Dark Meadow, WA



Vicinity Location:
About 70 miles northeast of Portland, OR in the Gifford Pinchot Natiional Forest.

Directions:
Take I-5 North from Portland and take exit 68 for US-12 E toward Morton/Yakima.

Drive Hwy 12 to Randle, Washington then travel south on State Highway 131 (Forest Roads 23 and 25). Veer left in 1 mile at the Y of Forest Road 23 and Forest Road 25. Follow Forest Road 23 about 22.5 miles.

Trail is off Forest Road 23.

Length and Elevation: 11.8 miles roundtrip. Elevation at the trailhead is 2,525 feet. Total gain is 3,800 feet and loss is 3,800- feet. Highest elevation is 4,488 feet and the lowest elevation is 2,420 feet above sea level.

Trail:
Dark Meadow Trail #263

There are no geocaches on this hike.

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, Download Garmin .gpx file, Open Garmin .gpx file

Review: August 28, 2024
The road is all paved to the parking area which is a wide spot along Forest Road 23.

I started on the dark Meadow Trail number 263. I parked by the road and found a place to step across East Canyon Creek. I just got one foot wet crossing the shallow creek.

The trails in this area are shared with motorcycles and mountain bikes.

The trail meanders through the forest, gently ascending for about the first mile. It is a dense forest of Douglas furs and hemlock trees with not too much undergrowth. After that, the trail starts climbing fairly steeply, and the motorcycles have made bread in many places. Expect to walk in a gully with loose rocks at the bottom. There are also stretch. Stretches of Trail that are in reasonably good shape. After about a mile and a half trail passes place that will soon be washed out. You can see some flagging for future reroute.

The trail continues to climb through the forest, crossing a stream every mile or so. After about 3 miles the trail begins to level out and you come to the junction for Boundary Trail #1. Turn left here and head towards Dark Meadow.

The trail gently rises and falls as it heads generally south. There is a stream that has made a long puddle in the trail that is difficult to avoid. Plan to get your shoes wet at one of these stream

crossings.

After about four or five miles the map shows a couple of lakes that they are really just Meadows. The one Meadow has a tiny pond about 30‘ x 15feet in the center of it. Even this may dry up in the summer.

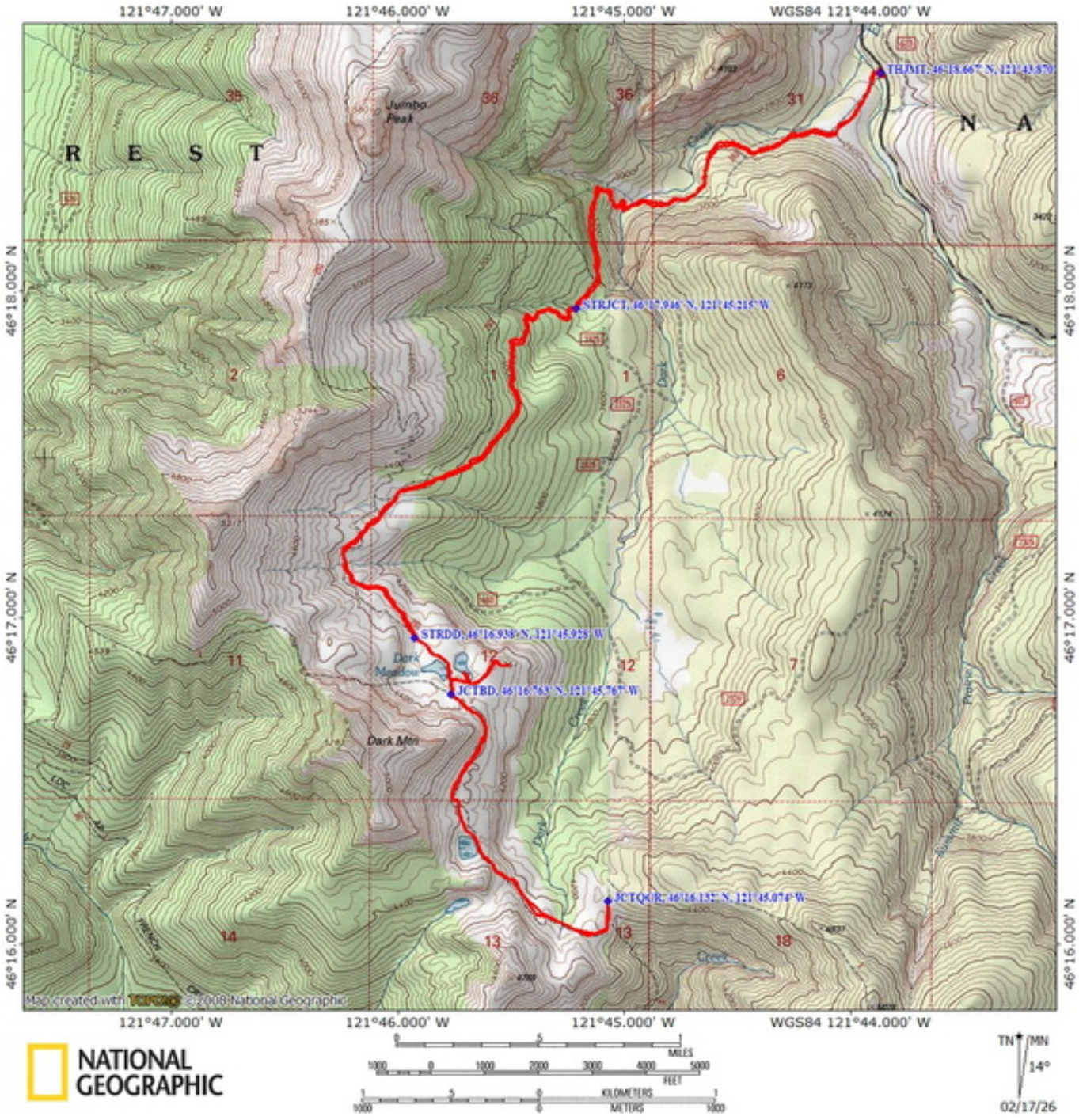
Continuing on there are some glimpses of Mount Adams and one nice view as you come down the hill. After that, the trail is pretty much in and out of the forest with an occasional view down into the valley on your left. Continue along until you find a place you want to, turn around. I picked the junction with Quartz Creek Trail #5.

I did see one or two places where you could set up a camp, but campsites are scarce along this section of Trail.

Return the way you came be careful not to slipon the steep sections of Trail. There are smattering of wildflowers along the trail, like lupine, columbine, Arnica, and spirea.

This would be a good trail for dogs because there are several streams along the trail so they would have plenty of water to drink.

Enjoy the photos!!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve


121°47.000' W
121°46.000' W
121°45.000' W
WGS84 121°44.000' W
46°18.000' N
46°17.000' N
46°16.000' N
TRLMT, 46°18.667' N, 121°43.870'
STRJCT, 46°17.946' N, 121°45.215' W
STRDD, 46°16.938' N, 121°45.928' W
JCTBD, 46°16.763' N, 121°45.767' W
JCTQC/R, 46°16.152' N, 121°45.074' W
Jumbo Peak
Dark Meadow
Dark Mtn
Dark Creek
R E S T
N A
Map created with TOPO! © 2008 National Geographic
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
MILES
FEET
KILOMETERS
METERS
TN MN
14°
02/17/26