

# ELK MEADOWS SOUTH TRAIL #645



Northwest Forest Pass	→	Required
Distance	→	2.5 miles one-way
Elevation	→	High 5,050 feet - Low 4,600 feet
Snow Free	→	June - October
Difficulty	→	Moderate

**Directions to Trailhead:** Drive south from Hood River on Highway 35 about 33 miles. Turn right at the Hood River Meadows Nordic Ski Area sign and drive to the trailhead parking lot on the right.

**Trail Highlights:** A beautiful view of Mt. Hood and an abundance of wildflowers can be enjoyed in the meadow area July through August. Several connecting trails can be taken to extend the trip. Combine them to make an ideal loop trip for either a day hike or an overnight trip.

**Trail Description:** Follow the Elk Meadows Trail north, passing a wilderness entry sign and crossing the footbridge leading over Clark Creek. Continue across Kate and Warren Creeks. At the one-mile point, there is a junction with the Newton Creek Trail #646, on the left. Continue straight ahead and watch your step crossing Newton Creek on logs and rocks. Climb a series of switchbacks to a saddle in the ridge and a four-way trail junction. To the left (west), the Gnarl Ridge Trail #652 climbs to the Timberline Trail #600. To the right (east), the Bluegrass Ridge Trail #647 climbs to Elk Mountain with nice views of Mt. Hood and the Hood River Valley. Continue straight to a junction with Elk Meadows Perimeter Trail #645A. Follow the Elk Meadows Trail to the right, passing a junction with the Bluegrass Ridge Tie Trail, and then coming to a junction with Gnarl Ridge Cutoff Trail # 652A at the North end of Elk Meadows. If a car shuttle has been arranged, you may continue down Cold Springs Creek about 6 ½ miles to Polallie Trailhead parking lot on Highway 35. For the energetic few that don't mind climbing the additional 1,600 foot elevation gain in two and a half miles, a trip to Lamberson Butte will provide a rewarding view. Follow the Gnarl Ridge trail #652 or Gnarl Ridge Tie Trail # 652A to the Timberline Trail #600. Turn right (north) and continue through the woods and grassy areas. After passing the remains of a stone shelter, you will arrive at an area of bushy, gnarled White Bark Pine. This makes a good stopping point, or you may continue to the left to complete your climb to the top of the butte.

**Please Note:** Camping is not permitted within the meadow itself, or the island of trees within the meadow. Please select a campsite in the nearby trees surrounding the meadow. By following this regulation, you will help protect the fragile meadow environment. **MAP ON REVERSE**

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITY GUIDE

### MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

Hood River Ranger District

6780 Highway 35 – Parkdale, OR 97041

541-352-6002

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood)



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