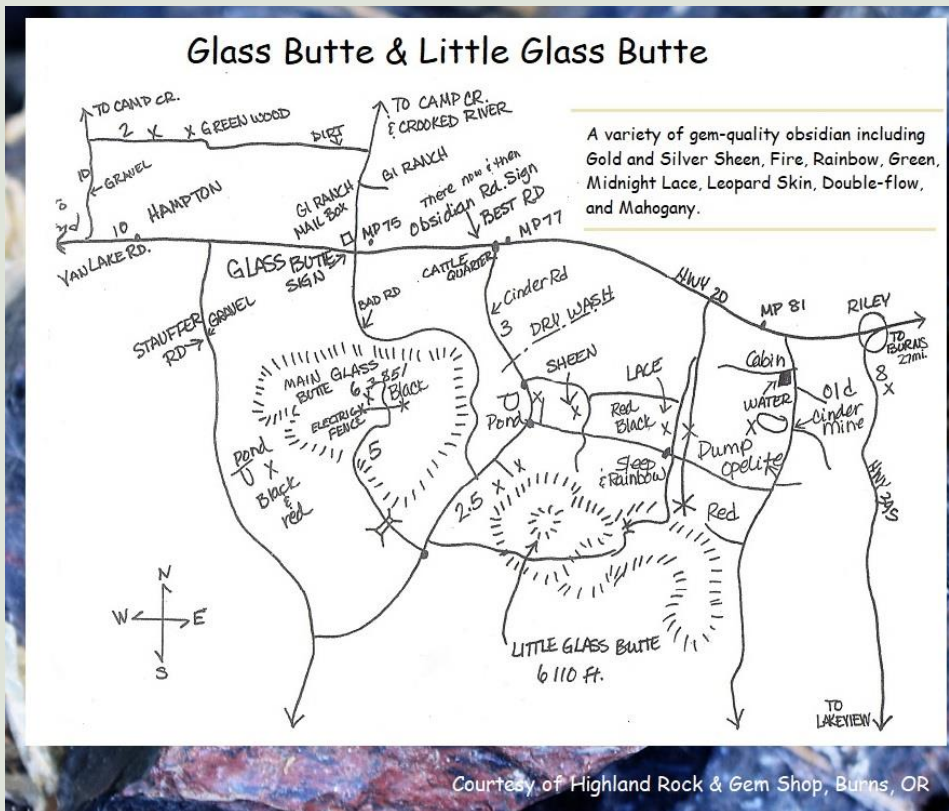
Glass Butte is in the north portion of Christmas Valley, which has various sites worth visiting, such as Fort Rock, Crack in the Ground, and Sand Dunes. Our write up on Central Oregon includes more information about those sites.



Looking south towards Christmas Valley. Fort Rock in the background (middle of picture)

ROCK COLLECTION

There are many resources on the internet that provide good resources on where to find obsidian. BLM also provides excellent map(s) for the site. Either download these maps for offline use or have a paper copy of these maps, as cell phone coverage is weak here. Below is a map from <https://oregondiscovery.com/glass-butte> - Highland Rock & Gem Shop, Burns, OR that we found helpful.



Collecting rocks is very easy once you get to the site. Obsidian can be found on the side of the road and all around the brush. Keep in mind the weight limit of the obsidian. There was a BLM official at the entrance/exit, but we were not stopped for inspection. The picture to the right (after they were cleaned) features a couple of obsidian rocks we collected.



Road with obsidian with Little Glass Butte in background



Top of Glass Butte on left