

RED LAKE TRAIL #719

5.8

LENGTH:	5.70 Miles	USE:	Heavy
ELEVATION:	3,600 To 5,300 Ft.	DIFF.	Med. Hard
USGS MAP:	Olallie Scenic Area	Mt. Bk. Rtg.	5
AVG. GRD.	7 %	MAX. GRD.	18 %

ACCESS AND USE:

Red Lake trail is open to hikers, horses, and mt. bikes. With grades of up to 18%, and very rocky trail surfaces along 75% of its course, it is recommended for expert bikers only. This path is the main east-west thoroughfare of the Olallie area trail network. Many other hiking routes can be accessed from its Path running down the approx. center of the scenic area, on an east-west axis. Some of the main trails include Timber Lake #733, Pacific Crest #2000, Double Peaks #735, Lodgepole #706, and Potato Butte #719A. Many of the largest and most popular lakes are found along its length as well. Some of them include Timber lake, Top Lake, Cigar Lake, Fork Lake, Sheep Lake, Wall Lake, Averill Lake, and Red Lake, near its western end.

For our purposes, we will make the Olallie Lake end of the path the actual trail head. Most who have hiked the entire length of Red Lake trail say it is easier and most pleasant from a difficulty standpoint to start from this end. At 5,000 Ft., the path Gains Approx. 400 ft. to the Upper Lakes basin, and then descends 1,800 ft. to the lower end of its route, on the 380 spur, about 3/4 of a mile east of Forest Service road 46. For those who prefer a challenge, the 1,800 ft. elevation gain from this end of the trail may be just what you're looking for. Parking is somewhat limited on both ends, with a slight advantage going to Olallie lake. There is no water or other facilities of any kind once you leave Olallie lake, except the lakes themselves. Any natural occurring sources of water should be boiled or treated before consumption. There are virtually unlimited, excellent camping disperse sites all along the length of this trail. Please use existing camp sites and fire rings, to avoid further damage to the extremely fragile ecosystems around the high Cascade lakes. The ground cover is easily damaged, and takes decades to recover from human activities such as tent trenches and firepits. Another growing matter of concern is proper human waste disposal, especially around the heavily used lakeside areas. Please locate latrines as far away from any body of water as possible. As this area is considered and maintained as a semi-wilderness, and As this trail is especially popular and heavily used, please respect the rights of the resident animal population and other campers to a peaceful, clean, quiet, and safe wilderness experience.

Access, Olallie Lake trail head: Forest service rd. 46 to 4690. Left, to the 4220 Skyline rd., Right to Olallie Lake. The trail head is located on the west (righthand) side of the 4220 rd. Approx. 1/2 mile south of the Olallie Lake Guard Station.

Access, West end trail head: Forest Service rd. 46 to approx. 3 miles south of the 4690 turn-off. Left turn onto the 380 spur rd. (There is a sign directing traffic to the Red lake trail head at this intersection). Follow 380 spur about 3/4 of a mile, trail head is on the left (east) side of rd at this point.

DESCRIPTION:

To describe the diversity and uniqueness of this trail in a few hundred words is difficult, to say the least. It can best be visualized as the primary east-west freeway of the scenic area, with off-ramps to many of the premier lakes and trails in the area. At its geographical high point it is bisected by the Pacific Crest Trail #2000 which is the main north-south route through the scenic area. All the flora and fauna described in other trail descriptions can be found along this route as well. The diverse geography of this route is probably its most unique feature. Starting with a westward climb from the shore of Olallie lake, you climb in moderate grades and switchbacks towards the Upper lake, Cigar lakes basins, and the approximate east west ridgeline that separates the Olallie basin from the Clackamas river drainage system. This area of high points, (Double Peaks, 6,000 ft; Twin peaks 5,602 ft;), and plateaus and lake basins, mark the summit of the Cascade range through this area. Old growth forests blanket the area, with the main species being Western and Mountain Hemlock, Pacific Silver Fir, Sub Alpine fir, Lodgepole pine and Alaskan Yellow Cedar. Pockets of wild Rhododendron add splashes of color

in spring and early summer. Wild Huckleberries and Blueberries grow in profusion almost everywhere, and add beautiful hues of red and yellow to the ground cover in late summer and fall. The Indian place name "Olallie" translated means "place of many berries". Bird and animal species native to the Cascade range abound in this habitat. Among the most active and common animals that make this place their home include Black Bear, Coyotes, Pine Martins, Bobcats, Elk, Deer, and even The occasional Mt. Lion.

Once you break over the summit between Top lake and Fork lake, a steady descent begins towards the Upper Clackamas river basin. From this high point the trail drops over 1,800 ft. in a series of 5 lake basins along the way. Potato Butte trail and summit, at 5,280 ft. offer unsurpassed views to the north and west, for those interested in a side trip along the way. The trail head for this climb is adjacent to Sheep Lake and is well Marked. Continuing down the trail, Sheep, Wall, and Averill Lakes provide fantastic camp sites among clear, clean, pristine high Cascade lakes.

Weekdays, in June and September are the least crowded and most peaceful times to visit these areas. On any given weekend in July and August expect to encounter between 50 to 300 fellow campers enjoying this unique and unusual high Cascade semi-wilderness.

