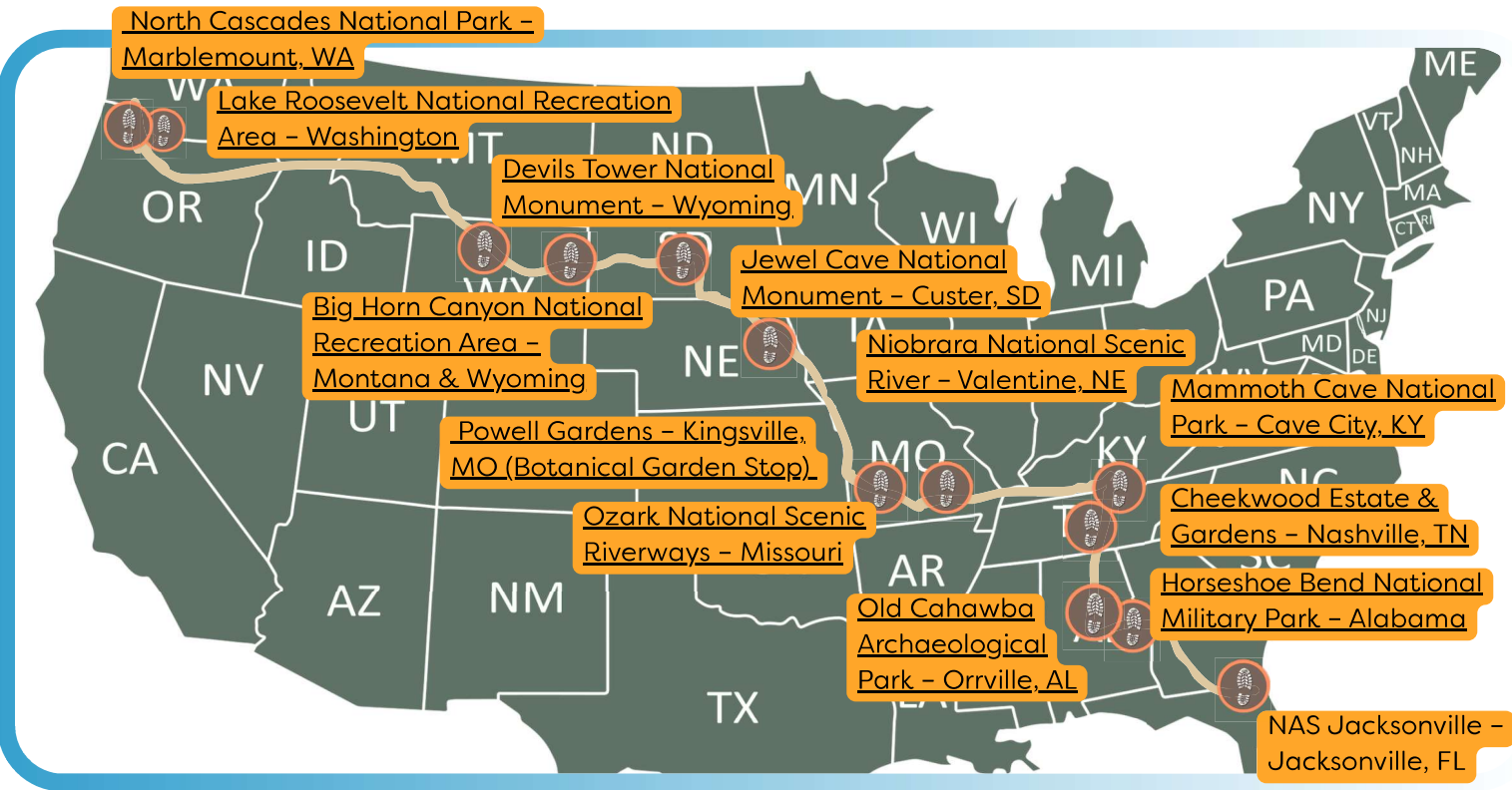




NAS Whidbey Island, WA → NAS Jacksonville, FL

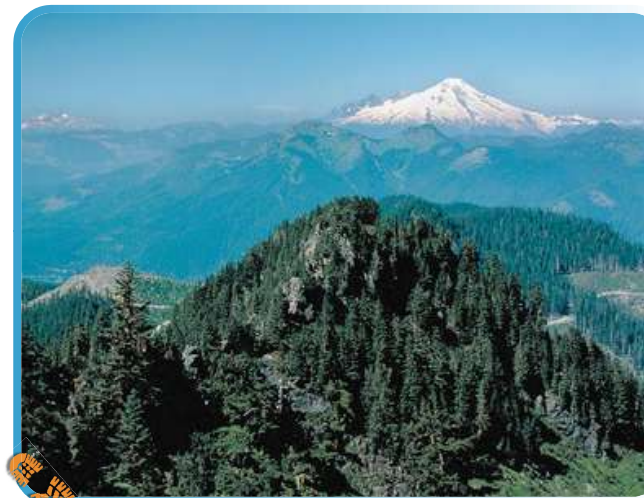
From the misty coasts of the Pacific Northwest to the sunny shores of Florida, this cross-country PCS adventure offers opportunities to reset, reflect, and reconnect. Whether you need a quick nature break or a longer outdoor escape, these stops keep your journey grounded in wellness.



📍 North Cascades National Park - Marblemount, WA

With alpine lakes, glacier views, and peaceful trails, North Cascades is a wonderful final PNW stop before setting off on your journey. Even a quick stroll near the visitor center offers a beautiful bon voyage to Washington state.

💡 Pro Tip: Active duty military, Veteran, and Gold Star families enjoy special benefits, including a free America The Beautiful Pass, which can be obtained at most national parks that collect fees using a military ID.



📍 Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area - Washington

Lake Roosevelt's wide blue waters and quiet shorelines make it an inviting first pause on your PCS. Let kids hunt for skipping stones or splash along the water's edge while you lay out a lakeside picnic under the pines. Trails and overlooks offer peaceful spots to stretch your legs, breathe in the fresh air, and set a slower, more mindful pace for the miles ahead.



Devils Tower National Monument – Wyoming

This towering monolith rises like a storybook castle from the rolling Wyoming prairie, drawing your eyes up to the sky. Take the easy paved trail that circles its massive base and watch for tiny climbers scaling the sheer rock walls. Kids love spotting them inch their way up.



