

TOP 26 TRAILS

and 12 Watchable Wildlife Units

For more information, please contact:

Grant County Tourism Commission

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TourGrantCounty.com



In Grant County, Washington

TOP 26 TRAILS

and 12 Watchable Wildlife Units in Grant County Washington

Grant County Tourism Commission
PO Box 37
Ephrata, Washington 98837
www.tourgrantcounty.com

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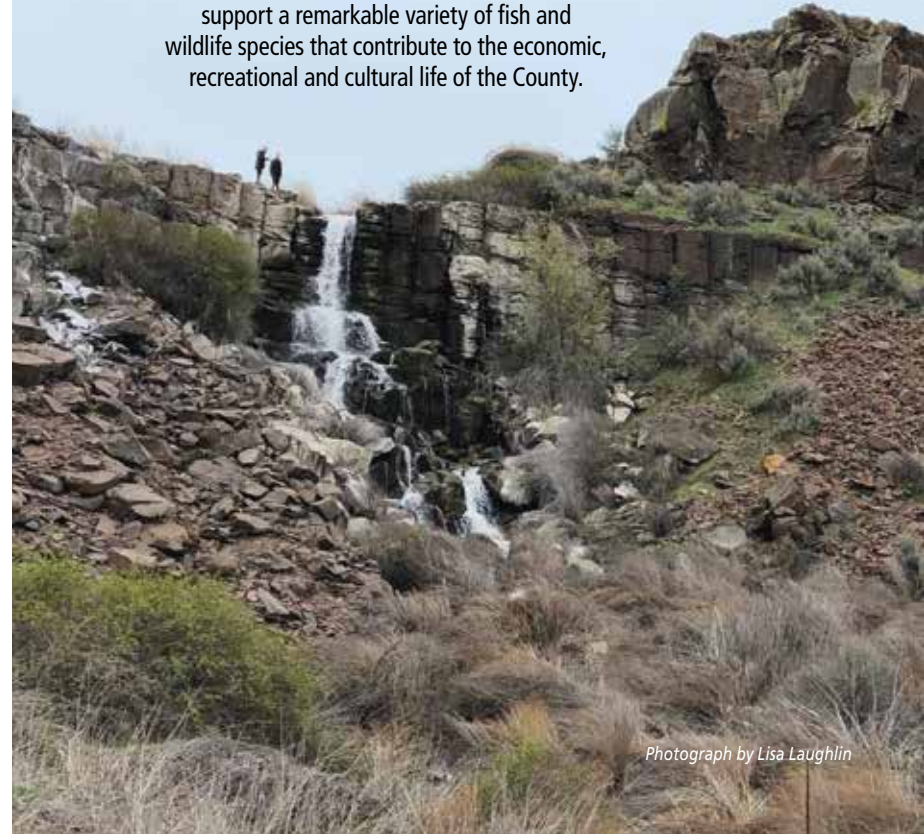
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Grant County has some of the most scenic and pristine vistas, hiking trails and outdoor recreational opportunities in Washington State. Grant County is known for its varied landscapes on a high desert plateau with coulees, lakes, reservoirs, sand dunes, canals, rivers, creeks, and other waterways. These diverse ecosystems support a remarkable variety of fish and wildlife species that contribute to the economic, recreational and cultural life of the County.



Photograph by Lisa Laughlin

CONTENTS

Grant County Trails and Hiking

Upper Grand Coulee Area	
1. Candy Point Trail	1, 2
2. Steamboat Rock Trail	3, 4
3. Northrup Canyon Trail	5, 6
4. Old Wagon Road Trail	7, 8
Lower Grand Coulee Area	
5. Lakeside Discovery Trail	9, 10
6. Park Lake Trail	11, 12
Location Map	13, 14
7. Umatilla Rock Trail	15, 16
8. Lake Lenore Caves Trail	17, 18
9. Billy Clapp Lake Trail	19, 20
10. Deep Lake Trail	21, 22
11. Trail Lake Coulee Trail	23, 24
Quincy - George	
12. Quincy Lake Trail	25, 26
13. Frenchman Coulee Trail	27, 28
14. Ancient Lake Trail	29, 30
Ephrata - Wilson Creek	
15. Beezley Hills Recreation Area Trail	31, 32
16. Wilson Creek Trail	33, 34
Potholes	
17. Potholes Wildlife Area Trail	35, 36
18. Desert Wildlife Area Trail	37, 38
Columbia National Wildlife Refuge	
19. Frog Lake Trail and Rimrock Trail Loop	39, 40
20. Blythe and Chukar Lakes Trail	41, 42
21. Upper Goose Lake Plateau Trail	43, 44
22. Crab Creek Trail	45, 46
23. Marsh Loop Trail	47, 48
Moses Lake North	
24. Artesian & Black Lake Trail	49, 50
25. Gloyd Seeps – South Trail	51, 52
26. Gloyd Seeps – North Trail	53, 54

