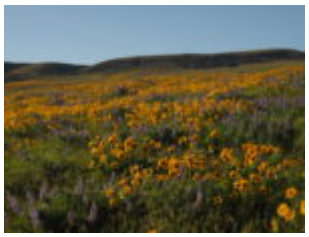
Dalles Mountain Ranch, WA



Vicinity Location: The trailhead is about 75 miles east of Portland, in the Columbia River Gorge.

Directions:
From Portland, drive on I-84 East from Portland for about 65 miles, driving past Hood River.

Take exit 87 to Hwy 197 and drive 3 miles north to Highway 14 and turn right.

Go half a mile and turn left up Dalles Mountain Road. Continue approximately 3.5 miles up the dirt road to the old Dalles Mountain Ranch and you'll see some ranch structures. Park along the road just past the pond or at the trailhead parking lot.

There are bathrooms at this trailhead.

A State of Washington Discover Pass is required for parking.

Trail:
Vista Loop Trail, Military Road, Eightmile Alternate.

Though pets are not prohibited, they are discouraged to avoid conflicts with wildlife.

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, Download Garmin .gpx file

There are no geocaches along this trail.

Length and Elevation:
3 miles roundtrip for the loop. Elevation at the trailhead is 1,260 feet. Elevation gain totals 350 feet. Total gain and loss is 700 feet. Highest elevation is 1,260 feet. Lowest elevation is 950 feet.

Review: April 26, 2016, April 28, 2019
The best time to go on this hike is when the flowers peak in late April or Early May. Look for trip reports on Washington Trails Association or Portland Hikers.

For this hike, go past the ranch pond about 100 feet and go through the narrow opening in the fence.

Take the path on the left that parallels the road and the fence. There is a nice trail carved from the sloping wildflower meadow. Soon the trail curves away
from the road and you are surrounded by wildflowers. The lupine and balsamroot carpet the ground and little pillows of phlox dot this area.

Continue across the meadow with stunning views of the Columbia Hills and distant views of the Columbia River. Drop down into a small creek valley and start heading towards the Gorge. The trail

is pretty level in this section and easy to walk on and the flowers are pretty spectacular.

The trail goes through a small draw, crosses more meadows and drops down into a shallow valley and crosses beneath an old Oak tree. There are lupines and balsam root along the side. There are some large Serviceberry bushes near the stream. Enjoy the sounds of the water running over the rocks and down the creekbed.

Climb up into another meadow with great views all around. The view of the oak tree at the stream with the green hills in the background is sublime.

Continue until you reach a seeping spring. There are some water troughs and other apparatus in the area. For this hike, turn right, and set off down the meadow, slowly working your way to a cow path along the stream. Continue along the stream and intersect a trail that comes from some of the lower meadows and cross the stream. As you pass the meadows of flowers, admire the lupines that have a variety of colors that range from the loveliest light blue to dark purple.

Head uphill through the wildflowers as the trail loops around to follow the contour of the land. Continue to walk through the non-stop display of wildflowers and soon you'll hear the sounds of another small stream splashing down the hillside.

Follow this trail to a fork where the left fork heads down to the creek and the right fork heads back up to the ranch and the parking area.

