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Soapstone Lake Trail



This Oregon Department of Forestry trail wanders through second growth forests, gaining 437 feet before reaching a small tree-lined lake. This short, scenic trail makes a nice stop on the way to or from the coast.

Details

Hike Difficulty: Moderate
Distance: 2.4 miles round trip
Elevation Gain: A gentle, rolling 437 feet
Walk Duration: 1.5 hours at a steady pace
Condition: The trail is maintained, but storms may result in debris along with mud and, in some areas, standing water.



Directions to Trailhead

The trailhead is on the East side of Highway 53, 0.3 miles North of milepost 5. The turnoff for the trailhead is marked by a brown Oregon Department of Forestry sign. Follow the single lane gravel road 0.3 miles to the trailhead on your left. There is a small parking area and a bulletin board with a trail map and other forest information.

TRAIL LOG



The trail is hard-packed earth and immediately enters the forest on a gentle grade. In 0.2 miles, the trail crosses a small footbridge over East Fork Soapstone Creek. After a storm, lower spots on the trail may hold standing water, which is easily skirted. At 0.3 miles the trail reaches a second bridge and creek-crossing. The trail continues through second-growth forest with many mossy remnants of giant stumps, some overgrown with huckleberries and others acting as nurse trees. The forest floor is filled with ferns, oxalis and other ground covers, while red cedar, Sitka spruce and western hemlock soar above you. The trail passes a grassy clearing before reaching a third bridge at 0.6 miles. There is a trail marker at the far end of the bridge and then the trail steepens sharply as it heads up two consecutive flights of stairs constructed with old railroad ties and then continues at a more gentle climb. The trail ends into the Lake



loop at 0.9 miles and the trail marker here has been destroyed. After a few dozen steps clockwise, the trail allows a first glimpse of the lake. After crossing a small bridge and climbing several stairs, a narrow spur on the right provides the option for a closer look at the lake. The main trail continues and narrows considerably at this point, circling the lake and offering fallen logs suitable for a small picnic or quiet contemplation. The 0.6 mile trail around the lake dips and climbs. Watch for salamanders crossing the trail at the lower elevations near the lake shore. The trail crosses a wooden boardwalk at the half-way point and makes a steep climb up a small ridge along the western side of the lake. There is a short set of stairs at the end of the ridge before the trail passes a small clearing above the lake before completing the loop where you began.

Info and photos from Sue Griffith