Family Tip: Slow down on the drive in and roll down the windows—prairie dog towns dot the fields, and their cheerful chirps (and sudden dashes) will have the kids giggling before you even park.

Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area – Montana & Wyoming

Just a short detour from I-90, Big Horn Canyon opens up in breathtaking surprise. Sheer cliffs plunge into deep blue water, framed by rugged high desert and wide skies. Even a brief walk to an overlook gives your family a fresh burst of wonder and a break from highway monotony.

Jewel Cave National Monument – Custer, SD

Step into the cool, mysterious depths of one of the longest caves in the world. While the full tours require reservations, there are also above-ground trails with beautiful Black Hills views. Take a short nature walk, or just breathe deeply and enjoy the mountain air.



Family Tip: While you're in the area, check out kid-friendly activities at nearby [Custer State Park](#) and [Mount Rushmore](#) and book your tickets ahead to make the most of your visit.



Niobrara National Scenic River – Valentine, NE

Whether you spend an hour or an afternoon, the Niobrara offers refreshing waterfalls, scenic overlooks, and swimming spots ideal for a summer PCS. Stretch your legs at Smith Falls State Park and let the kids splash while you soak in a few mindful breaths by the water.

Powell Gardens – Kingsville, MO

Just off the highway east of Kansas City, this expansive botanical garden is a beautiful spot to recharge. Kids love the fountains and fairy-like landscapes, while grownups enjoy a serene wander.

Family Tip: This site participates in [Blue Star Museums](#), so military families enjoy free summer admission—don't forget to take advantage!