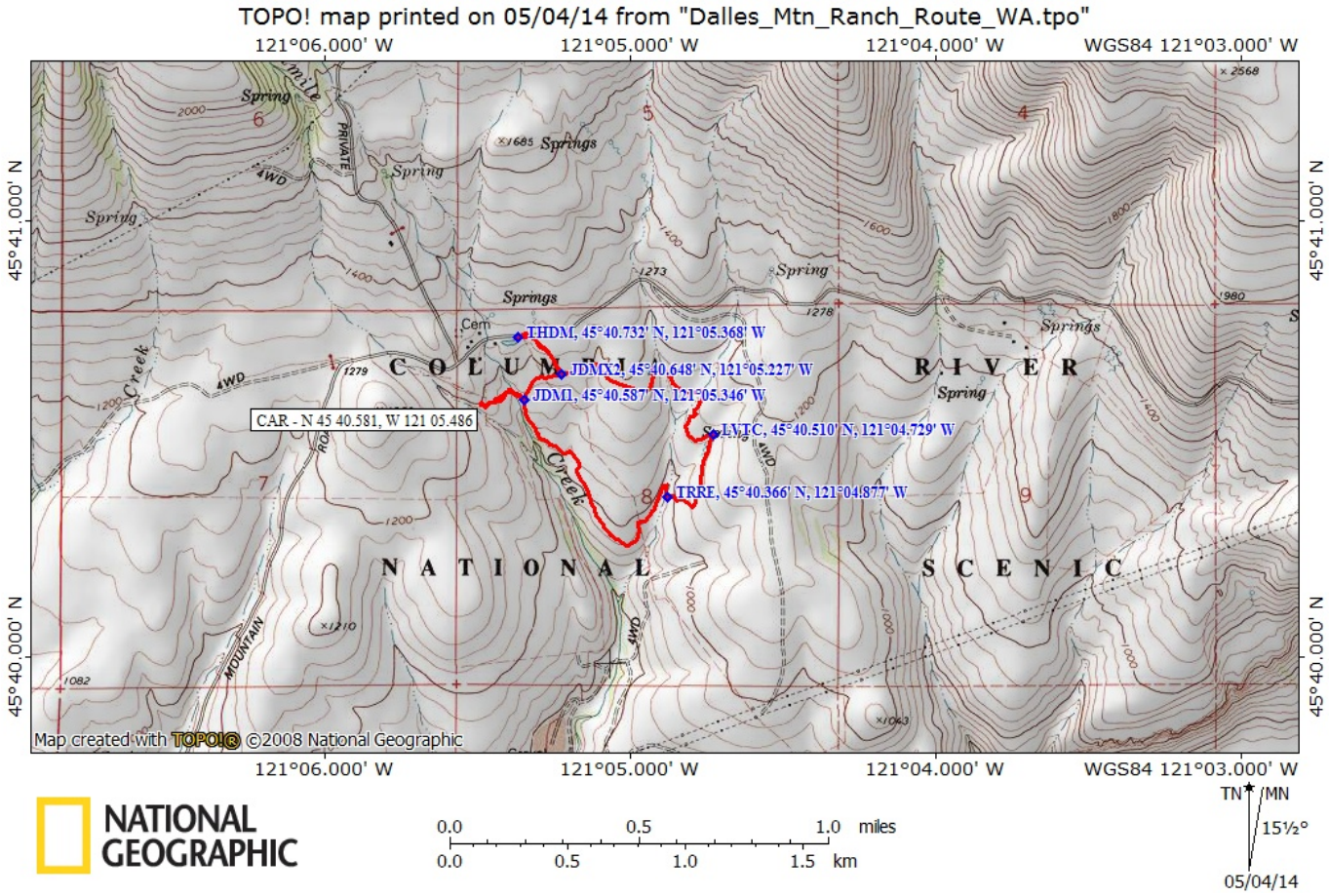
To see the rusty car, take the left fork that crosses the creek and leads to a meadow. This is a great chance to hone your cross-country navigation skills. Find a way to note where you crossed the creek and head gently uphill, generally east for about 500 feet. You'll see an opening in the field fence. Look for the rusty car near the fence opening. Return the way you came, crossing the creek.

Walk back to the junction and take a left, crossing the field on the old Military Road. After walking about 700 feet, you come back to the main trail and turn left which heads uphill back to where you parked.

As a note, other parts of the park are also in bloom and a parking area is being constructed.

This is a "must hike" trail during the peak of the spring wildflower season in late April and early May. This trail is good for kids who are experienced hikers because of rattlesnakes and ticks.

Enjoy the photos!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve


TOPO! map printed on 05/04/14 from "Dalles_Mtn_Ranch_Route_WA.tpo"
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121°05.000' W
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WGS84 121°03.000' W
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CAR - N 45 40.581, W 121 05.486
LVTC, 45°40.510' N, 121°04.729' W
TRRE, 45°40.366' N, 121°04.877' W
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Map created with TOPO!© ©2008 National Geographic
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