CONTENTS

Grant County Watchable Wildlife Viewing

1. Banks Lake WDFW Unit	55
2. Billy Clapp Lake WDFW Unit	56
3. Desert WDFW Unit	57
4. Gloyd Seeps WDFW Unit	58
5. Goose Lake WDFW Unit	59
6. Lower Crab Creek WDFW Unit	60
7. Potholes Reservoir WDFW Unit	61
8. Priest Rapids WDFW Unit	62
9. Quincy Lakes WDFW Unit	63
10. Seep Lakes WDFW Unit	64
11. Sun Lake WDFW Unit	65
12. Winchester Reservoir WDFW Unit	66



A Discover Pass is required for vehicle access to Washington State parks and recreation lands managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

They are very easy to purchase and one pass can be transferred between two vehicles.

Annual pass: \$30

One-day pass: \$10

For more information: discoverpass.wa.gov

Or call: (844) 271-7041

GRANT COUNTY TRAILS & HIKING

1 Candy Point Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- UPPER GRAND COULEE AREA

1.5 miles, roundtrip Gain: 635 ft. High Point: 1765 ft. Difficulty: Difficult



Experience: Mountain Views/Wildlife/Summits/Rivers/Dogs allowed on Leash

From Moses Lake and/or Soap Lake head north on State Highway 17 towards Grand Coulee. Stay on State Highway 17 for 21 miles toward Coulee City. Just past the Dry Falls Interpretive Center, turn right (east) on US Highway 2 for 4.4 miles (passing turnoffs to Coulee City).

At the "Y" junction, stay straight to merge onto State Highway 155 toward Grand Coulee for 27 miles. On the edge of the town of Grand Coulee, reset the odometer from the State Highway 155 – State Highway 174 intersection and go 3.1 miles north through the town of Grand Coulee to the bottom of the hill past the Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center in the town of Coulee Dam. Just before crossing the Columbia River, turn left onto N. Columbia Ave. Follow it .2 miles to 432 N. Columbia Ave. There is a sign along the curb identifying the start of the Candy Point Trail. The sign directs hikers to the trail which begins after crossing the

lawn between two residences. There is an overview of the history of the trail encouraging hikers to follow the signage. The description notes that the trail was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937. The stone stairs and retaining walls were later repaired by the Grand Coulee Dam Rotary Club. The town of Coulee Dam lies partially in Grant, Douglas and Okanogan Counties.

There are no restrooms at this trailhead. Parking is available alongside the residential road on which the trails starts.

This trail is rated difficult. Although the trail is relatively short, there is quite a steep grade and about 700 feet elevation gain in a short distance. This trail shows off the beautiful cliffs above and along the Columbia River. Hikers can enjoy amazing panoramic views and wildlife. Many different types of birds and mammals may be present and hikers are able to gawk at the Grand Coulee Dam while on this trail. There appear to be a lot of critters who call this area home.

The trail is very exposed with no shade or cover. This means you can see far into the distance and enjoy views all along the trail. The sagebrush is extremely fragrant and follows the trail to a wide-open view of the Grand Coulee Dam. This trail takes about an hour to complete. Depending on your abilities, the time to finish this can vary greatly considering the elevation gain.

Anyone with small children should be careful on this trail as it is steep and footing can be loose at times. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby. Another great thing about this trail is that you will park on a residential road which means no pass or permit or fee is required!

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photograph by Cameron Smith

Trailhead photo by Mark Amara



2 Steamboat Rock Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- UPPER GRAND COULEE AREA

6 miles, roundtrip Gain: 665 ft Highest Point: 2265 ft. Difficulty: Moderately Difficult



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Mountain Views/Wildlife/Good for Kids

Steamboat Rock State Park is located 10 miles south of the town of Grand Coulee and about 18 miles north of the town of Coulee City (on State Highway 155). Standing like a beacon in the coulee, Steamboat Rock was created when the Missoula Floods swept through the land carving out the Grand Coulee. At one time, Steamboat Rock was an island surrounded by a temporary diversion of the ancestral Columbia River. It's 2265-foot summit is accessible to hikers from the park. To get to the trail head, turn off State Highway 155 at the Steamboat Rock State Park entrance and follow the road to the north for 2.6 miles to the back of the park. There are ample parking spaces and multiple restroom facilities including handicap options.

After parking, cross the road (to the north) to the clearly marked Steamboat Rock trail. It is a sandy half mile at a gentle uphill grade to where the trail ascends more steeply up the south side of the massive landmark. Before starting up, consider resting in the shade of pine trees and get a drink from the provided water fountain. For those who continue on the trail, it is clearly marked and heads up the basalt talus slope. It is a steep rugged trail, and some parts may require the use of your hands to scramble up over loose rocks.

