





Pacific Crest Trail OREGON

3RD EDITION

Paul Gerald



阁 Day & Section Hikes Pacific Crest Trail: Oregon FORD PINCHO NATIONAL WASHINGTON 26 FOREST (14) 84 30 30 Vancouver Hood 14 84 30 River 97 Portland **OREGON** 26 197 Eagle Creek MOUNT HOOD NATIONAL FOREST (99W) $^{\odot}$ (224) 26 Breitenbush 20 97 Lyons 18 (22 26 20 20 Sisters (126) Belknap 126 Springs (242) 99 DESCHUTES FORESTALES 126 Bend NATIONAL (1) FOREST McCredie 58 Springs La Pine 58 138) 10 Crescent Sutherlin 138 Chemult 8, 9 UMPQUA Winston NATIONAL FOREST (230) 97 WINEMA NATIONAL Prospect 62 FOREST (D) (62) Kirk ROGUE RIVER NATIONAL 4 Grants (234) FOREST Pass (140) 140 Medford (238) Ashland Klamath 2 3 OREGON 20 miles 20 kilometers

CALIFORNIA 97

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PART I: SOUTH

California Border to Mount Thielsen



The PCT winds along the scenic ridge atop Sky Lakes Wilderness. (See Hike 4, page 35.)

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California Border to Observation Peak

SCENERY: \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$ TRAIL CONDITION: \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$ CHILDREN: \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$

SOLITUDE: A A A A HIKING TIME: 4 hours

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 7-mile out-and-back MAP: USFS Applegate and West Half of Ashland Ranger District

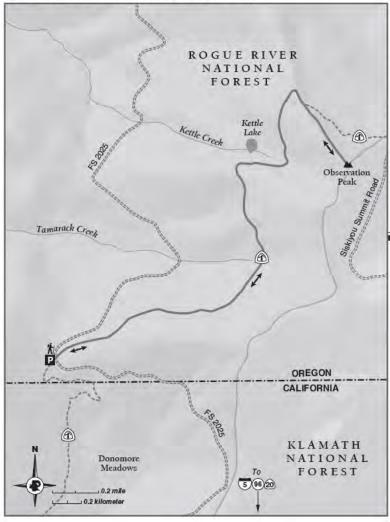
OUTSTANDING FEATURES: A geographical curiosity; a quiet forest; and a sweeping, panoramic viewpoint

IF YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO SAY you've hiked from one state to another, here's your chance. Enter Oregon the way northbound Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) thru-hikers do, and then climb the state's first peak for a lovely viewpoint—all without working too hard at all.

Being something of a map geek, I'd first like to tell people how to hike to the Oregon—California border. It's just over a quarter mile from a road, but that isn't really the point of this hike—rather, Observation Peak is the point. And for the record, I wanted to include the walk from Oregon to Washington as well, but it's across the narrow Bridge of the Gods at Cascade Locks, which has lots of traffic and no walkway. So this is your only chance for a border hike in this book.

From the road start south (right, as you drove up), through meadows and thin forest, for 0.3 mile down to a register at the border. You can join the hundreds of others who've had their pictures taken next to the OREGON/CALIFORNIA sign on a tree, enjoy the views south into the Golden State's Donomore Meadows, and read the exuberant comments of the thru-hikers who have tromped some 1,600 miles just to get through one state. Most of them arrive here around mid-August, having started at the Mexico—California border around May I. But their speeds vary greatly: on one September hike here, I encountered a northbounder who said he liked to "sleep late, nap after lunch, and have a good time." At the other extreme, I met a man at Washington's Snoqualmie Pass one August 30, then saw that he had signed this register on August 4. That's about 700 miles in 26 days, or about 27 miles a day!

California Border to Observation Peak

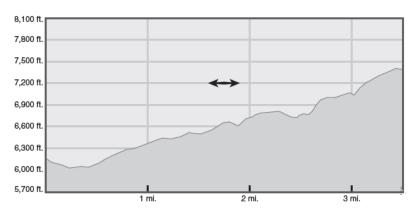


Now sufficiently humbled, trek back up to the road and cross it, then start a long, gradual climb along a ridge that was clear-cut years ago. Now it's covered with chaparral, whose red blooms are a favorite of hummingbirds. Up ahead you can see your destination, Observation Peak.

