

Minnehaha Trail, #1039 & Soda Springs Trail, #1039A

User Groups: Hikers, horses, mountain bikes and motorcycles

Difficulty: Easy

Length: 3.1 miles

Season: June through Oct.

Elevation: 3825 to 4400 feet

Description:

The Minnehaha Creek crossing was a popular layover site for travelers on the old John Day Trail that passed just north of here at Lake West. Blazed out in the early 1860's by miners and stockmen, this route was used for travel from the Rogue Valley to the newly discovered gold mines in the John Day Valley. Reopened in 1910 by the Forest Service, this wagon road became known as the Diamond Lake Road.

The trail begins on an old road for the first 1/2-mile, then gradually narrows as it enters the Minnehaha drainage. The trail passes several beautiful meadows before climbing briefly over pumice bluffs overlooking Minnehaha Creek, offering great views of small waterfalls below. Eroded pumice bluffs and exposed lava rock are evidence of the glowing avalanches of Mt. Mazama ash that covered this area over 6,800 years ago.

The trail continues through a forest of old-growth Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, and western white pine. An array of plants carpets the forest floor, including wild strawberries, huckleberries, Oregon grape and vanilla leaf. The trail returns to the river's edge just prior to reaching the Soda Springs Trail junction.

Access:

From Union Creek Resort, travel north on Hwy. 62 to the junction with Hwy. 230. Travel north on Hwy. 230 for 12 miles to Forest Road #6530. Turn right and go 1 mile to the junction with Forest Road #6530-800. Follow Road #800 .1 mile to the signed trailhead on the left. Parking is available in the undeveloped camping area on the right.