Ozark National Scenic Riverways – Missouri

Spring-fed rivers wind through limestone bluffs and lush forests at this stunning Missouri gem. Let your family wade into clear streams, explore small caves, or hike gentle trails lined with wildflowers and songbirds. Kids love skipping rocks, spotting fish dart by, or peeking into cool springs bubbling from the ground.



Family Tip: Pack water shoes and a small net. There's endless fun searching for tiny critters in the shallows, and plenty of space to simply unwind together by the water.

Mammoth Cave National Park – Cave City, KY

Discover the wonders of the world's longest cave system or wander quiet surface trails that wind through deep valleys and leafy hills. There's a special kind of calm that comes from exploring beneath the earth and enough space to find a little stillness inside yourself, too.



Cheekwood Estate & Gardens – Nashville, TN

Wander 55 acres of vibrant gardens, wooded sculpture trails, and colorful seasonal displays at this Nashville gem. Kids can explore the playful children's garden, hunt for art tucked among the trees, or just run across wide lawns.



Family Tip: This site also participates in [Blue Star Museums](#), so military families enjoy free summer admission—don't forget to take advantage!

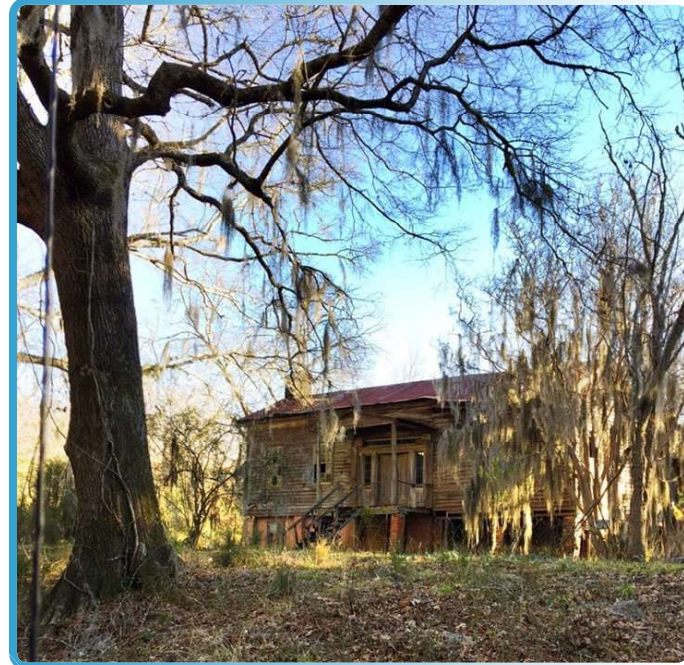


Horseshoe Bend National Military Park – Alabama

Nestled along the curves of the Tallapoosa River, this peaceful park preserves the site of a 1814 battle. Today, gentle trails wind through sun-dappled woods and open meadows where history whispers on the breeze. Kids can run ahead under towering trees or explore riverside overlooks perfect for a quiet family pause.

Old Cahawba Archaeological Park – Orrville, AL

Part open-air museum, part ghost town, with wildlife everywhere, Alabama’s first state capital is now an evocative landscape of moss-draped trees, mysterious brick ruins, and sunken streets being reclaimed by nature. Kids will love the ghost-town feel the old streets offer and adults will enjoy soaking in the quiet beauty of this lost city nestled by the river. It’s a place where history and nature intertwine, inviting your family to slow down and explore together.



NAS Jacksonville – Jacksonville, FL (Arrival)

Finally! Welcome to your new home base. Whether you spend your first weekend on base or exploring local trails and parks like Timucuan Preserve, your outdoor adventure doesn’t have to stop here.

Don’t forget to share your PCS journey with [#MilitaryFamiliesOutdoors](https://www.militaryfamiliesoutdoors.com), and visit [MilitaryFamiliesOutdoors.com](https://www.militaryfamiliesoutdoors.com) for more ideas and wellness stops to make your move a little less stressful—and a lot more memorable.