Around I.5 miles out from the road (2.I miles total if you went down to the border), you'll pass a couple of springs, and half a mile later you'll come upon a sunny ridge that is the west shoulder of the peak. From here you'll be in the forest for a bit, crossing a few small springs; then it gets a little steeper at times, but it's never severe. Look for Kettle Lake down the hill to your left.

Half a mile past that little ridge, pop back into the open, with views ahead and to your right of Silver Fork Basin and rolling, forested hills stretching off to the horizon. Next, at a big rock pile, encounter the northern ridge of the peak, with fine views out toward Dutchman's Peak and its lookout. According to the book Oregon Geographic Names, this peak is named after a miner named Hensley who froze to death here in the 1870s... and was German. Go figure.

The PCT now swings southeast and starts a traverse of the north side of Observation Peak, toward Observation Gap, but you step off the trail just before it disappears into the woods, which are often filled with snow well into July. A short climb of 50 feet will put you on the ridgeline, which you then follow cross-country past several false summits to the real one, which is marked by a pile of rocks with a wood stake in it.



From the broad and grassy summit, which is a little more than 7,300 feet in elevation, you can make out Forest Service Road 20 heading east toward I-5 (the PCT stays very close to it all the way there), and off to the northeast, Mount McLoughlin. Farther east is Pilot Rock, the next big PCT attraction to the north (see Hike 3, page 30). Looking south, you'll see Mount Shasta, with the Marble Mountains to its right. To the north see if you can spot conical Mount McLoughlin, which for thru-hikers is a walk of several days ahead. And finally, in a red can among the rocks, there's a summit register with (when I was there) entries going back to October 20, 1992. The can was also, when I opened it, filled with hundreds of ladybugs.

An interesting note about this summit is that it has two benchmarks labeled USC&GS, which stands for U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, a government agency that was founded in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson and has been known as the National Geodetic Survey since 1970.

Perhaps a bit anticlimactic, this sign marks the end of a 1,600-mile journey for northbound PCT thru-hikers.



PART 2: CENTRAL

Willamette Pass to Santiam Pass



Magical Linton Creek flows through Linton Meadows in Three Sisters Wilderness. (See Hike 14, page 86.)

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- 12 Mink Lake Basin (p. 76)
- 13 Wickiup Plain to Sisters Mirror Lake (p. 81)
- 14 Obsidian Loop (p. 86)
- 15 Lava Camp Lake to Collier Glacier View (p. 91)
- 16 Little Belknap Crater (p. 96)
- 17 Three Fingered Jack (p. 100)

II Rosary Lakes to Maiden Peak Shelter

SCENERY: 🌣 🌣 TRAIL CONDITION: 🌣 🌣 🌣

CHILDREN: \$\partial \partial \

SOLITUDE: \$\displaystyle displaystyle for the solution of the

 ${\tt DISTANCE~\&~CONFIGURATION:~6.6-mile~out-and-back~to~North~Rosary}$

Lake, 11.6-mile out-and-back to Maiden Peak Shelter

MAP: USFS Middle Fork Ranger District

OUTSTANDING FEATURES: A quiet walk through shady forest to three mountain lakes, with a nice view and hidden cabin if you want to go farther

THIS EASY-TO-REACH, easy-to-hike leg stretcher is perfect for an afternoon outing or a simple overnighter with the family. And if you put in a few more miles, you can spend the night in a wonderful cabin.

The trip up to the Rosary Lakes is one of the more popular hikes in the Willamette Pass area, and it's no wonder. Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) hikers tend to blow on through, however, as most of them just stop at Odell Lake to rest and resupply. Chances are you'll see other folks on the trail, but they won't bother you nearly as much as July's mosquitoes.

The first 2 miles or so are about as gradual and mellow as a hike can be. There's not much to see, other than big trees and the occasional glimpse of Odell Lake off to the right. The total trip to Lower Rosary Lake is 2.4 miles and gains a little more than 500 feet.

For reference along the way, at 0.9 mile the trail turns to the north in a flat section and enters a younger forest with much less ground cover. At I.4 miles it reenters the more-diverse forest; at I.6 miles look for a gigantic hemlock snag covered with woodpecker holes. Finally, just past I.8 miles, round the eastern edge of a minor ridge and turn north, leaving the sounds of cars and trains behind.

When you get to the first lake at 2.4 miles, look for good swimming off a rockslide to your left and campsites on an around-the-lake path. Other good campsites are along the right side of the lake, across the PCT from the shore.

