

Trickling, Misting, Spraying, Cascading ...

Have we got waterfalls!



Triple Falls photo by Peter Marbach

The Columbia River Gorge is famous for its falls – 77 on the Oregon side alone! They come in all shapes and sizes. Waterfall watchers (be careful, you could become one!) classify them into eight forms – plunge, horsetail, fan, cascade, punchbowl, block, tier, and segmented. Starting to sound complicated? It's simpler than it sounds. You can see examples of each of these waterfall shapes on a tour of the Historic Columbia River Highway ... and just beyond.



A **PLUNGE** drops vertically and away from the cliffside, losing contact with bedrock. Multnomah Falls is a classic example and so is Latourell Falls.

A **FAN** descends from a stream above and is similar to a horsetail but it gets broader or "fans out" at the bottom. See fan-shaped falls by hiking the Wahkeena Trail #420 a little over a mile from the trailhead to Fairy Falls.



A **HORSETAIL** looks just like a horsetail. Dropping vertically, it maintains contact with bedrock. Oneonta and (of course) Horsetail Falls are good examples.



A **CASCADE** tumbles along a series of rock steps. You'll find a fine model by following the directions to Dutchman Falls, then hiking .2 of a mile – a total of 1.9 miles from the trailhead – to Upper Multnomah Falls, near the junction with Wahkeena Trail, #420.



A **BLOCK** pours over a wide section of a stream. Dutchman Falls along upper Multnomah Creek is a block shape and can be seen at the 1.7 mile point on Larch Mountain Trail #441. The trail starts at the east side of Multnomah Falls Lodge.



A **TIER** falls, then falls, then falls again. It has several "tiers" – separate falls that can all be viewed all at once. Wahkeena is tiered as well as Bridal Veil.

SEGMENTS separate into several parts. Examples include Triple Falls on Oneonta Trail #424, and upper McCord Creek Falls, on the Elowah Falls Trail out of John B. Yeon State Park.



PUNCHBOWLS pour out of a narrow opening in the stream and into a pool. Punchbowl Falls, a 2.1 mile hike on the Eagle Creek Trail, features a viewpoint and bench – the perfect combination for a rest stop.