

Trail Advocates

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

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Serene Lake Trail 512

Topic: Serene Lake Trail 512

Author: Donovan

Topic Started: 1/11/2004; 6:42:06 PM

Last Posted: 6/6/2007; 11:19:51 PM

Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Matt Patrick : 6/5/2007; 10:03:00 PM

Reads: 180, Responses: 12 ([view responses to this item](#))

Trail Report: Cripple Creek Trail #702 to Serene Lake #512 Date Hiked: 06/02/2007 and 06/03/2007

A group of 4 backpacked to Serene Lake via Cripple Creek/Cache meadows. The unmarked trailhead is somewhat difficult to locate, there is a small campsite/parking lot on the west side of where the road crosses Cripple Creek. The creek has a large culvert allowing the creek to flow under the road. If you drive over the creek, you have gone too far. The trail is ~80-90% melted out. Somewhere around 10-15 trees were blown down over the length of the trail. Cripple Creek Lake and Cache meadows were beautiful, and mosquitos were minimal. One nice campsite at Cripple Creek Lake. Patchy snow was first encountered south of Cache Meadows, which made following the trail somewhat difficult (anyone with a map, compass, and a moderate level of experience would be fine). Cache meadows was melted out, but the snow returned around the spring just north of where the trail crosses Cripple Creek. Snow remained patchy climbing the ridgeline north of Cache meadows, south of Serene Lake, but the ridgeline itself was snow free. The ridgeline had a great view of Mt. Hood, Adams, and St. Helens. We followed the trail down to Serene Lake (2 great campsites, first one is on the west side of the lake where the trail meets the lakeshore; it has a fire ring and picnic table. The second site is on the south end of the lake, it has a fire ring, but no table. I preferred the view of the second campsite, so we set up camp at the south campsite. The campsites and trails around the lake are almost completely melted out (few small patches on the trail). Fish were jumping, rats, no pole. Thunder and lightning from 7:30-9:30 pm, but luckily no rain. Beautiful sunset, and perfectly still mirror reflections in the lake that evening and the next morning. Mosquitos around Serene Lake are becoming a problem, bring repellant. Unfortunately, we had commitments in Portland for Sunday evening, so we packed up and hiked out the same way we came in rather

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than completing the loop. A really good, relaxing backpack or day hike. I hope this information is helpful.

Matt

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Tom Kloster : 6/6/2007; 6:22:50 AM

Reads: 184, Responses: 9 ([view responses to this item](#))

Thanks for the report, Matt. I'm always a skeptic about that window between snow and mosquitos - apparently, some have been lucky enough to see the early blooms at Cache Meadow, before the mosquito hatch. Not me. I've always fought off mosquitos in the larger Rock Lakes area, pretty much anytime before late August.

I wonder if that picnic table is the same one that was there 40 years ago, when I first camped at Serene Lake as a kid (my first backpack!). There was definitely one of those big, sturdy CCC-type tables at that site then, and I remember seeing it on subsequent trips through the years - never occurred to me that it might be the same one. I still have my family's copy of Don & Roberta Lowe's "100 Hikes in Oregon", their first guide: the Serene Lake page literally has a smashed mosquito dried onto the page from that first trip up there - I'll always save it for that bit of grotesque sentimental value!

These days, we have deet -- and it works exceptionally well for me in warding off mosquitos and black flies. Not a great solution for kids, but a certainly a revelation for us grown-ups.

Tom

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702**Donovan** : 6/6/2007; 6:37:33 AMReads: 210, Responses: 1 ([view responses to this item](#))

Don and Roberta, they set the standard for trail guides, which, in my opinion, no one has exceeded.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702****Donovan** : 6/6/2007; 6:46:30 AMReads: 195, Responses: 1 ([view responses to this item](#))

Thank you for the trees down numbers. We cleared 702 a week ago. You went in "trail X" which has no blazes. This week we will start out and start on Grouse Point to Serene Lake. Thanks for the snow report too. It is always a drag to haul the saws in a few miles and have to leave trees on the trail that are under the snow. It is nice to know when it's gone.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Don & Roberta Lowe****Tom Kloster** : 6/6/2007; 2:08:09 PMReads: 248, Responses: 0 ([view responses to this item](#))

That's for sure. They helped me on a pamphlet guide to the Salmon-Huckleberry when I was in college in the early 80s, and were incredibly generous with their time. I've pointed people at the Portland Hikers site to the Lowe's "50 Portland and Northwest Oregon Trails" guide, which has at least a dozen "lost trail" hikes along fading old routes, and that has triggered a number of hikers to re-explore places like Rudolph Spur, Hiyu Mountain and Red Hill. The Lowes were never political in their books, but I saw that particular guide as a plea to save some of the remaining trails from oblivion.

