

Eagle Peak, WA

Vicinity Location:

About 11 miles east of Ashford, WA in Mt. Rainier National Park.

Directions:

From Portland, take I-5 North and take exit 68 to Hwy 12. Take Hwy 12 for about 30 miles to Morton. Turn left on Hwy 7 and drive about 17 miles to Hwy 706. Turn right on Hwy 706 and drive to the Nisqually entrance on the west side of Mt. Rainier National Park. Drive about three miles from the entrance and cross the bridge over Kautz Creek. Continue to Longmire and take a right turn just after the lodge. Drive about .1 mile and park on the right.

From Seattle, take I-5 South to Hwy 512 East and go towards Puyallup (Exit 127). Follow Hwy 512 East for about 2 miles. Turn south onto Hwy 7 towards Mt. Rainier. Follow Hwy 7 south to Elbe. At Elbe, turn left onto Hwy 706, travel through Ashford, and then to the Nisqually entrance of Mt. Rainier National Park. Drive about three miles from the entrance and cross the bridge over Kautz Creek. Continue to Longmire and take a right turn just after the lodge. Drive about .1 mile and park on the right.

Flush toilets are available at Longmire.

Pets aren't allowed on National Park trails.

National Park Entrance fee of \$30.00 for a car or \$25 for a motorcycle and a single passenger or Annual Pass is required to enter the park.

Length and Elevation:

7 Miles round trip. Elevation gain 2,950 feet and no loss. Total gain and loss is 5,900 feet. Side-trip to other peaks - 1 mile. Elevation at the trailhead is 2,800 feet, the saddle elevation is 5,700 feet, Eagle Peak is 5,958 feet.

Trail:

Eagle Peak Trail.

Trail Maps:

Topo Map, National Park Service Map

Review: September 8, 2007

From the parking lot, continue walking on the pavement uphill and cross the large wood suspension bridges over the Nisqually River. Walk down the road about 1,000 feet to the trailhead on the left.

The trail begins innocently enough. You walk gently uphill on a wide, well maintained trail. Pretty soon you realize the trail has gotten steeper. Then the switchbacks start. The trail climbs relentlessly up the side of the mountain on a multitude of switchbacks. The climb is pleasant as the trail switchbacks along a stream. The last water on the trail is where the trail crosses the stream at about 2 miles up the trail. Eventually the trail climbs a ridge and you think a little more fondly of the switchbacks. Don't worry though, there are more! The Park Service has graveled the trail for erosion control.

The official trail ends on a saddle between Eagle Peak and an unnamed peak. You'll find a trail that heads towards the west to scramble up Eagle Peak. There are places where you'll need to use your hands and watch your head so you don't bump your head or fall off but it isn't any harder than

climbing a tree. Once at the top there are great views of Mt. Rainier, Mt. Adams, and Mt. St. Helens. On the scramble back down to the saddle, make sure you go back the way you came. There are two paths that look like a shorter trail down but they quickly dead-end.

Perhaps you want to take a side trip on the way down. There is a primitive path that branches off from the main trail at the lower edge of the rock field at N 46 45.004 Lat, W 121 46.97 Long. The trail sidehills along the meadow and goes through the brush. The hill side is covered in beargrass. At the boulder field you can climb up to another saddle or sit in the boulder field and try to spot the Pikas and Marmots.

Continue back down to the trailhead and if you have time, take Trail of the Shadows. It is across the main road from the Longmire Inn. It is a 1/2 mile walk around the Longmire Meadow to see a homestead cabin and soda springs.

Here is a trail that has plenty of switchbacks, is safe for small children to the saddle, has great views, and is fairly uncrowded.

Enjoy the photos!!

Gallery Pics

Switchback Steve