After going through a few switch-backs the first natural bench is reached. Here the path becomes less steep and it is easier to walk. The bench itself broadens out into a gently sloping

Grant County Tourism Commission

meadow filled with sagebrush, boulders, and flowers. From here look out over the state park (to the south), and the Day Use parking lot. Looking southeast, the Devils Punch Bowl (in the bay between Steamboat Rock and the vertical cliffs to the south) and Martin Falls are some of the sights



viewed from this natural panoramic vista. The trail continues north where there is a sharper climb up the path to a second smaller shelf. The trail passes by a large pile of stacked stones that serve as a distinct trail marker built by the thousands of hikers who pass by it every year. Here the trail splits giving hikers the option of going northeast or southwest.

Many people hike the southwest trail to look out over the State Park entrance (to the south). This short trail starts with a climb on a well-worn and traveled path through the bottom of a coulee. The earth can be slippery and the hills daunting, but by climbing the steep hill to the south hikers are greeted with a view down the coulee looking towards Coulee City. State Highway 155 can be seen like a ribbon running along the edge of the coulee wall, while Banks Lake is so huge it vanishes out of sight in the distance. Thompson Lake (a small lake on the Steamboat Rock peninsula south of the rock) can be seen from the southwest trail and many people take selfies with the granite erratic boulders located on top. This is a destination trail ending at a stunning view and measures approximately 1.5 miles one way from the base of Steamboat Rock.

The northeast trail is a bit longer and offers more opportunities to explore the natural landscape and watch for wildlife. After a steep ascent up the trail arrive close to the summit of Steamboat Rock. From here look north and see miles of native grasslands. Further north outside the park on the horizon the view is dominated by the mountains of the Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest. The northeast trail follows along close to the east edge of the Rock as it loops around the back of Steamboat Rock through fields of luxuriant grasses, wild flowers and large rocks (called erratics) dropped by the glaciers or ice rafted in on the Missoula Floods. This trail can be followed around the edge of the rock or the hiker can walk cross country to find another trail back down. Whichever trail you choose, Steamboat Rock has something for everyone, with multiple side trails for people of all ages.

In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers are encouraged to carry water and a snack.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by J.Kemble

3 Northrup Canyon Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- UPPER GRAND COULEE AREA

6 miles, roundtrip Gain: 400 ft. Highest Point: 2,134 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Wildlife/Lakes

Travel State Highway (SH) 17 to Soap Lake. Stay on SH 17 for 21 miles toward Coulee City. Just past the Dry Falls Interpretive Center, turn right (east) on US Highway 2 for 4.4 miles (passing turnoffs to Coulee City). At the "Y" junction, stay straight to merge onto SH 155 toward Electric City. From the US 2-SH 155 intersection go 19.2 miles (just south of Mile Post 19) to turn right (east) up the hill on a gravel road identified as Northrup Canyon Road. Follow the road .5 miles to its end at a locked metal gate where there is a small parking area, a vault toilet, and signage identifying the trail start as the Northrup Canyon Natural Area. Northrup is misspelled as Northup on the sign. A Washington State Discover Pass is required.

The first 1.5 miles of the trail is easy with moderate ups and downs. At the start, the path follows a historic road, dropping down around a dense aspen grove that runs alongside Northrup Creek, and up again, before the road flattens going around a flat wet area next to the creek. Once again the road rises and drops to cross Northrup Creek on a wooden bridge (rebuilt in 2008). Then the road becomes a single-file trail along Northrup Creek. There are two possible trail routes through this section to reach an historic homestead at the east end

of the canyon. In dry years or late in the season, walking on a trail through the wetland next to the creek is possible. But when the creek is high, a trail along the bottom of the steep rocky slope to the north is the only other practical option. At the east end of the wet plain are the remains of the historic Northrup homestead, lived in 1889-1926. In the 1940s, another house was built and lived in by a Bureau of Reclamation engineer. After 1976 Northrup Canyon was bought by Washington State Parks, who are the current managers. Up the hill to the north of the homestead, follow the trail another 1.5-miles to Northrup Lake. This part of the trail is moderately difficult with as much as ½ mile of steep ascents and descents. The trail passes four seasonal wet spots which consist of small unnamed shallow lakes along with trees burned and blackened by a wildfire in the year 2000. There is a trail part way around Northrup Lake, though many visitors may enjoy the vista overlook above the lake's southeast edge, or explore the lake margins before turning around to follow the same trail back.