TRAIL MILEAGE LOG:

- 0.00 Trail head departs 4220 rd. approx. 3/10 of a mile south of the Olallie Lake Guard station.
- 0.20 Trail climbs moderately in a southwesterly direction.
- 0.30 Path passes small, unnamed bodies of water on right side, and continues gradual climb. Surface of trail fairly smooth here.
- 0.40 Trail crosses up and over large rocky outcropping, tricky footing for horses.
- 0.60 Another small lake on right of path.
- 0.70 Timber lake trail turnoff is at this point on the left.
- 0.80 At this point the path follows the Top Lake run-off water course upwards through a small box-like canyon. Very beautiful high Cascade riparian area.
- 0.90 Lovely small waterfall to the left of path in springtime run-off conditions. Unfortunately, this little stream is usually dry by mid-June.
- 1.10 Trail encounters Top lake on left and comes to a T junction. Go right here to stay on Red Lake trail. A left turn here will take you up and around to the P.C.T. trail junction and Upper Lakes area.
- 1.30 For the last 2/10 of a mile, trail is a moderately steep, steady climb. Trail surface becomes rocky and slippery. Also at this point you reach a 4 way intersection which is the Pacific Crest trail #2000. Go straight for Red Lake trail, left for Upper Lake area and points south, and right for Olallie Lake Guard Station and points north on the P.C.T. Trail moderates in steepness, but continues to climb.
- 1.45 Path crests ridgeline separating Olallie basin from Clackamas River basin. Highest point on trail is reached at 5,650 ft.
- 1.50 Trail parallels ridgeline to right. Huckleberries, Heath, Mosses and Lichens grow in profusion.
- 1.90 Path downgrade increases in steepness. Trail surfaces becomes increasingly rocky and rough.
- 2.10 Last 2/10ths of a mile very steep, rocky and step-like in places. Loose rock makes footing tricky and difficult.
- 2.45 Here you come to the Lodgepole trail #706 junction. You must make a left turn here to stay on the Red Lake trail. One trail sign gives directions at this writing. If you pass a small body of water to the left just past this junction, you are on the Lodgepole trail, and need to turn back.
- 2.60 Trail skirts north shore of Fork Lake.

- 2.75 Trail meets Sheep lake and Potato Butte #719A junction. Trail surface much improved along here. Continued downgrade becomes gentle and fairly smooth.
- 2.90 Trail departs west end of Sheep lake and begins slightly steeper downgrade, becoming rocky and rough.
- 3.00 Path reaches Wall lake and follows 750 ft. of north shoreline. Many good dispersed camping sites around lake.
- 3.30 Trail surface becomes very rocky, following a watercourse for 2/10ths of a mile.
- 3.65 Here you pass along the north shore of Averill Lake. Very thick old growth around lake. Fairly flat terrain. Very beautiful area. Trail surface is very flat and smooth, making for very pleasant hiking or biking.
- 3.7-8 Descending trail passes through primeval old growth, as thick as it gets in these environs. Very green and lush. Wild Rhododendrons grow everywhere through this area. Oregon Ash and Thinleaf (mountain) Alder dot the area. Redleaf Alder grows along water courses and at lakeside.
- 3.95 Trail crosses main run-off water course for the lakes above. Very wet and riparian in nature, Huckleberries as thick as they get along here.
- 4.10 Red lake trail turn-off on your left at this point.
- 4.15 Trail again crosses huge watercourse, main lakes run-off channel.
- This course becomes a good sized river in spring. Hiking here is bound to get your feet wet in early June, depending on snowpack.
- 4.30 Path begins steeper descent through old growth Douglas Fir. Large Hemlocks also abound as trail follows hillside halfway down a northwest leading ridgeline. Trail surface fairly smooth, slippery in places when wet.
- 4.50 Trail begins very steep descent. Meadows to the right are filled with water in spring.
- 4.70 Trail again becomes very rough, crosses main watercourse once more.
- 4.80 More stately old growth Douglas Firs, awe inspiring in their majesty. Vine Maple and Ferns carpet understory of forest.
- 5.00 Views of Clackamas river basin become apparent as trail continues downward through old growth Douglas Fir.
- 5.10 Path reaches powerline corridor.
- 5.15 Here the trail gets a little tricky and hard to follow. First the path comes upon a road and turns to the north (right). In about 100 ft. you reach the main powerline rd. You can recognize this road because it looks fairly well traveled, as opposed to the others which have a lot of undergrowth and brush on them. When you meet this main road you must turn left and walk downhill about 50 ft. Here you can regain the Red lake trail on the right as you descend. If you lose the trail in this area, try to find the most northerly power line road, and walk back and forth from the small road that runs into it until you locate the trail leading off to the north.
- 5.40 As soon as you exit the powerline corridor, you again find yourself in old growth Douglas Fir and Rhododendrons. Oregon grape becomes common on the forest floor.
- 5.50 Trail becomes steeper, encounters very heavy canopy above, with less undergrowth but very green and verdant trees. Incredible amount of downed wood in various states of decay.
- 5.70 Pathway finally breaks into the valley at the confluence of the Clackamas and Breitenbush rivers. Last portion of trail leads through a clearcut onto the 46-380 spur.

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1.6

