

Trout Creek - Deschutes River, OR



Vicinity Location:

About 90 miles southeast of Portland, OR in the Deschutes National Forest.

Directions:

From Portland drive east on Highway 26. Pass by Government Camp and in about 2 miles stay left at the junction with Highway 35 and continue on Highway 26 towards Madras, and Bend.

Drive 47.9 miles, passing through the Warm Springs Reservation. Soon after crossing the Deschutes River, turn left at an abandoned gas station. You will see four road options; take the second from the right, signed for the Mecca Flat Recreation Site.

Drive 1.5 miles on a narrow potholed gravel to the campground and day use parking at Mecca Flat. On the way there is an old railroad tunnel in 0.3 miles. There is a spot to pull out if you want a closer look at this tunnel that was built in 1912.

There is a pit toilet bathroom at the trailhead.

Length and Elevation:

Total distance is 16.1 miles. Trailhead elevation is 1,371. Highest point is 1,371 feet. Lowest point is 1,300 feet. Total ascent is 238 feet and total descent is 238 feet.

Itinerary	Mileage	Camp Elevation	Ascent	Descent	Notes
Day 1 - Mecca Flat Campground-Frog Springs Creek-Started 11:15 am - Finished at 5:45 pm	10.7	1,327	170	222	Day hiked to Trout Creek Campground and back to camp
Day 2-Frog Springs Creek-Mecca Flat Campground-Started 9:30 am - Finished at 12:05 pm	5.4	1,371	68	16	Rafters getting ready at parking lot
Totals:	16.1		238	238	

Trail:

Trout Creek Trail

There is at least one geocache at: **N 44° 48.750 W 121° 05.763** Info at Geocaching.com

Trail Maps:

Topo Map, Download Garmin .gpx file, Open Garmin .gpx file

No permit needed to park for backpacking. There are fees for using the campground.

There is a pit toilet bathroom at the trailhead and additional bathrooms along the way and at the far end of the trail.

History:

This trail was a section of the Oregon Trunk Railroad completed in 1912 but abandoned in 1923. It was one of two rival lines built down the Deschutes River towards Bend in the early 20th century. Oregon Trunk Railroad and the Deschutes Railroad Co were fierce rivals often sabotaging efforts of each other. Powder stores were exploded in night raids, blasting was timed to roll rocks into each other's path or charges were set off to throw rock and debris across the river while the competing crews were working.

While clearing rock for shallow blasting holes a crew from Des Chutes Railroad discovered a large ball of rattlesnakes huddled together to conserve body heat. The crew spent several days sneaking burlap bags full of rattlesnakes into the Oregon Trunk Railroad camp which caused many men from the Oregon Trunk Railroad to pack and leave the railroad.

Both companies posted sharpshooters on the ridges to cover their crews. One of these riflemen noticed sputtering sparks in the midst of sleeping workers. When the workers were alerted they found a lighted fuse leading to a keg of black powder.

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Head north from the trailhead parking lot along a well-used dirt trail along the river through sagebrush. Along the river you'll pass by alder and willows.

In about 1.5 miles you pass through or over a gate onto the private property of the Luelling River Retreat where signs ask you to stay on the trail. The trail goes along an old windbreak poplars, some of which have been gnawed through by beavers. There is a very faded sign commemorating the spot where Peter Skene Ogden crossed the Deschutes in December 1825. Ogden was the first European to explore this area.

Walk across a lawn below a ranch house and continue along the river on the trail which is between the railroad grade river. The trail joins the railroad grade after crossing a couple of small streams.

Follow the old railroad grade and in about 2 1/2 miles there is a pit toilet along the trail where rafters camp.

After about 4 miles, the canyons close in on both sides of the river, and the river speeds up, and the basalt cliffs become more dramatic, falling steeply from the mesa above to the river below.

We set up camp at Frog Springs Creek with nice campsites by the river and a pit toilet on the other side of the railroad grade.

Once we set up camp we did a dayhike to the end of the trail at Trout Creek Campground. We passed by some climbing trails but they are closed each year from January 15 through August 31 for nesting golden eagles.

We looked around at Trout Creek Campground then turned back and hiked upstream to our camp.

The next morning we had breakfast, packed up, and headed back to the Mecca Flat Campground and our car.

This is a great spring backpacking trip and is good for children. The trip can be shortened to accommodate younger backpackers and the stream crossings offer very mild challenges. This trail is

good for dogs too.

Enjoy the photos!!

Gallery Pics

Switchback Steve