The trail lies in an unusual area where two different rock types intermingle with each other. Northrup Canyon is on the north edge of the Columbia Plateau known for its volcanic lava flows which covered eastern Washington's surface with basalt rock millions of years ago and which followed underground eruptions which created granite common to the Okanogan Highlands. Both the basalt and granite were exposed through erosion by the glaciers in the last million years and by ancient Missoula floods which gouged out this portion of Northrup Canyon tens of thousands of years ago. Along the trail, there is lots of the basalt rock right next to the granite. The area is also special because it is the only place in Grant County where a native Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forest is present. There are a variety of habitat types in this small area from the forest to dry shrub-steppe desert upland habitat, steep rocky terrain with few plants, small to large granite and basalt boulders, marsh and wetland, and acres and acres of rolling native grasslands mixed with woodland. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



4 Old Wagon Road

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- UPPER GRAND COULEE AREA

2.6 miles roundtrip Gain: 450 ft. Highest Point: 2300 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Beautiful Views/Abundance of Wildlife

Travel State Highway 17 to Soap Lake. Stay on State Highway 17 for 21 miles toward Coulee City. Just past the Dry Falls Interpretive Center, turn right (east) on US Highway 2 for 4.4 miles (passing turnoffs to Coulee City). At the "Y" junction, stay straight to merge onto State Highway 155 toward Electric City and Grand Coulee. From the US 2-State Highway 155 intersection go 19.2 miles (just south of Milepost 19) to turn right (east) up the hill on a gravel road identified as the Northrup Canyon Road. Follow the road .5 miles to its end at a locked metal gate where there is a small parking area, a vault toilet, and signage. A Discover Pass is required.

There is signage at the trailhead that goes over the description of the trail along with the distance and elevation gain. This trailhead starts on the same trail as Northrup Canyon, Northrup Lake, and Northrup Homestead. After about 475 feet, leave the aforementioned

trail and take a side path that takes the hiker up the Old Wagon Road (identified by signage) on the south side of Northrup Canyon. The trail is currently maintained by the Crab Creek Riders, an equestrian group, who partner with Washington State Parks to keep it up. The last major improvements were completed in 2018. The trail is closed November 15 through March 15 to protect bald eagle roosting habitat and nesting.

This trail was moderate as it is a steady uphill climb up and all downhill on the return. There are sections of the trail that are over loose rock and there are a few parts where there are steep drop offs. The trail winds its way along the edge of the only native forest in Grant County. The forest is mixed ponderosa pine and Douglas fir with a varied assortment of vegetation which includes serviceberry, elderberry, buckwheat, currant, yarrow, balsamroot, clematis, aspen, bluebunch wheatgrass, and Idaho fescue to name a few of the plants observed.

This trail gives you beautiful views of Northrup Canyon and if you follow up to the top of the cliff you can see Steamboat Rock across the way to the northwest.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

*Narrative and Photographs by
Cameron Smith and Mark Amara*



5 Lakeside Discovery Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

0.4 mile – up to ½ hour round trip

Highest Point: 1100 feet Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Fantastic scenery/Cultural Legacy of Native Americans/Lake Overviews

From the intersection of Main Street and State Highway 17 in Soap Lake, drive north on the state highway. Just south of Milepost 85 and 9.2 miles north on State Highway 17 (and between mileposts 84 and 85), turn east onto a signed gravel road to the Lake Lenore Caves. Go .3 miles to an unsigned parking lot on the north side of the road. There are no bathrooms or signage though it is located .2 miles west of the Lake Lenore Caves trailhead which does have a permanent restroom and a picnic table. Since both trails are on state land, a Discover Pass is required. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them.

The Lakeside Discovery Trail is part of the newly named Lake Lenore State Park Heritage Site

designated four years ago by the Washington State Recreation Commission. The Americans with Disability (ADA) accessible gravel trail was completed in 2010 and parallels the east side of Lenore Lake. Four interpretive panels were funded in part by a National Scenic Byway federal grant with additional financial support, cooperation and coordination by Washington State Parks, the Coulee Corridor Consortium and other partners.

The hike begins at the parking lot bordered by large boulders. Walk between two metal posts at the start of the walk. The first interpretive panel is visible near the beginning and describes the setting as the Lake Lenore Interpretive Site. The area shows off some of the fantastic scenery that characterizes the unique relief of the Grand Coulee canyon's channeled scablands created by multiple ancient floods which gouged out the area more than 12,000 years ago. The trail parallels the edge of the lake where abundant wetland vegetation (currant, rose, and basin wildrye) is present below the trail while the slope above the trail is characterized by upland plants indicative of a high salt environment (including salt grass, greasewood, rabbitbrush and weeds). The end of the trail is a cul de sac overlook turnaround graced with three interpretive panels which describe the rich cultural legacy of Native Americans who utilized the area and pioneers who subsequently settled the land. Additional panels describe watchable wildlife and a summary of the area's geology. Views along the trail and at the overlook are of Lenore Lake (also known as Alkali Lake), the Lake Lenore Caves, the Grand Coulee (canyon), and vertical profiles of exposed layers of Columbia flow basalts.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass



Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara

6 Park Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

3.25 miles roundtrip Gain:80 ft. Highest Point: 1150 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Wildlife/Lakes

Bordering the southeastern-edge of the large and popular Park Lake, the Park Lake Trail is by far the easiest, most laid-back trail in Sun Lakes – Dry Falls State Park, and is the only one that is fully paved and wheelchair accessible. Bordered on one side by nearly vertical basalt coulee walls, this trail is an excellent opportunity to marvel at the volcanic forces that created the geological formations millions of years ago. Repeated lava eruptions that blanketed this part of eastern Washington were followed by more recent Missoula Flood erosion which occurred tens of thousands of years ago. A walk along the Park Lake Trail passes by lava flows and flood deposits while avoiding all the rough terrain of much of the rest of the park. Adventurers, do not fret! Though the main trail is easy going and fairly steady in elevation, arterial trails stretch for good distances, crop up a few times along the way and provide a lot of diversity.

