

# Trail Advocates

of the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mount Hood National Forest

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## Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area

**Topic:** Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area

**Author:** Tom Kloster

**Topic Started:** 7/16/2006; 6:17:46 PM

**Last Posted:** 7/30/2006; 9:11:41 PM

### Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area

**Tom Kloster** : 7/16/2006; 5:17:46 PM

Reads: 79, Responses: 4 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I spent another day exploring the High Rock area last week, and continue to be amazed at how rugged and beautiful this much-abused mountain is! But as always, I came back with more questions than answers:

1. There's a nice trail from the summit saddle to the west summit - is this a remnant of a longer trail that once predated the road to the summit saddle? Did it extend to High Rock Springs or Black Wolf Meadows?
2. What is the history of Wolf Peak? It's a nice little mountain, but strangely inaccessible. I'm guessing the proximity to High Rock ruled it out as a lookout location in the heyday of lookouts, but did it ever have any other trails that went near the summit?
3. Was there ever a trail along Shellrock Creek, connecting the Oak Grove Fork to Frazier Turnaround or some other point in the vicinity of Frazier Mountain? I was exploring the falls and upper stretches of the "Hideaway Creek" (informal name for the outlet from Hideaway Lake) and ran across a lot of well-used wildlife trails, and wondered if any had been human paths at one time.
4. Has anyone hiked south from the Rimrock Trail to the "5015" southern summit of Mt. Mitchell? This is where the east "Rimrock" face and southern escarpment come together, and there looks to be an open viewpoint. Air photos show an old road curving in from the NW toward Mt. Mitchell, so another question is whether this was ever a lookout site?

Red alder is rapidly encroaching on Road 5830 beyond the Shellrock Lake trailhead - even for my small truck. I won't be surprised if the USFS gates or abandons this road at this point in the near future. While that would put a crimp in gaining access to the Rimrock and Cottonwood Meadows trails, it would also be one less area for the target shooters to leave their trash behind.

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Tom Kloster

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**Re: Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area**

**Donovan** : 7/16/2006; 10:16:23 PM

Reads: 83, Responses: 3 ( [view responses to this item](#))

1. No, I don't think so. The road has been in for over eighty years. The summit had no timber at all on it as it does today. Most of the area was as bald as Signal Buttes in 1937. There was a huge CCC camp at the four way junction. There were also facilities at High Rock Springs. I have not found trail in or out of the springs and have always assumed the road to have been put in essentially the same place. The east west trail that predated the Abbot Road can be followed today from Black Wolf Meadows up towards High Rock but then runs under the road and then is in the old burn and impossible to find. The tread runs on and just above the road towards Hambone Springs.
  2. One map suggested a route to the summit but I think it was a mistake meant to show the trail leading from Dinger Lake up and over the peak east and down towards Phinney Guard Station site.
  3. Yes. But I have never looked for it and I suspect most of it has been logged through. There was and are parts of a trail about where the road to Pyramid Lake runs. It did not go to the lake. The top of the trail is at the hairpin curve in the 240 spur into Frazier Turn.
  4. The sidetrail off the 704 trail leads there. It is an awesome spot. It was a lookout spot. That is to say a man would be sent up there and there was a wire to hook up a phone but no facilities. As for the alder write a letter registering your desire to have roads to trailheads maintained.
- That's all I can offer.

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**Re: Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area****Tom Kloster** : 7/23/2006; 2:08:09 PMReads: 72, Responses: 2 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Wow - that's a lot of great information, Donovan! Have you ever considered writing a history of the MHNH? Your history essays on this site are fascinating. I've re-read Jack Grauer's book on Hood many times, and there's also a nice selection of historical info in Marcia Sinclair's hiking guide, too. But a more thorough look at history would be great!

When you say "four-way junction" do you mean the 4610/58 junction or the 4610/240 junction? The latter seems like a more likely spot for a "huge" CCC camp. I'm guessing that "Phinney" and Linney are the same - and my old standby 1938 topographic of the forest shows a trail curving north along the east side the Linney Creek Drainage, too.

The same map shows a lot of dotted trails that appear to be boot paths (official trails are shown as dashed lines), though many of these follow routes that are trails today. There are some intriguing dotted paths - one from Cottonwood Meadows over the ridge to Shellrock Creek, the route you mentioned along the upper reaches of High Rock Creek and even a route dropping from Signal Buttes, across Cougar Creek and to the Roaring River just upstream from the confluence with Splintercat Creek - all very interesting!

Lots to explore (and tend to) out there. Most of my wanderings are on the opposite side of the Clackamas/Sandy Divide, I've been spending more time in the Clackamas country in recent years. My general observation is that the Clackamas has a LOT more destructive behavior going on (ATVs, target shooting, dumping) than the more populated trails around Mount Hood and the Gorge. I suspect this is, in part, due to the smaller number of recreation visitors in the Clackamas portion of the forest... fewer "eyes on the forest"..? Not sure what to make of it.

-PP

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**Re: Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area**[Edit this Page](#)**Rob Williams** : 7/25/2006; 7:46:08 PMReads: 73, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I have to second the request for writing a history book of the MHNF....I love the little tidbits here and there you have put on the site.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Trails in High Rock/Mt. Mitchell Area****Donovan** : 7/30/2006; 8:11:41 PMReads: 78, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

4610-240. When I can, I will digitize and post the panarama shots from High Rock. People need to see and understand the natural fire history of the area.

Yes, Linney.

Today we followed some of the old 491 trail. Very faint. Old burn. Well blazed. Didn't get far.

The trail from Shellrock to Cottonwood Meadows first shows on the GLO land survey from, I think, 1895. I always assume it was an Indian trail.

I have seen no sign of it.

The Cougar Creek Trail is easy to find and follow for a little ways. First pull out on right west of Signal Buttes. Gets very steep. Bear country.

My knowledge is quite limited and based on what I hear from others. A history would be a great thing to have. I wish one of the archeologists of the Forest had the time to write one. It would take a huge amount of research and access to information. I am not sure the Forest Service yet recognises it's own history as part of the natural history of the area in a positive enough light to want to write about it. In time, I believe that they and the public will appreciate what they have achieved and want to know the story.

I think it is human nature that lousy behaviour seeks obscurity.

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