Lacamas Heritage Trail, WA

Vicinity Location:
The Southern trailhead is about 14 miles Northeast of Portland, OR, on the southern shore of Lacamas Lake.

Directions:
From Portland:
Southern Trailhead:
Take I-205 North; drive past the Portland Airport Exit and cross the Columbia River. Move over to the right lane as you cross the bridge. Take exit 27 for Vancouver/Camas and move into the left lane on the off ramp. Merge onto Highway 14 East toward Camas and drive 6.3 miles. Take exit 12 for Camas and go 1.7 miles. The road will change to NW 6th Ave. Turn Left on NE Garfield St (SR-500) Continue to follow WA-500 uphill for 0.1 mile. Turn Right on NE Everett St (SR-500) and drive 0.9 mile. Turn Left on NE Lake Rd, drive about .3 mile, turn right, and park in the paved lot.

There is a small overflow lot about 150 feet north of the main parking lot.

From Vancouver:
Northern Trailhead:
Drive east on SR 500 E toward past I-205. Bear Right on NE Fourth Plain Blvd and drive 4 miles. Continue on SR 500 E, NE 58th St for another 0.4 mile.
Turn Right on NE 199th Ave and go 0.5 mile. Continue on NE Ingles Rd for 1.4 miles. Turn Right on NE Goodwin Rd and drive about 0.2 mile. Turn left onto NW Alexandria Dr Pvt and turn left into the trailhead parking lot. If you pass NW Camas Meadows Drive, then you have gone too far.

There are bathrooms at the trailheads at either end.

Length and Elevation:
7 miles roundtrip. Elevation gain is 15 feet and the loss is 15 feet to the turn-around point. Total gain and loss is 60 feet in elevation change. Elevation at the trailhead is 190 feet. Elevation at the turn-around point is 190 feet. High point is about 200 feet.

Trail:
Lacamas Heritage Trail
There is at least one geocache along this trail at: N 45° 36.941 W 122° 25.200 . Info at Geocaching.com

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, Vancouver Parks Map

Review: September 12, 2008
The southern trailhead has a much larger parking lot than the northern trailhead. From the southern trailhead, wander towards the bathrooms and look across the paved access road to find the trailhead. The fist part of the trail is paved and goes through a wooded park area and past a small mobile home park. The pavement ends as the trail enters the woods and soon the trail is going near the shore of Lacamas Lake. There are several seeps and a couple of small streams along the first mile of the trail providing habitat for jewelweed, ferns, and other plants that like damp soil. There is a local access trail junction about .7 miles from the southern trailhead.

The trail has views of the lake and far shore and there are some benches to sit on to enjoy the view.

There are several interpretive signs with pictures and information about the wildlife along the lake and trail.

The level of the lake drops a couple of feet during the summer exposing mud flats which can sometimes be a little smelly in the fall. The lake is open to powerboats, but I usually only see one boat at a time plying this part of the lake. After about 1.5 miles the trail meets a private boat dock. Turn left for about 50 feet and the trail continues on the right along the shore of the lake.

The trail begins to leave the shore of the lake and crosses a couple of steel and concrete bridges over flood channels. After the bridges, the trail leaves the water and enters a Douglas Fir forest with undergrowth of snowberries, Oregon Grape, and at least one patch of poison oak. The trail goes along the edge of Camas Meadows Golf Course. The section along the golf course is the least scenic part of the trail. You soon reach the northern parking lot with restrooms.

This is a nice low-elevation hike in the Metro area and can be hiked or biked year-round. It is common to see people with jogger strollers on this hike. This hike is recommended for small children.

Enjoy the photos!!

Gallery Pics

Switchback Steve