Access to the park is from State Highway 17 (6 miles southwest of Coulee City or 17 miles north of Soap Lake). Turn east into the park down Park Lake Road NE for 1.5 miles, past the campground and over the small bridge, going straight after the stop sign (.2 miles), until the road ends

Grant County Tourism Commission

at a gate and a parking lot. From here on out, the road (Park Lake Road NE) is the trail, although it is gated to all vehicles on either end of it. Large bathroom and park facilities are readily available nearby, and geese can often be seen flocking en masse near the trailhead.

About a mile in, one of Park Lake Trail's side paths wraps its way up into the southern coulee wall which can be a nice sun-laden optional stroll through the shrub-steppe scattered grasslands. If taking this path in the spring, summer, or fall watch out for rattlesnakes, which are uncommon but do sometimes sun themselves on rocks or along the trail. This trail, which starts fairly level but ascends somewhat after a mile, can be followed up into a nearby canyon which is laced with a number of intersecting trails that stretch for many miles outside the park boundaries. None of these paths are paved or particularly well developed.

Another path heads towards the water, and loops around an oblong peninsula studded by towering basalt rocks that stick up twisted from the lake. This peninsula can be a fun little jungle gym for rock climbing or scrambling and provides some interesting perches from which to fish or peer out into the water. Winds can be strong here, so consider bringing a windbreaker and a kite! Footing can be unstable on the peninsula, and parents should be cautious with young children. From here, it can be a quick swim to the lake's island, which looking like a giant boulder tossed into the water, is appropriately known as Big Rock Island; be aware that boats also use the lake so be careful not to be in their path when swimming.

The waters of Park Lake are relatively deep and choppy, and it is more exposed to high winds whistling through the coulee than many of the other lakes in the park. Boating and fishing are common pastimes along the lake so don't be surprised to see someone paddling beside you! If you are hoping to fish or boat on the lake yourself, make sure to get the appropriate permits from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in advance of the trips. If you're looking for a high-octane way to end the day, water skiing is also permitted on Park Lake during park hours.

Following the main trail/road will eventually bring the hiker to the park's southern border and trail end, marked by a faint orange sign and the large visitor's center of Laurent's Sun Village Resort, quickly making way to civilization. Unfortunately, though there may be other paths along Park lake Trail to explore, there are no options for getting back to the parking lot except to turn around and return the way you came. Assuming there are no major diversions, this hike should take around an hour and a half roundtrip.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photograph by Emry Dinman

7 Umatilla Rock Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

2.6 miles roundtrip Gain: 250 ft. Highest elevation: 1,450 ft.

Difficulty: Easy to Difficult



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Wildlife/Lakes

The Umatilla Rock Trail is one of the most distinctive and is one of the most taxing of the Sun Lake-Dry Falls State Park's trails. The hike provides a close-up view of the several-mile wide and nearly 350 feet high former ancient water falls at Dry Falls with the associated "basalt blade" known as Umatilla Rock, which rises lonely from the earth like the fin of some primordial fish. Don't be fooled by this trail's listed elevation gain; the trail meanders up and down frequently, and side trails up the side of Umatilla Rock can add several hundred feet of steep climbing.

Access to the park is from State Highway 17 (about 6 miles southwest of Coulee City or 17 miles north of Soap Lake). Turn east into Sun Lake-Dry Falls State Park on Park Lake Road NE for 1.3 miles, past the campground and then turn left onto the paved road to Deep Lake. This road is closed during the winter, but hiking in is still allowed. Continue for 1.1 miles bearing left at the "Y" in the road onto the unmarked paved road and go .4 miles. Continue until the road intersects with another, then proceed about 100 feet to a sign marking the Umatilla Rock Trailhead. A map is present on the reader board at the Umatilla Rock trailhead and there is an outhouse along Dry Falls Lake.

From the trailhead, a faintly marked rocky trail gradually becomes more apparent as you approach Umatilla Rock. The rock looks much like the rest of the coulee walls rimming the park, with layers of shattered columns but it is entirely isolated, popping up like a thin, three-layered island amid the coulee walls. Shortly after the start of the trailhead, the path diverges into two ends of the loop, which circumnavigates and eventually bisects Umatilla Rock. Turning left, the trail rapidly drops elevation to Perch Lake before traveling along its northwest side, parallels the access road to Dry Falls Lake and turns around/or into the rock itself. Or, near the trailhead, the trail goes north following the east edge of the slope below the rock before crossing over it via a steep notch in the blade. An alternative route takes the hiker on an easier trail around the north end of the rock and back to the southwest to intersect the Dry Falls Lake and the Perch Lake trail to return to the starting point. In early spring when the bottomlands are wet, park officials recommend that hikers use the route over the rock rather than the easier path around its north end.

