

# Trail Advocates

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

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## Rho Creek Trail

**Topic:** Rho Creek Trail

**Author:** Doug Firman

**Topic Started:** 9/18/2006; 4:30:56 PM

**Last Posted:** 10/4/2006; 10:03:28 AM

### Rho Creek Trail

**Doug Firman** : 9/18/2006; 3:30:56 PM

Reads: 75, Responses: 9 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I just wanted to chime in on the discussion of the Rho Creek trail since I have hiked it a couple of times now, once last summer and again this summer. The work that's been done to improve the lower end of the trail is very noticeable and much appreciated. But I have to admit that I had trouble finding the lower trailhead on both occasions, although I now know where it is. My mistake was in assuming that the trail began at the wide spot in the road a few hundred feet west of the actual trailhead. This seemed like the only place along the 4671 road where there was enough room to safely park, and the flagging on a nearby tree made me think that this is where I should enter the woods to find the trail. Which I did, and wound up following an old logging road and some trails which may have been animal trails. Eventually, though, I came onto a well-worn trail that looked as if it had been improved in places, although not recently. This trail took me higher up on the hillside than I thought I should be going, but it was generally heading in the right direction, so I followed it, eventually winding up at Tumble Creek, quite a bit upstream of where I should have been. I'm curious to what that trail might have been. It seemed more substantial than a deer trail. Along the way I came to an junction with a trail leading further on up the hillside. Even noticed a bit of old flagging there. If I had had more time I would have explored it, but I already knew that I was off-course so I focused on getting back to the Rho Creek trail at the Tumble Creek crossing.

After crossing Tumble Creek, I found the trail and from there on it was clear and easy to follow. A little overgrown in places, but in pretty good shape for an abandoned trail. Things are not so obvious at the clearcut, though, and the first time I went up there I did not find the trail up to the 4672 road. Instead, I followed the creek to the road crossing, which was a bit off-course. This year I did find where the trail heads uphill to the road from the spring. I hung some flagging on the trees to help others

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find the route.

Turning around and heading back, I missed the spot where the trail leaves the clearcut and enters the woods. I was definitely following a trail tread along the edge of the clearcut, but it continued heading north well past the point where I should have headed east into the woods. I followed this trail for quite a ways before I realized my mistake, and turned back. But I am wondering what trail I was following. On several old maps I see a trail in that vicinity which is referred to as the Mt. Lowe Trail, which heads north from Fadeaway Springs to Lowe Creek, then westerly to Mt. Lowe. Is anything known about this trail? Maybe next summer I'll devote a whole day to exploring these trails that I found by mistake and see where they might lead me. Oh, and by the way, on my return trip on the Rho Creek trail, I found that by keeping my eyes open and noticing the flagging and brush cutting that had been done recently, that I was easily able to follow the lower part of the trail back down to the road and my truck.

I think the Rho Creek trail is a great little trail, with a feeling of solitude and wilderness. I enjoy hearing the sound of the creek as I walk along, even if it is not always within sight. I'm thinking that this could make a good all-day hike by connecting to the Rho Ridge trail and hiking up to Mt. Lowe and back. Thanks again to those who have worked to locate this abandoned trail and open it up again.

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

**Robert Kosciak** : 9/19/2006; 8:04:20 AM

Reads: 70, Responses: 8 ( [view responses to this item](#))

It's GREAT to hear these stories! Yes, I do enjoy that trail and the area in general. When were you there? I was there about 2 weeks ago and did more work on the lower end and on the switchbacks after Tumble Creek. I have about 2 more miles to go before the route is cleared to the top, and when chainsaws come thru it will be that much nicer. Since May, we've gone thru there about 4 times clearing the route, each time getting a little farther. How this great trail was abandoned to begin with is beyond me, but so is much! Yes, there was a junction a couple miles from the Tumble Creek crossing, but I've yet to investigate it. It has been abandoned much longer, and most likely encounters a couple clearcuts.

There is a shiny metal "T" now tacked up at the trailhead. It should make finding it much easier, well... until it gets shot up at least. I also tried to make the route a bit more obvious at the beginning of the trail. Basically, if you cross Rho Creek then you've gone too far.

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

**Doug Firman** : 9/19/2006; 9:19:28 AM

Reads: 72, Responses: 7 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

I was there in early August. It was at the time when there were a lot of forest fires burning, and the air was a bit smoky that day. Other than that, it was a perfect day, and I had a great time even if I did get a little lost once or twice.

