

Trail Advocates

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

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Pyramid Lake and Cottonwood Meadows

Topic: Pyramid Lake and Cottonwood Meadows

Author: Rob Williams

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Rob Williams : 10/13/2008; 7:05:19 AM

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I decided that last weekend might be my last opportunity to get to the higher elevation trails, so I decided to get out and explore some new areas. My plan was to attempt the Cottonwood Meadows trail, all the way through (the cross country section). Since I was near, I thought I'd also explore the very short Pyramid Lake trail. And, due to some discussions I've seen here and on Portlandhikers.org, I decided to take a look at the Hideaway Lake Waterfall. I had also thought about taking the Rimrock trail up the viewpoint, but I ended up running out of time.

First, I have to say that the work done on roads 58 and part of 5830 (I wish they had gone further than Hideaway Lake) makes those roads MUCH better to drive on. Both roads have been brush trimmed on both sides. It makes the roads seem much wider, and they are much safer, since you can see down the road a lot further. It is too bad that they didn't continue on 5830 past Hideaway Lake. It REALLY needs it. If they would brush these roads, and grade them (to get rid of the washboards), I wouldn't care if they converted all of them to gravel!

Second, I have to tell everyone - If you want to get to the higher elevation trails - **DO IT NOW!** I was surprised to see a 2-4 inches of snow, both on the trails and also on the roads, starting at about 3800'. It won't be too long before these trails will be gone for the winter.

Anyway, I went up to Pyramid Lake. I mistakenly trudged up the "trail" at the first **yellow sign** I saw. When I was doing it, there was really no trail evident, and I didn't go far before I realized I wasn't in the right place. The yellow sign was a replacement for an old brown sign that just had an arrow on it (which was in the ditch). The real trailhead was about another half mile up the road. That road does get rather **narrow and rough**, but it wasn't too bad. The trail up to the lake is actually quite pleasant and in

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good condition, and it has a couple of very nice campsites. Interesting little place....

















Next was the trip to Cottonwood Meadows. I found the **trailhead** with little difficulty and proceeded through the meadows. Between the flagging and the description here, it was easy to follow the trail through all the meadows. Although it wasn't much to look at, mostly because all of the plants were buried under snow, I can see how that place would explode with color in the spring. I'd love to get in there early, after the snow but before the bugs. I got to the first road where the clearcut begins and attempted to follow the directions. I thought I was going in the right direction, but I started to get a little worried, and ended up backtracking. When I got home and examined my GPS track, it appears as though I was just about exactly on track, so if I had kept going, I would have made it to the lower trail section. Oh well, that can wait until another day, maybe when there isn't snow on the ground!

Lastly, I took a very short side trip down to the **Hideaway Lake Falls**. It is tough to get down to a spot where you can actually see the falls, but they are very pretty.

All in all, a beautiful late fall day in the woods....

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