Traveling down to the shore of Dry Falls Lake, it quickly becomes clear why this is the park's most well-known trail. On one side, is the towering and lonely Umatilla Rock, and on the other, one of the largest waterfalls in the history of the world, without any falling water.

During the Ice Ages, a glacial dam repeatedly burst over the course of thousands of years, each time bringing with it floods of epic proportions which carved through the basalt lava rock of eastern Washington like a hot knife through butter. Dry Falls marks one of the flood channels and plunge pools from which those mighty floods once poured over three-hundred feet of cliffs, dwarfing modern waterfalls and punching holes in the coulee below creating Dry Falls Lake. Now, all that remains are the dry river beds where the water once flowed, and the lakes beneath them.

Umatilla Rock isn't the only lonely giant in the area, as gigantic Missoula floods deposited sand, gravel and boulders across the landscape, whose vegetation is dominated largely by native grasses and other shrub-steppe desert plants. Birds frequently nest in the various nooks and crannies of the coulee walls and can be spotted swooping down to snatch up prey while deer are occasionally seen at a distance. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby.

Ignoring side trails and shortcuts, this trail can easily take two hours to complete, given the rapid changes in elevation. However, some side trails cut straight up Umatilla Rock and may be worth your time. Nestled on that lonely ridge is possibly the best viewpoint in the park.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photograph by Emry Dinman

8 Lake Lenore Caves Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

1-mile roundtrip Gain: 200 ft. Highest Point: 1300 ft. Difficulty: East to Moderate



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Wildlife

From Soap Lake, follow State Highway 17 approximately 9 miles north to the turn onto the graveled Lake Lenore Caves Road (south of Milepost 85). Follow the gravel road for .4 miles to the parking area turnaround equipped with a restroom and a picnic table. A Discover Pass is required to park at this location.

A large metal brown display panel describes the caves and points to the trail head. The trail to the caves is part of the newly designated Lake Lenore State Park Heritage Site and they are part of the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.

The caves are actually rock shelters, which formed as Missoula floodwaters ripped apart less resistant rock contacts between lava flows by plucking out basalt columns. Plunge pools, basins, and potholes were created and the rock was removed by powerful floodwater

whirlpools. After the flooding ended, freezing and thawing occurred causing loose rock, called talus, and rock-fall to nearly close off many of the undercut areas that formed the caves. Early users were people who were nomadic hunters and gatherers and used these natural rock shelters as overnight camps and storage caches for food or tools many thousands of years ago.

There are about 100 cement stair steps to the top of the basalt rock plateau where the trail levels off. Keep walking southeast until the first of the caves is visible. There are at least seven caves ranging in different sizes though you may do some searching to find hidden ones.

This trail is easy although loose rock can provide some challenges. Recommended footwear should consist of closed toe shoes and no flip flops, as it is very rocky. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby.

While walking along the cliff edge enjoy views of Lenore Lake and Alkali Lake (to the west). The views are spectacular and one can imagine what Native Americans would have seen when they stayed in the caves thousands of years ago. The caves could be a great place to bring along a cold lunch and sit down to enjoy the view of the lakes while in the shade.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Cameron Smith and Mark Amara



9 Billy Clapp Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

5 miles roundtrip Gain: 300 ft. Highest Point: 1400 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Lake and Cliff Views/Butterflies, Birds and a Variety of Wildlife

From the city of Moses Lake head north on Stratford Road for 20 miles. Turn east (right) onto State Highway 28 and go ½ mile. Turn left onto Road J Northeast and continue for 2.8 miles to the parking area at Pinto Dam on Billy Clapp Lake. Pinto Dam impounds the water in Billy Clapp Lake.

That water originates from Grand Coulee Dam, where Columbia River water is pumped into Banks Lake, is piped through two 10,000- foot long tunnels which drop into Billy Clapp Lake by way of Summer Falls. The falls at Summer Falls runs only during the irrigation season from April through October. From Billy Clapp Lake, the waters are diverted into the West Canal and the East Low Canal to provide irrigation water to the nearly 700,000 acres of cropland as part of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project in parts of Grant, Adams, Douglas, Franklin, and Lincoln Counties. Columbia River water provides electricity, water for irrigating crops, all kinds of recreational opportunities and habitat for wildlife.



At Pinto Dam, there is a beach area and a dock to enjoy during the summer. To hike along Bill Clapp Lake, head up the footpath right behind the restrooms. Using this trail, enjoy amazing views of the lake and the cliffs. This trail is relatively easy despite the steep uphill in the beginning. There are areas of the trail that meet up with the shore of the lake offering plenty of areas to take a dip in the cool water or to just sit and enjoy its beauty. At other times the trail ventures far above the lake on a cliff. Parents of small children or those with dogs should be careful around the edge of the cliffs as there can be large drop-offs in certain areas.



