

Trail Advocates

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

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Janus Butte trail revisited

Topic: Janus Butte trail revisited

Author: Doug Firman

Topic Started: 10/13/2007; 10:28:37 PM

Last Posted: 10/31/2007; 8:09:07 AM

Janus Butte trail revisited

Doug Firman : 10/13/2007; 9:28:37 PM

Reads: 267, Responses: 9 ([view responses to this item](#))

Following the recent discussion of the abandoned Janus Butte trail, I decided to go out yesterday and take a look for it and see what I could find. Once you find the junction with the Elk Lake Creek trail (#559), it is easy to follow the old trail down to the creek. I crossed the creek and after a good bit of searching found what appears to be the tread of an old trail. I couldn't find any blazes, but I did come across a downed tree which had been sawn out to clear the trail back in the days when the trail was maintained. This tread led to a jumble of downed and uprooted trees, and I was unable to pick it up beyond that. For all my efforts, I doubt that I located more than 300-500 feet of trail. I flagged it in case anyone wants to pursue it further. I guess I spent a couple of hours going back and forth looking for remnants of the tread and/or blazes but found nothing. The forest in this area is mature with some sizeable old trees and an open and mossy understory, making for easy going for an amateur explorer like me. Even though my efforts weren't very productive, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed spending a couple of hours wandering around in this beautiful forest with the sound of Elk Lake Creek keeping me company.

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Re: Janus Butte trail revisited**Robert Koscik** : 10/14/2007; 8:21:08 AMReads: 262, Responses: 3 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Thanks Doug! I do have that Hidden Wilderness book that shows the old route on a topo, and it looks like it follows the ridge-edge pretty much straight up after an initial hairpin turn. Glad to hear that the creek is still crossable. Hopefully this beautiful Autumn will hold up for a spell. Yeah, I've found that a lot of those secondary way trails weren't blazed, I guess they figured there wasn't enuff traffic to warrant the work. I'll bet it's been since the 70s since that trail has seen much use, and even back then it was on it's way to abandonment. Wish we had a way to post pictures on this site, I redrew the old route on a topo, getting as close as logically possible. Sure looks like deep boonies out there....

Funny sometimes I spend all day just locating 1/4 mile of trail. Amazing what time will do to a straight line in a forest. Nature says "forgit it".

Was going to take the family to Memaloose yesterday but wound up at boringgggg Mclver instead because the little one was getting tired.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Janus Butte trail revisited****Doug Firman** : 10/14/2007; 5:49:38 PMReads: 262, Responses: 2 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Bob,

I did the same thing with the maps...transposed the trail route from the old map to a larger-scale quad map. It was helpful for getting me oriented out there, but I was unable to locate those handy contour lines out on the ground. Maybe all that moss covered them up ;-) I checked out maybe half a dozen routes that looked like they could potentially be the old trail, but none of them panned out. There really is a lot of moss on the ground, so if the trail has been unused for years, it's probably hidden under that carpet. Up on the slope of that ridge the ground is more exposed, so maybe that's where there would be a better chance of spotting something.

There are a few blazes on the trail on the north side of Elk Lake Creek, so I expected to see some on the other side of the creek as well. If they're there, I didn't spot them.

You're right, it is deep boonies out there. It looks like it hasn't been logged for a long, long time, if ever. I was told that the FS at one time had plans to get into that area and cut the timber. They built the bridge over the East Fork of the Collawash and were getting ready to punch roads into the area south of Elk Lake Creek, but were stopped by the wilderness designation. And that's the reason that there is that "bridge to nowhere" out there at the confluence of the East Fork and Elk Lake Creek. I don't know if that story is true or not, but it is the best explanation that I've heard for that bridge being there.

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Re: Janus Butte trail revisited[Edit this Page](#)**Rob Williams** : 10/14/2007; 7:28:13 PMReads: 245, Responses: 1 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

I'm really jealous.....This weekend was a BEAUTIFUL weekend for hiking, but unfortunately, I had to spend the weekend getting firewood. I was up in the forest, but not having a lot of fun, just a lot of work.

