Lostine-Minam River Loop, OR



I'll get the mileage and elevation updated with our GPS tracks but this is pretty close for now.

Date	Start	Stop/Camp	Trail	Distance (mi)	Side Trip/s	Distance (mi)	Total Day (mi)
7/21	Sean's house	Joseph, OR	N/A	322.4			322.4
7/22	Joseph, OR	Two Pan TH	N/A	22.0			22.0
	Two Pan TH	Mirror Lake	East Fork Lostine	8.7			
7/23		Mirror Lake		0.0	Eagle Cap	5.0	5.9
7/24	Mirror Lake	Minam Lake	Ivan Carper	5.4			
	Minam Lake	Swamp Lake	Minam Lake, Copper Creek, North Minam	10.0			
7/25	Swamp Lake	John Henry Lake	North Minam, Bowman, John Henry Lake Spur	11.1			
7/26	John Henry Lake	Chimney Lake	John Henry Lake Spur, Bowman, Chimney Wood	9.7	Wood Lake	7.2	16.9
7/27	Chimney Lake	Two Pan TH	Bowman, NF8210	7.6			7.6
	Two Pan TH	Joseph, OR	N/A	22.0			22.0
			Backpacking distance:	51.1	Side trips:		30.4
					Total trip:		81.5

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

This backpacking trip is in the Wallowa Mountains, Oregon

Day 1 – Two Pan Trailhead to Mirror Lake 8.86 miles, 6.5 hours

Yesterday Sean drove to Joseph, Oregon, past Wallowa Lake, and to the Mt. Howard Tram so we could ride a gondola car up to the top. In 2022 tickets were $40 for each person. You have great views from the tram and there is a nice loop trail on top, We saw the surrounding mountains, Wallowa Lake, and a paraglider, There is a launching area north of the tram.

On our walk we saw some marmots, ground squirrels and chipmunks We finished the loop and had

beers at the café on top. A deer came by while we were relaxing.

After being on top for a couple of hours we caught the tram to the bottom. The last tram runs about an hour after when they stop selling tickets. When we got to the car Sean's hatchback was up. It had hit on some of our gear when it was closing and opened back up. That could have been a disaster but all of our gear and my phone were still in the car.

We drove back into Joseph and checked in to Indian Lodge Motel then had dinner at the Ember Cafe. We ordered the largest size pizza and it was delicious but we couldn't eat it all and we were sad to have to leave the leftovers.

The next morning we checked out and had breakfast at the Cheyenne Café. Sean had hash browns, eggs, and toast and I had the giant cinnamon roll. Everything was delicious.

Sean drove to the Two Pan Trailhead. Most of the road is paved but the last few miles are a pretty crummy dirt road. We got all our gear together and headed up the trail. It is a typical horse trail but not too dusty. The trail climbs through a beautiful forest of Douglas fir, noble first, and grand firs.

There are many places where you see the Lostine River through the trees. As you climb higher there are breaks in the trees and then rockfields allowing you to see across the valley. In many places the trail is high above the river but after a few miles it comes to some lovely campsites next to the river.

It is an all day climb and after a few hours you come out into an alpine valley. Eagle Cap is away in the distance and the views are magnificent. You climb gently through the meadows for a couple of miles. We chose a nice spot by the stream for lunch. We tried sitting in the shade of a nice tree but the mosquitoes were ferocious. Sitting in the sun by the stream was just fine with only occasional squadrons of mosquitoes looking for landing sites.

We got back on the trail and it wasn't too long before we crossed the stream on a broken down bridge tilting into the stream. After the bridge the trail re-enters the woods for the final climb up to Mirror Lake. This was the hottest part of the day and we were getting tired. It seemed to take forever to reach the lake.

We found several open spots to choose from and while I was coming down a little gully I slipped in the mud, hyperextendng my little finger and gashing my knee.

It was another five minutes before we got to the lake and I spend about 30 minutes washing my gash out and getting all the dirt and sand out of the wound., I dried and bandaged it up. Luckily it isn't bleeding much and doesn't really hurt yet.

After that we had snacks then waled down to Moccasin Lake and back to see if camping is better there, but it wasn't.

Back at camp we made dinner, had dessert, and filtered water for tomorrow. There are tons of mosquitoes here and they hunt you down whenever you stop.

Day 2 – Mirror Lake to Eagle Camp to Mirror Lake 5.9 miles, 5.5 hours
We woke to the sun shining and birds singing. It got pretty cold last night, close to freezing and I as worrying about my Sawyer water filter freezing, which ruins it. Luckily it didn't freeze. I went over to Seans tent and he had gotten kind of clod in the night too,. Of course the mosquitoes came out as soon as the sun came up so I got on my raincoat and rainpants and put on bug spray.

After breakfast we started out to Eagle Cap. This year there is quite a bit of snow and we had to use

our GPS a lot to find our way past the snow. Once we got up to the ridge, high above the lakes, the trail goes to the back side and there is no more snow. This trail is a real slog as it climbs and switchbacks up to the top. There are a couple of sketchy parts where the trail has sluffed off leaving bare rocks to cross but it is find if you take your time and be careful.

We only saw two people coming down so we had the top to ourselves for about five minutes. Glacier Lake was a sight to behold with big chunks of ice floating on the lake. Great views of the Matterhorn to the north and the different river valleys laid below you.

