

Trail Advocates

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

Editors Only: [News](#) [Stories](#) [Pictures](#) [Files](#) [Shortcuts](#) [Discuss](#) [Logoff](#) [Help](#)

Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure

Topic: Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure

Author: Rob Williams

Topic Started: 7/20/2008; 7:32:03 PM

Last Posted: 7/29/2008; 3:27:18 PM

Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure

[Edit this Page](#)

Rob Williams : 7/20/2008; 6:32:03 PM

Reads: 784, Responses: 3 ([view responses to this item](#))

Based on some postings here, and several scouting trips to the North section of the road, I had planned a 25 mile backpacking loop in the Southern half of the fish creek basin. The plan was to go up road 45, to 4550 (just before the Memaloose turnoff), and then follow it to 4540 to the end, and backpack the old roads up to Surprise Lake and up Wash Creek and Fish Creek.

Well, other things were planned for us, as shortly after getting on 4550, there was a HUGE (12+ foot diameter) boulder blocking the entire road. It couldn't have been placed better if someone had tried. We realized we weren't going to move it, so went to plan B, doing an out and back up fish creek from the north side. We camped at the third bridge, about 6 1/2 miles from the "trailhead", and did some day hiking from there. Someone had recently said they didn't think that the ATV's went much beyond the first bridge, but we saw 10 ATVs up there this weekend-6 on Saturday and 4 on Sunday-The ones on Saturday were at the third bridge (about 6+ miles South). I asked one of them where they were going and they said there was a trail that went nowhere further up the road, so it appears as though there is some sort of "destination" that they go to. None of them were camping that we could see.

Anyway, it turned out that we couldn't go from the south end, because I tried to go up the old road 54 that goes up Wash Creek, and there isn't any kind of a trail left. It is VERY overgrown in most spots, and there isn't much of a trail that you can see. A few spots of flagging here and there, but nothing that really helps find a route through all the brush, etc. I only went up to pick creek on Saturday afternoon and was pretty bushed. I can only imagine what the "roads" look like from the South end. The only reason the trail on the other side is easily followed is due to the ATV traffic keeping it open. Someone has kept the saplings

Navigation

[Home](#)
[About](#)
[Trail Index](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Hikes](#)

Discussion

[Chronological](#)
[By Topic](#)

Membership

[Sign Out](#)

trimmed back for the most part so there is still a route.

Someone had once said that there was some really nice Old growth past the second bridge, and there most certainly is. This country, although not wilderness, certainly feels like it.

At any rate, we had a great time, saw a bunch of new sites, some beautiful country, and had great weather. Some day, I'd love to explore the South end of the basin, but that will have to wait for another day.

[Discuss this message.](#)

Re: Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure

Zack Byerly : 7/25/2008; 2:51:45 PM

Reads: 655, Responses: 2 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Rob-

Have you considered entering the south end of the basin via Thunder Mtn. and the Skookum Lake Trail #543 & #542? I have made two to trips to Surprise Lake by taking that route then bushwhacking down to the old road that leads to the lake (I have forgotten the old road # and don't have a map here at work). Most of the roads I've traveled in the upper basin are in pretty good shape, much better than the old road next to pick creek with its numerous downed logs.

[Discuss this message.](#)

Re: Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure[Edit this Page](#)**Rob Williams** : 7/25/2008; 6:52:55 PMReads: 658, Responses: 1 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

We had considered doing some bushwhacking, but MAN most of that forest is THICK! I didn't get too far trying to bushwhack down that old "road", especially in the afternoon when it was getting warm.

It looks like road 4550 goes west down lukens creek and goes over several un-named forest roads before ending up in Molalla. Looks doable, but difficult due to many twists and turns.

I think I see the road you are talking about. Do you bushwhack down the creek just west of Skookum Lake down to that road and then take it around to Surprise Lake? What is surprise lake like? Is it worth the trip?

The biggest problem I had with the old roads was the overgrowth. LOTS of young saplings growing very close together. Couple that with the uneven surface of the ripped up roads and it made for a tough go. I'd still love to get further back in there. It is a very beautiful area!

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Fish Creek Basin Backpacking Adventure****Zack Byerly** : 7/29/2008; 2:27:18 PMReads: 659, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

You are absolutely correct Rob, bushwhacking around upper fish creek is slow going and sometimes painful. Devil's Club is prolific in some of the old clear cuts. That plant makes for a terrible hold when climbing up the hillside.

For two consecutive October's I have taken the route that you described to Surprise Lake. For all the hiking involved it was somewhat disappointing the first time I arrived and found evidence of ATV's camping/playing in the area, I was hoping it would be a bit more pristine. Albeit the lake feels about a 100 miles from anywhere, it's nice to photograph, and the fishing is fair. Also, the old roads are not yet overgrown by the birch saplings, and there are some great views of Mt. Hood and the basin sprawling out below you.

[Discuss this message.](#)

Response text:

Normal Font Size

B *I* U

View HTML Source Use CSS

Post Response

This Page was last updated: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 3:27:18 PM
Copyright 2009 [Trail Advocates](#)

[XML](#)