



Lower Salmonberry Trail Overview



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This is one of the most impressive hikes in all of Oregon. The hiking is strenuous and requires strong ankles as one will be bushwhacking steep detours and walking across many patches with large rocks. There is a sharp grade descent at the beginning, but then mostly level walking for the remaining 13.6 miles. Due to the extent of this hike, we have provided separate driving directions (below) along with separate guides in order to layout the hike in its entirety.

North Coast State Forest Coalition

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Details

Hike Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult

Distance: 15.35 miles

Elevation Change:
Approximately 2,100 feet

Walk Duration: Approximately
10-12 hours walking

Condition: Not well maintained



Directions to Trailhead

These directions assume that you will leave a car at the junction of the Salmonberry River and the Nehalem River, and will use a second car to access the top of Beaver Slide Road from whence the hike will commence.

From the Sylvan exit on US 26 (Exit 71) at the top of the West Hills, travel 51.5 miles on the Sunset Highway (US 26) to the Lower Nehalem Road and turn left (South). Travel on this road until you get to the washed out bridge over the Salmonberry, which is about 13 miles. The last 2.2 miles are in Tillamook County, and significantly more potholed, starting at the bridge crossing Cronin Creek. To travel from the washed out bridge over the Salmonberry to Beaver Slide Road, the "mid-point" access road is a 33.4 mile journey requiring about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Leave first car here.

Retrace your journey up the 13 mile Lower Nehalem River Road to US 26. Turn right heading back towards Portland and travel 10.8 miles until you reach the "Section 10 Road" (aka Wheeler Road). Take a sharp right on this dirt road and proceed up into the wooded heights. After 1.6 miles there will be two dirt roads that split off to the left. The second of these leads to the Salmonberry Road, which debouches out onto US 26 some miles to the East of where you turned on to Wheeler Road. Drive past these left hand alternatives and continue to travel generally uphill on what is Wheeler Road, but following signs that say Salmonberry Road. This will eventually lead you to the Salmonberry Road.

Another 0.7 miles onwards, Lousignant Road will be on the left, but keep following the Wheeler Road. In 0.5 miles from there, another road ascends on the left, which is actually the East end of Wheeler Road. Here, you will pass the Wheeler Road turn-off, but proceed straight into what is called the Wheeler Cut-off Road. This road slopes downhill another 1.6 miles Southwards, passing Shields Road on the right about half way down. At the end of the 1.6 miles on Wheeler Cut-off Road, you will encounter

an intersection at the bottom of a steep grade. The right hand option leads you on to the Salmonberry Road. Turn left, and a few yards onwards, this intersection splits into a three way choice. The extreme right hand option is only a minor logging track, so ignore it. The other two tracks are both segments of the Wheeler Pond Road, which originates near the Cochran Pond, the origin of the Salmonberry River system. At this juncture, you will want to take the right hand choice (or middle choice if you include the minor logging road) and follow the Southwestern stretch of the Wheeler Pond Road for 4.6 miles, moving in and out of the ravines that lie above the upper stretches of the Salmonberry River. This road always seems longer than its actual 4.6 miles. Eventually, you will emerge on a flat clearing that affords views both East towards the Salmonberry River Valley and West towards the deep valley formed by the North Fork of the Salmonberry.

At this junction, four roads join. You entered the intersection from the Northeast on the Wheeler Pond Road. To your right, the Salmonberry Road enters from the Northwest and continues across the intersection descending towards the Southwest on the far side of the clearing. Cross the clearing and veer to the left (Southeast) entering a road that has the least traffic of all the choices presented. This is the infamous Beaver Slide Road. Carefully follow this road for another 0.7 miles, driving slowly since the road is a bit rough and potholed. After the 0.7 miles, the road reaches a shoulder where the track splits. The least used choice leads straight back into the copse of trees straddling the ridge top and stops. The middle choice dips sharply downhill, and the last choice curves around the end of the ridge to the right. It is suggested to park at this point, and begin the hike by descending the middle fork of the three choices, which is Beaver Slide Road.

Info and photos from Jim Thayer,
foresthiker.com