

Go Prepared

Planning is key to an enjoyable day trip along the Columbia Plateau Trail. Those looking for an adventure for a lifetime should go prepared with supplies and safeguards. Part of the appeal of this unique trail is that it offers a break from the hustle and bustle of every day life and an opportunity to enjoy the wide open spaces of eastern Washington.

Crossroads are rare. Public facilities are scarce and summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The trail also features 18 railroad trestles, all of which offer interesting viewing but lack decking and guard rails (most are closed to use).

Trail users should carry the 10 essentials: extra food and water, maps, a compass, flashlight, sunglasses, first-aid kit, pocket knife, waterproof matches and a fire starter. Travelers may need other supplies as well, depending on the length of their trek.



NOTES:

- Sections of the Columbia Plateau Trail are closed. Call (360) 902-8844 for current trail conditions.
- When using the trail, please respect private property and stay on the trail.
- Pack it in, pack it out. Properly dispose of garbage at home or at designated disposal sites.
- Open year round, 6:30 a.m. to dusk
- For more information, call (360) 902-8844 or contact the park.

Columbia Plateau Trail State Park

South (Main) Office

100 S.W. Main St.
P.O. Box 541
Washtucna, WA 99371
(509) 646-9218

Riverside State Park (north portion only)

9711 W. Charles Road
Nine Mile Falls, WA 99026
(509) 465-5064



COLUMBIA PLATEAU TRAIL

history + railway + trailheads + facilities



Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
P.O. Box 42650
Olympia, WA 98504-2650
(360) 902-8500
www.parks.wa.gov

Commission members:
Patricia T. Lantz Joe Taller
Fred Olson Cecilia Vogt
Rodger Schmitt Lucinda S. Whaley
Eliot Scull

Agency director: Don Hoch

All Washington state parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all people.

To request this brochure in an alternative format, please call (360) 902-8844 or the Washington Telecommunications Relay Service at (800) 833-6388. **P&R 45-52002-1 (02/11)**

HISTORY OF THE TRAIL

The Columbia Plateau Trail is a 130-mile corridor and 4,109-acre day-use area located on an abandoned railroad right-of-way in eastern Washington. Currently, 23 miles of the trail between Lincoln County and Cheney and 15 miles in Franklin County are developed and open for public use. Activities include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, in-line skating, nature viewing, bird watching, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The trail area has an amazing geologic story to tell. Huge outpourings of basaltic lava about 15 million years ago buried the eastern Washington landscape under a sea of lava. Much later, during the Ice Age (and as recently as 13,000 years ago), some of the largest documented floods of water to ever occur raced across eastern Washington, carving out a landscape of basalt buttes, basins and canyons. A volume of water comparable to some of today's Great Lakes was unleashed when an ice dam in northern Idaho burst. Dozens and perhaps hundreds of flood events eroded the lava surface into the unique landscape known as the channeled scabland. Trail visitors will see stark reminders of one of the world's largest volcanic fields eroded by the cataclysmic Ice Age floods.



In the early 1900s, the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway Company constructed a rail bed in the area. The company, which never actually connected the line from Portland to Seattle, operated the steam (and later diesel) railway for more than 50 years. It is said that the owner, James Hill, promoted the railway as a Seattle connection only to mislead competing railroad developers. The Burlington Northern Company operated the rail line for many years after, until the company abandoned it in 1987. Remains of reservoirs, reservoir flumes and homes of former railroad employees and other



developments also are apparent along sections of the trail. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquired the right-of-way in 1991 to develop a multi-use recreational trail. In 1995, State Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service entered into a cooperative agreement to manage the area within the boundaries of Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. State Parks also has an interagency cooperative agreement with the city of Cheney for development and some maintenance of approximately four miles of the trail from Fish Lake to Cheney Spangle Road.

TRAILS AND FACILITIES

The 3.75-mile trail section from Fish Lake Trailhead to Cheney Trailhead has an asphalt trail surface and is great for hiking, bicycling and inline skating. The remaining 19.25-mile trail section from Cheney Trailhead to Martin Road Trailhead has a crushed-rock trail surface and is useable by horseback riders, mountain bikers and hikers. Both trails are ADA accessible. Directional signs to trailheads are provided on I-90, state routes and county roads. The mileposts represent the distance from Portland. Trailhead locations are as follows:

Fish Lake Trailhead, milepost 365

Getting there

Westbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 270 (Four Lakes/Cheney), travel 5.4 miles and turn left on Cheney Spokane Road. Go three miles and take a right onto Fish Lake Trailhead.

Eastbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 257 (Cheney/Tyler), turn right and travel 12 miles. Turn right on Cheney Spokane Road. Go three miles and turn right onto Fish Lake Trailhead.

Parking, a picnic shelter, tables, restrooms and an informational kiosk; drinking fountain at milepost 361.5.

Cheney Trailhead, milepost 361.25

Getting there

Westbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 270 (Four Lakes/Cheney), travel 6.5 miles and turn left on Cheney Spangle Road. Go one mile and turn left onto Cheney Trailhead.

Eastbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 257(Cheney/Tyler), turn right and travel 10.9 miles. Turn right on Cheney Spangle Road. Go one mile and turn left onto Cheney Trailhead.

Parking (including equestrian units), restroom, picnic shelters, tables and an informational kiosk.

Amber Lake Trailhead, milepost 349.25

Getting there

Westbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 270 (Four Lakes/Cheney), travel 8.3 miles and turn left on Mullinix Road. Go 9.5 miles and turn right on Pine Springs Road. Travel 1.4 miles and take left onto Amber Lake Trailhead.

Eastbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 245 (Sprague/Harrington), turn right and travel .6 mile. Turn right on Fourth Street and go one block. Turn right onto B street and travel three blocks. Turn right onto First Street (turns into Sprague Highway) and travel 2.6 miles. Turn right onto Williams Lake Road (Williams Lake Road turns into Martin road and then turns into Mullinix Road). Go straight and follow signs. Travel 16.5 miles and turn left onto Pine Springs Road. Travel 1.4 miles and turn left onto Amber Lake Trailhead.

Parking (including equestrian units), equestrian highline, restrooms and an informational kiosk.

Martin Road Trailhead, milepost 342

Getting there

Westbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 270 (Four Lakes/Cheney), travel 8.3 miles and turn left on Mullinix Road (Mullinix road turns into Martin Road). Go 21.2 miles and turn right onto Martin Road Trailhead.

Eastbound I-90 traffic: Take exit 245 (Sprague/Harrington), turn right and travel .6 mile. Turn right on Fourth Street and go one block. Turn right onto B Street and travel three blocks. Turn right onto First Street (turns into Sprague Highway) and travel 2.6 miles. Turn right onto Williams Lake Road. Travel 4.8 miles and turn left onto Martin Road Trailhead.

Parking (including equestrian units), equestrian highline, restrooms and an informational kiosk.

Snake River Junction Trailhead, milepost 256.2

Getting there

Southbound 395 to 182 to Highway 12: Take Kahlotus exit and drive northeast on the Pasco/Kahlotus Highway. Travel approximately 23.5 miles to Snake River Road. Turn right, and drive 4.6 miles to Lake Sacajawea and Snake River Junction Trailhead.

Parking (including equestrian units), restroom, picnic shelter, table and an informational kiosk.

Ice Harbor Dam Trailhead, milepost 241.9

Getting there

Southbound 395 to 182 to Highway 12: Take Kahlotus exit and drive northeast on the Pasco/Kahlotus Highway. Travel approximately 9.9 miles to Ice Harbor Dam Road. Turn right, and drive three miles. Make a left turn just before road onto the dam. It is .3 miles to trailhead from this point.

Parking (including equestrian units), restroom, informational kiosk and boat launch

Distance in miles between trailheads						
ACCESS POINTS	Fish Lake	Cheney	Amber Lake	Martin Road	Snake River Junction	Ice Harbor
1 Fish Lake	—	3.75	15.5	23.0	108.8	123.1
2 Cheney	3.75	—	11.75	19.25	105.05	119.35
3 Amber Lake	15.5	11.75	—	7.5	93.05	107.35
4 Martin Road	23.0	19.25	7.5	—	85.8	100.1
5 Snake River Junction	108.8	105.05	93.05	85.8	—	14.3
6 Ice Harbor	123.1	119.35	107.35	100.1	14.3	—



Shaded area undeveloped. No facilities currently available, unless noted

FOLLOWING THE OLD RAILWAY



Beginning 16 miles south of Spokane near Fish Lake, hikers, bicyclists and other nonmotorized trail users may follow the Columbia Plateau Trail along the semi-arid channeled scablands of eastern Washington to Lincoln County.

The trail runs through pine forests encompassing the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, a habitat for wild birds such as the famed trumpeter swan. Interpretive panels about the local environment dot this portion of the trail. Milepost 358, located within Turnbull, is the high point of the rail line between Portland and Spokane.

The trail then continues west, passing ponds, lakes and creeks that provide additional nesting sites for birds. Observant visitors often see owls, badgers and other wildlife.

UNDEVELOPED TRAIL



The right-of-way intersects the eastern extension of the John Wayne Pioneer Trail between Lamont and Benge, a remote portion of the corridor that has no facilities for public use.

This undeveloped portion of the trail continues to Washtucna and on to the Snake River Canyon, where the canyons become larger and cliffs steeper. Along the way, there are five tunnels (three of which are concrete-lined) ranging from 200 feet to nearly one-half mile long. Six massive steel viaduct trestles, some of which soar overhead to more than 200 feet high, are currently gated and block trail users from continuing. The trestles, which vary from 800 feet to more than one-third mile long, are located along the Snake River between Kahlotus and Ice Harbor Dam at East Pasco, as well as Cow Creek near Benge.

