

In the Colorado Plateau ecoregion, stately ponderosa pine forests emit the sweet fragrances of vanilla and pine resin. Long needles, clumped by threes, sway on limber branches in the breeze. A soft rustling punctuates the intense quiet. Orange-yellow bark flakes off in puzzle-piece shapes, leaving spongy piles of residue at the feet of the trees. These are perfect places for bushy-tailed squirrels to bury their winter food supply.

This giant ponderosa pine was designated as an Arizona Great Tree by the Arizona Community Tree Council in 2003. Based on tree ring data from other large trees from the same area, this tree is estimated to be between 320 and 360 years old. It stood 104 feet high with a 16.5 foot circumference at last measurement. Many of the trees in this area were logged in the late 19th century and into the 20th century but this one managed to escape the sawmill's blade and stands as a relic of a bygone era. With time, and protection, many of the surrounding trees will reach similar sizes.

The Mt. Trumbull and Mt. Logan wilderness areas are the largest areas of ponderosa pine in the monument. They contain the densest forest and probably the oldest trees, some up to 500 years old. Some of these ancients reach 125 feet, standing tall and proud in the deep soil of the mountain tops. Others, however, must persevere in gnarled and stunted form on lava flows or cinder fields. Associated with the hardy ponderosa pine is Gambel's oak, quaking aspen, New Mexican locust and serviceberry. At lower elevations, you may see a few scattered ponderosa pines mingling with the pinyon and juniper.

The giant trees that once dominated these hillsides had some important destinies. Many were used for cabins and ranch houses in the surrounding region and many were taken across far distances to St. George and other towns for use in infrastructure there. The St. George LDS temple, for example, is known to have some Mt. Trumbull lumber in its walls.

Don't open until you arrive

9. This One's Great

Take a picture!

N 36° 21' 51.3"
W 113° 10' 03.3"

This is no tall tale.

From County Rd. 5, take BLM Rd. 1044 to BLM Rd. 1029. Pull over as far as possible and park along BLM Rd. 1029 away from any blind corners and hills.

Difficulty: ♦♦ - -

#FindItAtParashant