For anyone not familiar with the Lowes, I highly recommend the coffee table book they wrote for Mount Hood -- "Portrait of a Magnificent Mountain". You can easily find it used (it's long out of print) and it is their finest work. It's a beautiful blend of Don's photography, Roberta's writing and some nice historic photos. Definitely worth tracking down for your library.

Tom

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Matt Patrick : 6/6/2007; 10:19:51 PM

Reads: 213, Responses: 0 ([view responses to this item](#))

Donovan,

Your welcome, and a big Thank You for all your hard work keeping trails clear for all of us to enjoy. I am off to climb Mt. Hood on Thursday night/Friday morning, cant hardly wait, take care,

Matt

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702**Matt Patrick** : 6/6/2007; 10:40:56 PMReads: 232, Responses: 6 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Tom,

Thanks for sharing. I think that the picnic table is most likely the same one. It looks rather old/weathered and it is the sturdy CCC type you described. On a footnote, my wife and I brought along 2 friends on the backpack, which was actually their first backpacking experience also. I have only been in Portland for 1.5 years and am always looking for new hikes/backpacks. We have hit most of the highlights around the Gorge, Mt. Hood, a few around Bend, and the Coastal Range. It sounds like you have a lot of experience around the area, anything you would recommend?

Matt

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702****Tom Kloster** : 6/7/2007; 6:33:45 AMReads: 253, Responses: 5 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Hi Matt, Always glad to see new arrivals out on the trails! One thing I'd recommend (if you haven't already seen it) is the Portland Hikers Field Guide:

http://www.portlandhikerswiki.com/wiki/Main_Page

This is the product of several volunteers on the Portland Hikers site, and about six months old. Our goal is to pretty much cover every trail within a day's drive of Portland, so we're ambitious! One of the categories is "backpackable", which means the trail has enough mileage, campsites and access to water to work for an overnight trip, at least.

We are gradually moving south into the Clackamas drainage with the guide - I'll be adding hikes in the Roaring River area this summer, and there are other folks working on the Badger Creek, Olallie/Jefferson and Bull of the Woods areas. Hopefully, the lesser-known trails that Donovan has adopted here will follow at some point.

As to my favorite backpack trips, don't miss the Timberline Trail on Hood, and a good way to do that spectacular route is over four days, beginning mid-day on a Sunday (and going clockwise) from Timberline Lodge. You'll pass a lot of hikers coming back from Paradise Park, but soon will have the trail to yourself, and only see a few hikers for the rest of the trip. Late July through mid-August is the wildflower peak, though September can be the best combination of nice weather and small crowds.

For a more remote backpack, the Badger Creek Wilderness is very nice -

not in the Field Guide yet, but well-described in various published guides. There are also some very nice, relatively lonely backpacks in the Gorge high country, particularly via the Tanner Creek trailhead. A bit further afield from Portland, the Bull of the Woods area offers great 2-3 day backpacks (my favorite being from the Dickey Creek trailhead).

I'm sure others have some ideas, too!

Tom

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Joe Keller : 6/7/2007; 10:34:12 AM

Reads: 261, Responses: 4 ([view responses to this item](#))

I'll second the mention of Bull of the Woods, although the last time I was there we climbed the Geronimo Trail, and it was steep. Wish I'd had a great site like this to review before I picked that route!

Also, there are lots of good hikes in the Olallie Lake basin, but be prepared for major mosquito attacks.

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Tom Kloster : 6/7/2007; 6:46:56 PM

Reads: 276, Responses: 3 ([view responses to this item](#))

Ha! Yes, the Geronimo trail! There was an old guide to the "Hidden Wilderness" that I believe described that trail as "resembling the trajectory of a large boulder rolling down the hillside". I went down that trail with a friend on a backpack in the mid-80s, and he's sworn that his knees have never been the same, since!

Tom

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Robert Kosciak : 6/8/2007; 7:05:50 AM

Reads: 323, Responses: 2 ([view responses to this item](#))

Yeah, I went up the Geronimo Trail with a full pack a few years ago.....just about killed me.

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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702

Donovan : 6/14/2007; 10:55:12 AM

Reads: 310, Responses: 1 ([view responses to this item](#))

The Forest Service has abandoned this trail. For better or worse. Often the steeper trails predate the Forest Service and can be Native routes. Kinda shame to lose it in spite of it's steepness.













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Re: Trail info for Serene Lake Trail 512 and Cripple Creek Trail 702**Robert Koscik** : 6/15/2007; 6:26:17 AMReads: 332, Responses: 0 ([view responses to this item](#))

I think it's useful enough and close enough to a primary trail that it won't vanish. It was pretty easy to follow a couple years ago anyway...

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