Palisades Lakes, WA

Vicinity Location:
About 59 miles southeast of Seattle, WA in Mt. Rainier National Park.

Directions:
From Seattle: Follow I-5 South for 25 miles and take exit 142A to merge onto WA Highway 18 East toward North Bend/Auburn. Drive 4.4 miles and take the Auburn Way/WA Highway 164 East exit toward Enumclaw for 0.2 mile.

Make a slight right at 6th St SE then turn left at Auburn Way S/C St SE/WA Highway 164.

About 58 miles southeast of Seattle, WA in Mt. Rainier National Park.From Seattle: Follow I-5 South for 25 miles and take exit 142A to merge onto WA Highway 18 East toward North Bend/Auburn. Drive 4.4 miles and take the Auburn Way/WA Highway 164 East exit toward Enumclaw for 0.2 mile.Make a slight right at 6th St SE then turn left at Auburn Way S/C St SE/WA Highway 164.

Continue to follow WA Highway 164 for 14.7 miles then turn left at Roosevelt Ave E/WA Highway 410.

Continue to follow WA Highway 410 for 37.3 miles.
Make a slight right onto Sunrise Park Rd and follow the road for about 14 miles to the Viewpoint parking lot.

From Portland: Take I-5 North towards Seattle and drive for about 75 miles.
Take exit 68 for US-12 East. At the top of the off ramp, turn right onto US-12 and travel about 71.8 miles. This takes you past Morton and through Packwood.

Make a slight left onto WA Highway 123, driving for 16.1 miles. This road is seasonally closed.
Continue straight onto WA Highway 410 for 3.5 miles.

Make a sharp left onto Sunrise Park Rd and follow the road for about 11 miles to the Sunrise Point parking lot. This is a popular parking area and fills up on weekends and holidays.

The road to Sunrise is usually only open from July through September.

There are no bathrooms or water at the trailhead. The closest bathrooms are at Sunrise, 1 mile farther up the road.

Pets are not allowed on the trails in National Parks.

A permit is needed to enter the park.

Trail:
Palisades Lakes Trail with connections to Sourdough Ridge Trail.

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, National Park Service Map, Download Garmin .gpx file

Length and Elevation:
7.5 miles round trip. Elevation gain of 786 feet and loss of 929 feet to Upper Palisades Lake.

Elevation gain of 1,600 feet and loss of 1,600 feet roundtrip. Elevation at the trailhead at 6,200 feet, highest point is at 6,200 feet. Lowest elevation is 5,600 feet.

Review: August 24, 2009.
Near the trailhead of Upper Palisades Lake Trail there are great views of the Olympic Mountains to the north. As you walk along you can see the emerald green water of Sunrise Lake. The junction to this lake is about .5 mile down the trail. From the junction to Sunrise Lake, follow the side trail about .25 mile to get to the shore of the lake.

This first part of the trail is downhill, so be prepared for a 500 foot ascent on the way back. About .5 mile from the trailhead, a short side trail branches off to the left, leading to Sunrise Lake. From the junction the trail continues to drop down, crosses a small seasonal creek, and passes a small seasonal pond. The pond looks like a great breeding place for mosquitoes so be sure to bring insect repellent on this hike until late August.

The trail climbs and crests a small ridge with nice views of the Palisades, then drops down, crossing a small creek at the foot of a lush green meadow. The Palisades rise up in the background to jagged peaks. There is a mixture of meadows and forests continuing gently downhill.

The trail continues to gain and lose elevation and passes to the left of Clover Lake at 1.5 miles from the trailhead. The trail climbs over a ridge as it continues past Tom, Dick and Harry Lakes, about 2.7 miles from the trailhead. Just before the lakes is a trail junction to the left that leads to Hidden Lake.

The .6 mile trail to Hidden Lake starts out fairly gentle, but soon becomes a steep, switchbacking trail, crossing the outlet stream from Hidden Lake twice. The trail levels out, then drops down to Hidden Lake and a small pond. There is a nice view of the Palisades, which ring the lake, their jagged peaks cutting off any views of Mt. Rainier.

Back at Tom, Dick and Harry Lakes, walk another mile on a mostly level trail to Upper Palisades Lake at 6,190 feet. There is a backcountry camp beyond the lake that can be reserved at the ranger station at the White River entrance. The trail to the right continues about .2 mile farther onto an unmaintained trail overlooking Lower Palisades Lake.

The Palisades provide a rugged backdrop to a pristine mountain lake. Summer wildflowers dot the meadows and Elk frequent this area in the fall.

This is trail that is safe for children. The streams are easy to cross and any cliffs are away from the trail. There are great mountain views and many meadows along this trail.

Enjoy the Photos!
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