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail****Robert Koscik** : 9/19/2006; 11:36:57 AMReads: 76, Responses: 6 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

OH yeah! We were at Olallie Lake at the time, and I was sneezing continuously...

[Discuss this message.](#)**Re: Rho Creek Trail**[Edit this Page](#)**Rob Williams** : 9/29/2006; 8:33:47 PMReads: 68, Responses: 5 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Well, I finally made it back to the lower half of the Rho Creek trail today. I took the day off of work (trying to take advantage of some of the last nice weather we will be having for a while). It took a little bit of looking, but I found the trailhead pretty easily, once I actually read the descriptions. I must say, you have been BUSY! There is a lot of work you have done to clear the trail. I really like the lower section much better than the upper section. I've now hiked the entire length of the trail, and the bottom 2 miles is much nicer I think. You get to see the creek more, and there is even a couple spots where it is relatively easy to go down to it. There is also a lot more dense, green forest (which is what I prefer). Up higher, there are the clearcuts and a sparser forest, partly due to the steep canyon it is in.

I have to agree with the comments on the trail description: This trail is not for a novice. I'm not a terribly experienced hiker (I've been hiking for about 4 years now, doing probably 20-30 hikes), but I'm more than a beginner. This trail requires you to stay on your toes. Between the old trail blazes on the trees and the flagging that people have put up, it isn't too hard to stay on the trail, but you have to constantly be paying attention. Some areas of the trail tread has disappeared under a carpet of moss, some has been overgrown with salal and oregon grape, and some looks pretty good. A very interesting trail with lots of diversity.

One question: Right after the trailhead, did the trail actually go through that small pine/fir hollow, or was that just the best route up the hill? I noticed quite a few 1-2" trees that you had to cut out to blaze the trail through there.

Thank you very much for the work you did on this trail! I will most definitely be back to explore the lower half some more. I didn't do much to help with the trail, but I did try and scuff it up a bit, and threw some branches, rocks off the trail, as well as uprooting some of the plants in the trail tread.

Thanks again for the heads up on the trail, and all the hard work! It is

appreciated!

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

**Robert Koscik** : 10/3/2006; 10:10:44 AM

Reads: 61, Responses: 1 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Well, thank you for your nice comments. That lower area was partially cut some years ago, and the original tread thru there was lost. The current route (for about a 1/4 mile) is a "user route" which basically gets ya onto the original tread past the cut area. We spent a LOT of time down there, it was really bad. Once on to the old tread it wasn't so bad.

Use of the trail helps! It's what makes a tread exist. Hopefully it was followable, although you do have to pay attention in spots. Keep in mind that work was re-begun only this Spring, so it's going to take some time before it's easy to follow again. The funny thing is I've not hiked the entire trail, I've been spending time down below. How is the area between the clearcut and below? We did spot a really cool abandoned wreck of a collapsed guard station up near Rho Ridge.

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

**Robert Koscik** : 10/3/2006; 10:24:07 AM

Reads: 60, Responses: 2 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

By the way, just past the road the old tread continues down to the Clackamas. It hasn't been worked on, but it's thru ancient trees so it's followable. It's flagged too. You may have to poke around in the trees to find it's beginning though.

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

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**Rob Williams** : 10/3/2006; 4:00:10 PM

Reads: 56, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

A great deal of the trail (once past the initial part) is pretty easy to follow. The sections that are faint are pretty well flagged, but you have to pay attention to where you are going.

The upper section I didn't care for nearly as much, since the forest is sparser and you walk through a couple of relatively recent clearcuts. There is one pretty long section in the middle that was clearcut, and the tread has fallen away in places. The clearcut at the top is not recovering well in most places. The bottom is just a nicer walk, I think.

Where did you see the guard station? That would be cool to see.....I took the Rho Ridge trail a couple years ago up to Hawk Mtn (that is a cool hike with the little cabin at the peak!). I need to do that hike again....

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**Re: Rho Creek Trail**

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**Rob Williams** : 10/3/2006; 8:13:15 PM

Reads: 61, Responses: 1 ( [view responses to this item](#))

How far does it go? Just down to the Clackamas? That sounds like another interesting adventure.....So many trails, so little time....

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### Re: Rho Creek Trail











**Robert Koscik** : 10/4/2006; 9:03:28 AM

Reads: 80, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I think it goes another mile or so. It's relatively flat and open. You'll like it. I shoulda marked the entry better though, but it's pretty logical.

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