

# Trail Advocates

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

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## The Clackamas District through new eyes...

**Topic:** The Clackamas District through new eyes...

**Author:** Tom Kloster

**Topic Started:** 9/20/2007; 8:31:34 PM

**Last Posted:** 9/24/2007; 11:36:26 AM

### The Clackamas District through new eyes...

**Tom Kloster** : 9/20/2007; 7:31:34 PM

Reads: 198, Responses: 5 ( [view responses to this item](#) )

Stop reading now if you don't want to view a frank account of someone visiting the Clackamas District for the first time. The following is a post from an experienced, forest-savvy hiker who posted this about her trip to Memaloose Lake on the Portland Hikers site:

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"On the way to the trailhead, where the 45 road turns to gravel, I found a smoldering fire. It was clearly started by humans, there was lots of trash and paintballs strewn about the area. It was a large overturned burning tree stump, and several inches deep of duff surrounding the tree were burning away. I poured some water on it, but it didn't make much difference. I also noticed that on the 11 miles of this road, there were SIX target shooting areas- all littered with shells and garbage. Three were at quarrys and three were just shot up and destroyed pull offs at the edge of the forest. Now remember, I'm from Falls City, but this was worse than anything I've seen in my hick town. Is this area some sort of redneck haven?

I stopped at the ranger station in Estacada to report the fire and I also mentioned the target shooting areas. I received weary nods and a sad explanation that personnel, funding and legal issues combined with the destructive nature of our fellow creatures prevents them from keeping up with all that trash."

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I read this with interest, because it goes against the "Portland latte enviros vs. Estacada rednecks" dichotomy about the problems facing the Clackamas. I submit that the problems in the Clackamas are largely a product of its proximity to the greater Portland region, not it's rural roots. It leads me to believe that the best solution is to bring more legitimate recreation to the area (read: trails) to discourage the illegitimate

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activities.

I also think there is a law enforcement angle that has long been ignored, and is not only needed to curb illegal activities, but also to give legitimate visitors the sense of safety they need to visit their forest.

My two cents worth.

Tom

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### Re: The Clackamas District through new eyes...

**Simon Harding** : 9/21/2007; 6:40:18 AM

Reads: 186, Responses: 4 ( [view responses to this item](#))

So did he pick up any of the trash? Did he dig over the fire pit? What is it that points to Portlanders versus Estacadaians? I don't think it really matters where folks are from; folks from both places and elsewhere abuse the forest and others from both places and elsewhere treat it with respect. The USFS needs a bigger budget, more presence in the woods and better enforcement. In the meantime I think it is up to all of us to set examples for our kids, try (without being obnoxious or getting in danger) to spread the word about trails and not littering), and pick up trash to the extent you are able.

I was at Blue Lake in the Wallowas a few weeks ago when two dads and their sons hiked in. They tromped right through our camp, camped virtually on top of us and immediately started gathering wood and yanking down dead standing trees for a fire. Fires are illegal there. They then started fishing and left fish guts in the lake. The lake is the only water source other than snowfields way upslope at that time of year. They lit their fire right under a tree. They were noisy. We tolerated it for a while and then moved camp making no effort to be discreet in doing so. I then got my trowel and retrieved the fish guts and head and buried them well away from the lake. They saw me do so. We saw them standing in our old camp looking around a while later.

I do not know where they were from. From their gear and looks, I'd hazard a guess they were locals. I could be wrong. I hope they got the message. But they probably didn't. There's going to be bad behavior everywhere, and from people from both cities and small towns.

I've read with interest the articles (and the op ed piece today) in the Oregonian re: concentrating the lemmings in big RV friendly campgrounds in the MHN. I think I am for it. Hopefully it will reduce the presence of yahoos elsewhere. But it could result in yet less attention on the shooting galleries and other places being trashed by idiots.

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**Re: The Clackamas District through new eyes...**

**Tom Kloster** : 9/23/2007; 9:11:40 AM

Reads: 181, Responses: 3 ( [view responses to this item](#))

I agree with everything you've said - especially that further concentrating "newbies" to the forest in urbanized campgrounds is likely to leave them uneducated on how to treat the forest, and the rest of the forest vulnerable to the anti-social element that is out there to dump trash, shoot up signs and ride over the landscape in OHVs. I also agree that the USFS needs more funding for enforcement and education, though my caveat is that they also need a clearer mission. You can't simultaneously destroy and protect something as a "steward".

I mostly posted the earlier message because it's my view that much of the bad behavior in the MHNH is the result of proximity to Portland-centric "rednecks", not rural residents. The drunken melee on the Clackamas River this summer was a case in point, and should be a call to action for Portlanders who love their wild areas. In defense of the woman who posted the message, she spent yesterday clearing brush along the Vista Ridge Trail -- so she votes with her clippers, in addition to speaking out. If everyone did that, we'd be in fine shape!

Tom

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**Re: The Clackamas District through new eyes...**

**Donovan** : 9/23/2007; 7:44:27 PM

Reads: 197, Responses: 0 ( [view responses to this item](#))

Memaloose Lake is as isolated trail in a small patch of larger timber in an area, the 45 Road, which has for decades, since WWII, been a workhorse for timber production. It is some of the most productive ground we have. It has until recently had many large fresh harvested areas. It has, since 1971 in my memory, always been popular with hell raisers. Increased law enforcement presence would be nice through out the Forest.

Writing letters asking for increased law enforcement to the District Ranger and the Forest Supervisor gives them the documentation they need to request the funding.

Don't underestimate the formal, written letter.

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**Re: The Clackamas District through new eyes...**

**Simon Harding** : 9/24/2007; 9:33:17 AM

Reads: 189, Responses: 1 ( [↩](#) view responses to this item)

Tom: Sorry if I came off strong. And I should not have ass-umed the writer was male. The MHNH has, as far back as I can remember, been a place where the Whiskey Tango set goes to bark at the moon and generally raise hell int he ways they like. And separately, there's always going to be people who think they can have a fire the morning they leave camp, and not bother with drowning it.

And it can be tough to enjoy the woods with these sorts of folks up there. I hope she gives it another chance, picks another trail.

Simon

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**Re: The Clackamas District through new eyes...****Robert Koscik** : 9/24/2007; 10:36:26 AMReads: 192, Responses: 0 ( [↩ view responses to this item](#))

Tis' a shame the Memaloose area isn't well respected. True, the area has been abused by yahoos and chainsaws but the Memaloose Creek area has quite a lot of old growth forest downstream of the trailhead. No trails in the area but it is literal wilderness so it's special down there.

Be warned, the yahoos drive like yahoos down that road, taking turns far faster than safe which has caused a few accidents over the years.

Those shot up quarries along the way have to go, nothing but a magnet for negative behavior. Shot up burned out cars and mounds upon mounds of trash. "If you build it they will come"!

[Discuss this message.](#)**Response text:**

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