Rosary Lakes to Maiden Peak Shelter

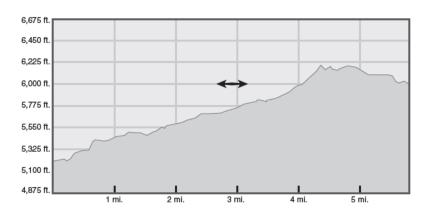


Past this first lake climb gently again, back in the forest, and 0.3 mile past the lower lake, arrive at Middle Rosary Lake, which is the most scenic of all. It's surprisingly deep for the elevation, and Pulpit Rock across the way makes a handsome backdrop. A fine campsite sits between Middle and North Rosary Lakes, a distance of just 100 yards.

Now, if you want to get a nicer view of the lakes and possibly spend the night in some unique accommodations, put in some more mileage north on the PCT. And don't ask me why the lakes are named Lower, Middle, and North—it seems like that last one ought to be Upper.

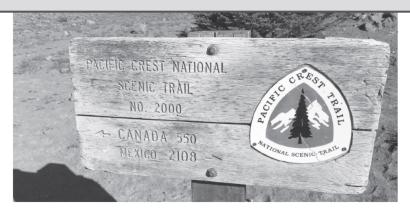
Continue north beyond North Rosary Lake, climbing 300 feet in a mile with lake-filled views to the south. After passing the Maiden Lake Trail at 0.7 mile, you'll come to Maiden Peak Saddle, with lake-filled views to the south. After a smidge more climbing, continue north along the east side of a ridge for a total of I.6 miles.

Just before the PCT crosses to the west side of the ridge, look for a cairn on the trail at the edge of an open flat. Across that flat is the Maiden Peak Shelter, built in 1999 by the Eugene Chapter of the Oregon Nordic Club. Inside (it isn't locked) you'll find a woodstove and sleeping space for a dozen or more people. It's quite comfy and will spare you from having to haul a tent—if you get there in time for a spot!



PART 3: NORTH

Mount Jefferson to Columbia River



This sign just above Timberline Lodge lends a little perspective as you head for Paradise Park. (See Hike 25, page 142.)

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- 19 Jefferson Park (p. 113)
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- 23 Twin Lakes Loop (p. 132)

- 24 Barlow Pass to Timberline Lodge (p. 137)
- 25 Timberline Lodge to Paradise Park (p. 142)
- 26 Ramona Falls to Sandy River Loop (p. 148)
- 27 Lost Lake to Buck Peak (p. 155)
- 28 Chinidere Mountain (p. 160)
- Eagle Creek to Benson Plateau Loop (p. 166)

24 Barlow Pass to Timberline Lodge

SCENERY: that the trail condition: that the

CHILDREN: \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$ \$\dagger\$

SOLITUDE: 🏚 🏚 🏚

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 10.2-mile out-and-back or 5.1-mile

point-to-point

MAP: USFS Mount Hood Wilderness or Green Trails Mount Hood

OUTSTANDING FEATURES: Magnificent forest, solitude, a trip to the high

country, and Timberline Lodge

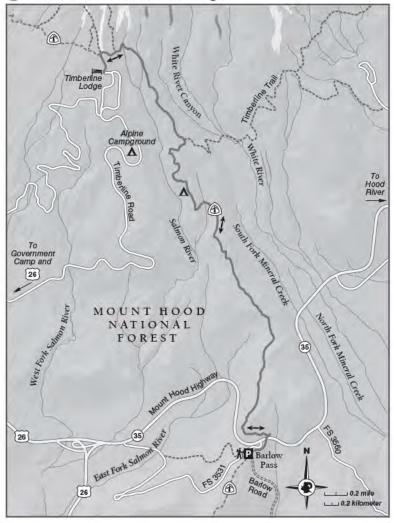
IT'S HARD TO IMPROVE on a visit to Timberline Lodge, but here are two ways: either walk east from the lodge on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) to some seldom-visited vistas, or climb up the trail through an amazing forest from OR 35, thus sweetening your arrival. The latter option requires either a second car or a IO-mile out-and-back walk, but it's the recommended route.

There are more spectacular hikes in the Mount Hood area and on the Oregon PCT, but few have the combination of solitude, old-growth beauty, and mountain splendor that this one has. It's also perfect for a picnic or a dose of sunshine in a high-altitude meadow with Mount Hood looming over you. And if you do the one-way option with a shuttle, you end your hike at Timberline Lodge to enjoy its food, beverages, and historic design.