Hikers may see many different types of butterflies, birds, insects, deer or coyotes and a variety of wildflowers and other native vegetation on or near this trail. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby. A Discover Pass is required to park at this location. This area is great for families.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Cameron Smith

10 Deep Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

2.25 miles roundtrip Gain: 120 ft. Highest Point: 1340 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Rocky Beaches/Cold, Clear Waters/Deer/Birds

The Deep Lake Trail meanders above the southern edge of Deep Lake for a little over a mile before ending about halfway along it, offering distant vistas of Sun Lakes – Dry Falls State Park’s southern coulee and the calm of a pristine blue-green lake out of sight from the high-way that overlooks the park.

Access to Sun Lakes – Dry Falls State Park is from State Highway 17 (about 6 miles southwest of Coulee City or 17 miles north of Soap Lake). Turn east into the Sun Lake - Dry Falls State Park down the hill on Park Lake Road NE for 1.3 miles, which passes a golf course and a campground and over a small bridge. Turn left onto the road to Deep Lake. This road is closed during the winter, but hiking in is still allowed. Continue for 1.1 miles until the fork (“Y”) in the road. Take the right turn and continue for 1.5 miles until you arrive at the Deep Lake parking lot.

The Deep Lake Trail is the furthest trail into Sun Lakes - Dry Falls State Park, but it also seems to have several notable features at its trailhead. From the parking lot, restrooms, picnic areas, a boat launch and dock are available. From the boat launch, there is a trail to both the left and right— Follow the path to the right. Though neither trailhead has signage to indicate which is the official trail, the left path quickly disappears into the rock wall that rims Deep Lake to the north while the right trail keeps going.

Deep Lake Trail is actually a tangle of parallel paths that splits into two, sometimes three at a time before eventually rejoining. Though the trail doesn’t loop, these various branches are a good way to get a little diversity out of your trip back to the car. Nearby paths can easily be lost in the tall grass, with occasional, unassuming posts planted in the scrub brush to mark where they lay. Were a group of people to head in the same direction along different trails, they would never lose sight of each other. Don’t forget to keep an eye on the path, as rattlesnakes can infrequently be found sunning themselves.

Different paths come with different challenges, as some trails, particularly those closest to the lake edge, have a tendency to bob up and down. The southern path roughly follows the shoreline of the lake though it also quickly rises tens of feet to a plateau covered with wildflowers and scrub brush, which is the foundation of much of the trail. At times the paths closest to the lake appear to have eroded away or have sunk away. This can be an opportunity for those looking to do a little scrambling up dirt paths without all the intensity of the Umatilla Rock Trail Loop.

There are a number of rocky beaches along the trail, providing an easy inlet to the cold, crystal-clear waters of Deep Lake and a place to land if you paddle out. As just one of the region’s many footprints from Ice Age-era floods, the lake is sandwiched between towering rust-red basalt lava coulee walls, though, at a few hundred feet, comparably small ones for the park. Waterfowl often swoop onto the lake by the dozens, touching down for a little rest and relaxation.

Traveling at a decent speed, the trail should take a little under an hour to complete, though allow a little extra time to dip a hand in the lake or to cook a celebratory hot dog at the trail-head. And while the official trail ends halfway along the lake, less developed foot paths can stretch time spent for several more miles for those who can’t bear to leave. Just don’t tarry too long, because the park closes at dusk—and the mosquitoes come out in full force.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative by Emry Dinman

11 Trail Lake Coulee Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- LOWER GRAND COULEE AREA

5 miles roundtrip Gain: 150 feet Highest Point: 1650 feet Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Variety of Wildlife, Primarily Birds/Fish/Channeled Scablands

From the State Highway (SH) 17 & SH 28 intersection near Soap Lake, drive east on SH 28 8.4 miles. Turn north onto the Pinto Ridge Road and go 8.8 miles. After crossing the bridge that passes over the (unsigned) Main Canal, turn north onto a gravel road that parallels the canal. Alternatively, from the town of Coulee City, get on E. Main and turn south onto S. McIntee Road which becomes the Pinto Ridge Road. From the E. Main – S. McIntee Road intersection go 6.2 miles to the Main Canal and turn north onto the gravel road mentioned above. The land is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. It is not signed and there are no restrooms. No permit is required.