Keep the stories going! I love reading all this stuff! Never seen that bridge before. Maybe someday I'll have to find it.

Rob

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Janus Butte trail revisited****Robert Koscik** : 10/15/2007; 6:22:46 AMReads: 259, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Yeah I've climbed around on that bridge before, very weird to see it there and VERY NICE that it's hovering in the air like that and NOT leading to a mess. Thank God for small miracles...

No contour lines? Well you can always look for the gigantic JANUS BUTTE that must be on the ground somewhere! Gotta look closer man...

Seriously tho, it IS a lot of work finding a vague trail. I've found that it helps to follow the logical contours of the land, start from a place you know the last part was and sort of wing it until it gets clearer again. Also like to spread out in circles and keep going back to that reference point. If all else fails just go where you think the trail should be and it's usually pretty darn close. I've always thought it strange that these old trails come and go - for a while it's clear as day, then it vanishes for a while, then comes back again. But hell if this thing was around in the '70s it's still gotta be out there, at least up to the butte. For the most part these trails were built very logically so I try to think like a trail-builder and that really helps.

The funny thing is usually someone has been there before me, I almost always find old flagging, brittle and faded with age. Have you guys ever found pink/black striped flagging? See it everywhere, think it's from the F.S. Archeologist who's been around th' Clacky-Block. Never met her tho.

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Re: Janus Butte trail revisited**Dan Butler** : 10/15/2007; 11:05:26 AMReads: 245, Responses: 4 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

I too made an attempt at locating this trail a number of years ago without success. It also shows up on a Green Trails map as an "other trail". The summit of Janus appears to be solidly forested so I've always wondered what purpose the trail served; ie, there was never a lookout up there as far as I know.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Janus Butte trail revisited****Robert Kosciak** : 10/15/2007; 11:09:13 AMReads: 268, Responses: 3 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Looks like it was a bypass route to hook up with other trails on the other side of the ridge. The F.S. tended to do that a lot, put in alternate routes. Not sure why, maybe fires or landslides?

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Janus Butte trail revisited****Doug Firman** : 10/15/2007; 4:42:12 PMReads: 279, Responses: 2 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Regarding old flagging, I did find a couple of faded strips of flagging on the Janus Butte trail. Were those yours, Dan? I was hoping to find more, but maybe whoever left them ran out of trail just like I did.

Pink and black striped flagging was what led me to the trail to that old campsite by the Collawash that I posted about a few months ago. It wouldn't be surprising if it was left by an archeologist. It had to be someone who knew what they were looking for because that trail was pretty well hidden.

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Re: Janus Butte trail revisited**Robert Koscik** : 10/15/2007; 6:00:19 PMReads: 292, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

Crazy crazy that lady has been EVERYWHERE.....she's like a ghost pre-following us.

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Janus Butte trail revisited****Robert Koscik** : 10/31/2007; 7:09:07 AMReads: 264, Responses: 0 ([↩](#) view responses to this item)

I did make it back to the area last weekend, but was camping with folks that aren't much of a hiking crowd. I did search the area north of the Collawash bridge on 6380, looking for remnants of the trail heading out of Bull of the Woods. Sadly the area has been heavily impacted by roads and clearcuts so the trail has been lost to the ages. It shows up on the Hidden Wilderness map if you have it, just to the right of the road. Also searched for the trail that heads straight east about 1/2 mile up the road but it's gone too. They sure ripped a lot of big trees out of that area. Must have been something to experience, nothing but wilderness trails and a couple of backcountry guard stations. Oh well now we have the Fruits of Progress...Are any of you old enough to remember the area before all the roads were punched in? Didn't really start happening til the late '40s. The old maps make me dream of those days.

Beautiful fall weather, sunny colorful days and ice in the cup in the morning. Who could ask for more?

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