From the trailhead, walk across FS 3531 and into the woods on the PCT. Stop to admire the relief map of the trail in the area, then take the left-most fork of the trails before you, walking north on the PCT toward Mount Hood. You take a few steps on historic Barlow Road, an overland alternative to the Columbia River back in the Oregon Trail days. After O.I mile along an abandoned section of the Mount Hood Highway, walk carefully across busy OR 35. The trail continues in a small draw on the far side.

The first part of the trail isn't too exciting; in fact, after 0.5 mile you walk through a fairly recent clear-cut. What follows, though, is a glorious stand of noble fir, with long, straight, branchless trunks. In June and July, wildflowers blanket the ground. In late summer, look for huckleberries; in fall, look for

Barlow Pass to Timberline Lodge



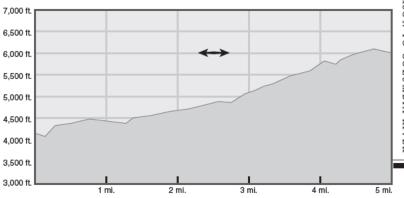
red-and-orange vine maple. Stay quiet, especially early in the day, and you'll hear birds and possibly see deer or elk. It's just a pleasant place to be, and the trail's altitude gain (less than 400 feet per mile) is entirely manageable.

If you're wondering about those blue diamonds on the trees early in the hike, they mark winter trails for cross-country skiers and snowshoers. Their height should give you a sense of how much snow falls in these parts.

At the 2-mile mark, enter a more diverse forest, including a mix of firs and hemlocks. Cross a creek with a small campsite at 2.7 miles. Soon you will enter the Richard Kohnstamm Memorial Area, named for a man who renovated and restored Timberline Lodge from the 1950s until it was designated a historic landmark in the 1970s.

A little more than 3.5 miles out, you reach an overlook of Salmon River Canyon and the headwaters of the Salmon River. The Salmon is the only river in the Lower 48 that is classified as a Wild and Scenic River from its headwaters to its mouth. The Salmon gathers its strength near the Timberline Ski Area and snakes down to the Sandy River along US 26. As you face west, note the rock patterns visible in a cliff face across the way; you're standing on layers of mudflow that burst from Mount Hood about 2,000 years ago.

Just after this point, the forest begins to open. In July and August, enjoy meadows filled with wildflowers, especially the spectacular bear grass, which





Mount Jefferson peeks through the clouds past Timberline Lodge.

looks like a giant cotton swab. After another quarter mile, reach the Timberline Trail (600) in just such a meadow, with Mount Hood towering above you and (if it's summer) purple lupines blooming all around. For the next 20 miles or so heading north, the Timberline Trail (which goes 41 miles around Mount Hood) and the PCT are one and the same.

Relax amidst all this scenic splendor if you'd like, and then turn around if your car is at OR 35 (for a total of 7.8 miles). You're at 5,300 feet elevation here (having climbed 1,100 feet since OR 35). The next 1.25 miles gain another 700 feet.

Otherwise, on you go, bearing left on the combination Timberline Trail and PCT, and in 0.3 mile find the first of several spectacular lookouts over the White River Canyon, which is 600 feet deep here. Look for buried 2,000-year-old trees in the mudflow along the far base of White River Canyon.

This section of trail is, in places, as sandy as a beach, and it tends to be windy above tree line—a combination that can become tedious. If there's any rough weather in the vicinity, be prepared for the cold, regardless of the forecast. There's nothing to stop the wind this high on the mountain—wind that

Discover the best of the PCT for day hikes or weekend jaunts

With sweeping views, glorious meadows, towering peaks, and countless lakes and waterfalls, Oregon's portion of the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail includes some of the most beautiful hikes in the country. Let local expert Paul Gerald guide you on 29 unforgettable day and overnight trips. Traverse the "high road" through Oregon as the PCT crosses Mount Hood National Forest, the Three Sisters Wilderness, Crater Lake National Park, and so much more. Every trip is another adventure!



This handy guide includes

- 29 trail profiles in geographical order from south to north
- at-a-glance ratings for scenery, trail condition, difficulty, solitude, and accessibility for children
- trail maps, elevation profiles, and details about what to expect on the trail
- · driving directions and GPS coordinates
- permit and fee information