Falls Creek cascades 15 feet! Of rain fell in the Quinault Valley. The Quinault Valley receives an average of 150 inches of rain annually, nourishing an incredible and complex temperate rain forest ecosystem. Most of the rain occurs from October to May. Rainfall is concentrated in the late fall, winter, and early spring, creating ideal conditions for growing the region’s coniferous trees and other plants.

Lake Quinault is a natural lake in the Quinault Rain Forest, one of only three temperate coniferous rain forests left in the world. Majestic glacier-carved and glacier-fed Lake Quinault is surrounded by the mossy and varied Rain Forest. It is the Quinault Rain Forest, a 2.7 million acre wilderness 

The Quinault Indian Legend

The Quinault Indians traditionally sought the shores of Lake Quinault for salmon fishing, hunting, berry picking, and other activities. The lake is also a vital resource for salmon and other fish. Salmon fishing in the Quinault River is a popular activity, with many species of salmon and steelhead available for fishing. The Quinault River is also home to other fish species, including trout and sturgeon.

Fishing in the Quinault River

The Quinault Indian Reservation is home to the Quinault Indian Nation, which is one of the only remaining indigenous nations in the United States. The Quinault Indian Nation is known for its rich culture and traditions, including its fishing practices. The tribe has a long history of fishing in the Quinault River, with some members of the tribe tracing their ancestry back many generations. Today, the tribe continues to rely on the river for food, culture, and identity.

Rainforest Nature Trail

A 3-mile loop trail takes you around the lake, venturing into the south end of the Olympic Mountains. It is the Quinault Rain Forest, a 2.7 million acre wilderness

The Quinault Valley is known as the “Valley of the Giants.” Here you will find the largest Sitka Spruce tree in the world, along with other nationally recognized giants of the Northwest Coast. You may drive or hike to this awesome world record holder, which is surrounded by a lush, green forest.

World’s Largest Sitka Spruce

The Sitka Spruce is a large evergreen tree that is native to the Pacific Northwest of North America. It is one of the most economically important tree species in the region, providing wood for construction, pulp, and other products. The Sitka Spruce is also a symbol of the Pacific Northwest, representing its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Quinault Rain Forest is a unique and diverse ecosystem, home to a wide variety of plant and animal species. It is an important ecological landmark, providing habitat for many endangered species and contributing to the overall health of the region. The Quinault Rain Forest is a place of beauty and grandeur, offering stunning views of the surrounding landscapes and a chance to connect with nature in a truly special way.
Lake Quinault is surrounded by the mossy grounds for salmon fishing, hunting, berry picking, and recreation.

The Quinault Indians traditionally used Lake Quinault as swimming grounds for salmon fishing, hunting, berry picking, and recreation.

Quinault Indian Legend says a monster lives in the Lake that is so big he can swallow a cedar canoe.

Early pioneer settlers first came to the Quinault Valley in the late 1880s.

The first road was built to Lake Quinault in 1914. Previous access was only by wagon trail, path, or river. The first auto made it to Quinault in 1914.

The Quinault Valley receives an average of 12 feet of rain per year, nourishing an incredible and complex temperate rain forest ecosystem. Most of the rain falls in the winter months. The wettest year on record was 1999 when 182.48 inches (over 15 feet) of rain fell in the Quinault Valley.

Temperate rain forests such as Quinault are true rain forests in more northern or southern latitudes than tropical rain forests. Temperate rain forests only exist on the Northwest Coast of North America, Chile, New Zealand, Southern Australia, and small patches in Norway, Britain, and Japan.

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Lake Quinault and the Quinault Rain Forest

Hiking Trails, Activities and more...

Colonel Bob Trail

Round trip hike to the top is 14.5 miles from the north side. This hike is best completed as a backpack trip. This is most of the trail; however, there are good day hikes without a destination. This is an excellent trail along the steep mountains. Grpunds stand of old growth forests can be found. Listen for the sharp birds that make these forests their home.

Lake Quinault

This map section is enlarged on fold-over flap.

South Shore Trails

These trails truly do have something for everyone. You're not a hiker, or don't have much time, or just want to learn about the temperate rain forest? Take the Quinault Rain Forest Nature Trail. It is a 0.5 mile loop with interpretive signs highlighting interesting information about our Quinault Rain Forest. You want to enjoy a sunny day at the lake? Take the Lakeshore Trail. The Lakeshore Trail meanders for one mile along the South Shore of Lake Quinault. It connects Forks Campground or the Lake Quinault Lodge to Willaby Campground or the Rain Forest Nature Trail. Be sure to look for ospreys, eagles, or trumpeter swans (in the winter). Loops of many lengths can be found — all starting and ending on the South Shore of Lake Quinault. For the hardy hiker, there are enough trails on the South Shore to keep you busy for days. The forest and waterway scenery is awesome! These trails are very well maintained and have directional signs at every junction. For more details on these trails see the fold-over flap.

Maple Glade Rain Forest Trail

This 1.2 mile loop trail leads you through large bigleaf maples hanging with rain forest mosses. Elk are commonly seen here. Mushrooms are abundant in the fall.

Quinault Big Cedar Trail

Travel 2.3 miles on the Quinault Big Cedar Trail to one of the worlds largest Western Red Cedars. This trail is on gravel roads. The forest is well maintained and has directional signs at every junction. For more details on these trails see the fold-over flap.

Kesler H omestead Trail

This 1.3 mile loop trail invites you to take a journey back in time to the early 1900’s in the rain forest wilderness.

Higley Peak Trail

You can drive most of the way up Higley Peak on US Forest Service gravel roads. This hike is for hikers of many ages and abilites. The trail is not maintained and is approximately an additional miles each way, and is well maintained. At the top there are views into the world’s largest Western Red Cedars. This trail is a lot of fun for kids (of all ages!) because it is short and has many stairs and boardwalks.

Colonel Bob -Pete’s Creek Trail

West Day Hikers choose this route to reach the summit of Colonel Bob 4,492 feet. Round trip hike is 2.6 miles one way through lush shrub, moss, and ferns. Traverse the trail for a meandering climb through the forest. The trail is well marked with directional signs.

Fletcher Canyon Trail

Fletcher Canyon is an excursion along one of the rainier valley roads. The trail follows the canyon for 2.6 miles one way through lush shrub, moss, and ferns. Traverse the trail for a meandering climb through the forest. The trail is well marked with directional signs.

Lake Quinault Loop Drive

The Quinault Loop Drive is a 31 mile loop around Lake Quinault, the Quinault River into Olympic National Park, and back around the other side. It is a great way to experience the Quinault Region. There are many opportunities along the way for viewing wildlife and scenery. In the spring, there are wildflowers. This trail gains many views of the surrounding mountains, giant trees, and the Quinault River. Laid two lanes telephone to complete the drive.

Enchanted Valley Trail

This road is not suitable for trailers & RV’s. It is a narrow road through a forested area ending on the South Shore of Lake Quinault. For the hardy hiker, there are enough trails on the South Shore to keep you busy for days. The forest and waterway scenery is awesome! These trails are very well maintained and have directional signs at every junction. For more details on these trails see the fold-over flap.