

Grouse Vista Trail, WA



Vicinity Location:

About 20 miles northeast of Vancouver, WA in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Directions:

From Portland: The drive takes about 90 minutes from downtown Portland. Take I-205 North into Washington and drive about 4 miles and take Exit 30. The exit branches into 3 exits, take the middle exit, Exit 30B and merge onto SR-500 East. Stay in the right lane for about .3 mile. This is an exit lane and turns right onto NE 4th Plain Road.

Follow NE 4th Plain Road for 1.3 miles, getting into the left turn lane to make a left onto NE Ward Road. Follow NE Ward Road for 3.3 miles and it turns into NE 182nd Avenue. Continue north on NE 182nd Avenue for another mile and turn right onto NE 139th Street. Follow NE 139th Street up the hill for 2.3 miles and make a left to continue on NE Rawson Road. After about 5.6, Rawson Road turns into L-1400 Forest Road. Continue on this road for another 2.9 miles, for a total of 8.5 miles from NE 139TH Street.

Turn left at the sign for Larch Camp onto the L-1000 Road. The pavement ends in 1.8 miles. After driving 4.2 miles from the L-1000 Road, turn right on the L-1200 road. In .7 mile is a junction where you bear to right to stay on the L-1200 road. Drive a total of 5.2 miles on the L-1200 road to the parking area for the trailhead.

There are is a bathroom at the trailhead.

A State of Washington Discover Pass is required for parking.

Trail:

Gifford Pinchot National Forest Trail 180F, 180, 180D, 180C, and Tarbell Trail with connections to Trails 180A and 172.

There is a geocache along trail at: **N 45° 44.769 W 122° 14.339** Info at Geocaching.com

Trail Maps:

Topo Map, National Forest Service Map

Length and Elevation:

7.5 miles round trip. 2.8 miles to Silver Star summit. Elevation gain of 2,045 feet and loss of 30 feet to the summit of Silver Star. Elevation gain of 2,250 feet and loss of 2,250 feet roundtrip. Elevation at the trailhead at 2,375 feet, highest point is at 4,390 feet. Lowest elevation is 2,375 feet.

Review: November 24, 2008.

At 4,390, Silver Star is the tallest peak in the area. Park in the gravel pull-off and look over the information at the kiosk at the parking area. Cross the road and walk up the forested trail. Just a few hundred feet up the trail is a junction with the Tarbell Trail. This is the trail you will finish this hike on.

The first .75 mile of the trail is very rocky in spots and almost always going uphill. The trail breaks out of the trees and affords views to the north. From here the trail goes uphill again to the first junction. Bear left at this junction and continue along the trail, enjoying the views that are laid out beneath you.

At about .9 mile, you'll be able to see Sturgeon Rock off to the northeast. The rock is at the end of a ridge that rises up in the distance to a kind of flat plateau. Looking to the right of that a bit, you can barely see Silver Star poking out above the distant trees. From this vantage, you can also see about a mile of the trail up ahead as it leads towards Silver Star.

The trail continues to climb and go in and out of the trees for the next .5 mile. After about 1.4 miles from the trailhead is another trail junction. Take the left trail to stay on the north side of the slope for the best views.

The trail drops down past a rocky area with Pyramid Peak looming above, then climbs again. After about 2.25 miles is another trail junction. Turn left again and continue uphill. The trail here is an old jeep trail and is pretty rocky and you pick your way, avoiding stumbling over the larger rocks.

At about 2.6 miles is a 4-way junction. Continue ahead at a bearing of about 45 degrees, northeast, uphill towards the summit of Silver Star. The trail to the right is the Indian Pits Trail. After about 2.7 miles is the next trail junction where you turn right and continue uphill. From the junction, the summit is only about .3 mile away and 500 more feet in elevation gain. Follow this trail past a small campsite on the left, and up to a small saddle. The false summit is to the right and the summit of Silver Star Mountain is to the left. On the summit is the foundation of an old fire lookout and a bit of debris left over from when it was dismantled. From the summit you can see Mt. Jefferson, South Sister, Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, Mt. Rainier, Mt. St. Helens and the snow on Goat Rocks.

To return, retrace your steps to the junction to the Indian Pits Trail, turn right at the 4-way junction and follow the jeep trail for about 200 feet. Take a right at the Y-junction and follow the narrow, fairly level trail. Most times of the year you can hear a stream farther downhill. There may be a sign marking Sturgeon Rock Trail and spring. Soon you will see a blue plastic tank along the trail. This gathers water from a nearby spring and you can refill your water bottles here. Walk on the narrow trail through the woods and turn left at the next junction, JCTT. Proceed down the trail about .4 mile, leave the trail and walk closer to the basalt columns of Sturgeon Rock for a better view. Go back to the trail and then down to JCST at N 45° 44.852, W 122° 14.792 and rejoin the jeep trail.

In a short distance are some user trails where you can pick your way up to the ridge. Climbing Sturgeon Rock you'll find some more user trails leading up the backbone of Sturgeon Rock. Clamber up the mossy rocks to the ridge and follow the ridge up as far as you like for views of mountain peaks and valleys. The walking is pretty easy but there is loose rock to watch out for. There are great views of Silver Star, Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, Mt. Rainier, and Mt. St. Helens. On the way back down to the trail try to find the user trails and then pick a safe spot to drop back down to the trail.

The trail passes a short level area with views to the southwest, then the trail descends fairly steeply following just below a ridge, through the trees. Sturgeon Rock is the last panoramic view on this trail. Continue downhill to a 4-way junction, waypoint JC4W, and turn left on the Tarbell Trail. After the trail drops down several switchbacks it levels out and generally follows the contour of the land past a couple of small streams. There are also some openings in the trees that afford glimpses of ridges to the south and west. There is a sign pointing out Pyramid Rock and from this vantage point you can look up and see the Grouse Vista Trail and it passes beneath Pyramid Rock.

The next section of the trail is alive with the sounds of the tributaries of Rock Creek rushing down

the mountainside. Follow this trail over Rock Creek on a metal bridge with a wood deck, which takes you safely over Rock Creek. After crossing Rock Creek, the trail begins to climb for the next mile and passes a few clearings but you are now at about 2,500 feet and you can no longer see the distant mountain peaks.

The trail finally starts descending again about .5 mile from the trailhead. Turn right at the next junction, back onto the Grouse Vista Trail and shortly return back to the trailhead..Parts of this trail are quite rocky so boots with ankle support should be worn. This trail is suitable for dogs and for young children who are experienced hikers . The only cliffs near the trail are at the summit of Silver Star and on Sturgeon Rock. This trail has some pretty steep sections on it.Enjoy the Photos!

Gallery Pics

Switchback Steve