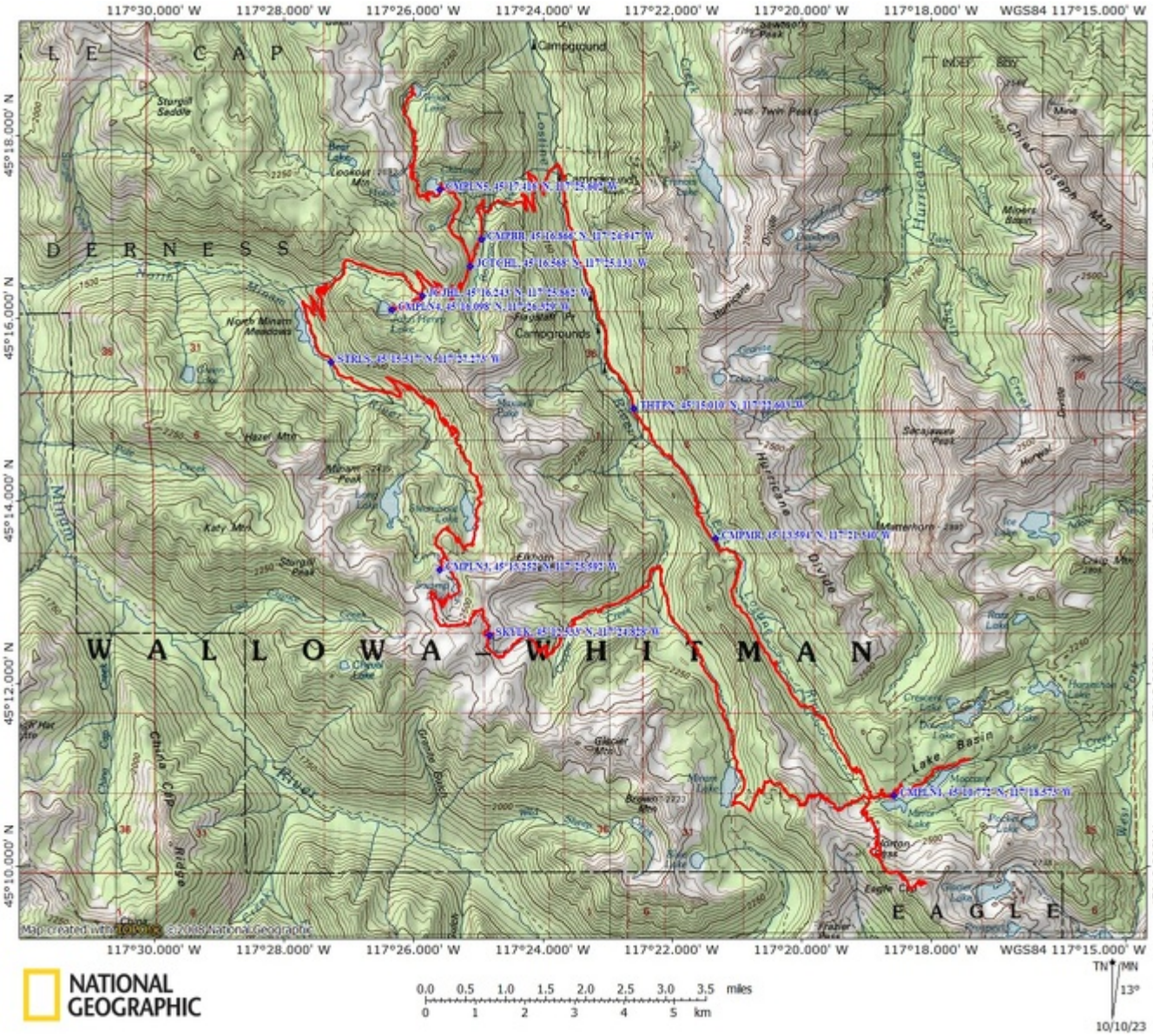
We headed down and met at least a dozen people coming up. We missed our trail junction on the way down and I picked a rock scramble to get us back to the trail. I don't know if that was the best choice or if we should have kept to the trail we were on. Sean slipped once before we made it aback to the trail and scuffed his hand a little.

Once we got back to camp we decided to stay a Mirror Lake another night and backpack extra miles to make up for staying. We had a nice walk to the outlet of the lake and took a nap at camp. Now we are set to get out of our tents at 6 AM for an early start.

Day 3 Mirror Lake to Swamp Lake 15.4 miles, 12 hours
We woke up early and got out of tour tents at 6 AM. Another beautiful day. Sean mentioned a chipmunk had gotten to his bag of pretzel snacks and chewed a couple. We left camp about 7:40 and started the long climb up to Ivan Carper Pass. We were able to rock-hop the stream crossing just out of camp.

The trail is a typical pack-horse trail with lots of boulders in a deeply gullied trail. We climbed and climbed up to the pass. There was still a lot of snow patches on the trail making routefinding a little challenging. We took a break at the pass then started sown to Minam Lake. Some sections were pretty good but most sections were pack-horse trail.

Enjoy the photos!!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve


117°30.000' W
117°28.000' W
117°26.000' W
117°24.000' W
117°22.000' W
117°20.000' W
117°18.000' W
WGS84 117°15.000' W
45°18.000' N
45°16.000' N
45°14.000' N
45°12.000' N
45°10.000' N
Campground
Sturgill Saddle
Bear Lake Lookout Mtn
Twin Peaks
Chief Joseph Mtn
Hurricane Divide
Hurricane Creek
Miners Basin
Divide Creek
Lookout Mtn
Forest Service Campgrounds
North Minam Meadows
Minam River
Minam Peak
Hazel Mtn
Katy Mtn
Sturgill Peak
Elkhorn
Mamenhorn
Secesseeta Peak
Hurricane Divide
Lostine River
Lake Basin
Granite Creek
Glacier Mtn
Brown Mtn
Chesla Cap Ridge
Eagle Cap
Fraher Mtn
Map created with National Geographic
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 3.5 miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 km
TN (MN 13°
10/10/23