The road may be driven or walked. If it is driven, it is rough in spots. If the route is walked, park next to the turnout just north of its intersection with the Pinto Ridge Road south of a barbed wire gate that is closed seasonally to accommodate a grazing permittee's cattle. The route is rated easy and follows the gravel road which parallels the Main Canal's east side all the way to Trail Lake (identified on the USGS topographic map). Hikers should also check hunting seasons because these lands are open during certain times of the year

The road to Trail Lake displays unique features associated with the Columbia Basin Irrigation

Project (CBIP). The CBIP was built for the purpose of providing water for irrigation on more than a million acres of semi-arid land. Grand Coulee Dam, completed in 1941, was part of a New Deal project started in 1933. It dams the Columbia River and pumps water from the reservoir into upper Grand Coulee where it is collected in Banks Lake. From Banks Lake, water runs into the Main Canal, through the Bacon Siphon Tunnels and canal, dropping over Summer Falls into Billy Clapp Lake. Below Billy Clapp Lake, the water is split into the East Low Canal and the West Canal. Approximately 2-3% of the volume of the Columbia River is diverted into the CBIP area in parts of Grant, Adams, Lincoln, and Franklin Counties. The CBIP has been supplying irrigation water to farms in these counties since 1951. There are over 70 different crops grown on more than 670,000 acres in an area where annual rainfall is as low as 6-9 inches per year.

The Main Canal, which is seen along the entire Trail Lake-Trail Coulee route, was blasted from solid basalt lava bedrock. Both unlined and cement-lined sections of the canal are visible. The Main Canal begins at Dry Falls Dam on the south end of Banks Lake near the town of Coulee City 6 miles to the north. A portion of the Main Canal runs through what are called the two Bacon Siphon tunnels up to 2 miles long cut through the basalt rock which outlets into Trail Lake. From Trail Lake, the water runs in the open-air Main Canal to Billy Clapp Lake. The first Bacon Siphon Tunnel was completed in 1949 while the second Bacon Siphon Tunnel was completed in 1979. Along the route are beautiful examples of the construction and engineering design expertise in an area of exposed basalt rock that are part of the channeled scablands. The first part of the journey both parallels the Main Canal and an unnamed lake to the east (created by canal seepage supplemented by underground hydraulic water movements). The route terminates where the road ends at the north end of Trail Lake and the siphon tunnels. A variety of wildlife, primarily birds, may be seen, though bass and other fish are present in the lake near the beginning of the trip. There are no fish in the spring fed significantly-modified Trail Lake section closest to the Bacon Siphons. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

*Narrative and Photographs
by Mark Amara*



12 Quincy Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- QUINCY AREA

3 miles, roundtrip Gain: 60 ft. Highest Point: 1200 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Dogs allowed on Leash/Wildlife/Lakes

This trailhead is easily accessible from several approaches – turn south from White Trail Road (also called U Road NW) if approaching from State Highway 28 (northwest from Quincy). It is called Road 5 NW if approaching from State Highway 281 (north of Interstate Freeway-90). Turn south onto the gravel road called T NW toward parking lots at Stan Coffin Lake, H Lake, Quincy Lake, Burke Lake, and Evergreen Reservoir. There is an upper Quincy Lake/Ancient Lake Trail area, and a lower Ancient Lake/Dusty Lake trail area. Be sure to look at maps before you go as there are several options in the area.

If traveling south from White Trail Road on T NW, Quincy Lake is the second on the left about half a mile down the road 1.7 miles south of the T NW intersection with White Trail Road. Other lakes and trailheads nearby include Ancient Lake which is the first parking area on the right (past the entry gate). Stan Coffin Lake is the first lake

on the left, H Lake the second on the right, and Burke Lake is past Quincy Lake. Each destination is marked with names cut out in railroad track pieces, and you'll find parking and bathrooms there, and scattered campgrounds suitable for tents or campers or RVs. A Discover Pass is required to park or stay at any of the locations.

Walking around Quincy Lake the hiker sees miniature columnar basalt cliffs, recently burned plateaus and sprouting flora along a verdant lake (as evidenced by all the good-natured fisher people in boats and along the shore) with Mission Ridge in the distance (to the northwest). There were a few spots with some moderate elevation gain, but the trail is never more than 20 meters above the water line.



A trail is easy to follow about 75% of the time. The rest of the time it is necessary to choose a line to follow since it disappears, usually staying on the elevated basalt plateau, but once or twice it may be necessary to walk down to the green marshy shore at the water line to see what is happening along the lake edge. Depending on the time of year, there may be flowers though in late winter expect to see plenty of neon green, red and orange shoots popping up. The trip around the lake is about 2.5 miles so plan on at least an hour but there are many other trails that can also be taken to extend the mileage.

All the trails crisscrossing the area make this a great place to come back to again and again. As always in the remote hikes in Grant County, don't forget to bring plenty of water and a snack (and some for your dog too if you bring them!) Wear good shoes, sunblock, and a hat. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Shawn Cardwell

13 Frenchman Coulee Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- QUINCY AREA

4 miles roundtrip Gain: 50 ft. Highest Point: 900 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Cliff and Water Fall Views

The Frenchman Coulee, is located north of George and south of Quincy, and offers spectacular vistas without requiring a lot of sweat.

From Interstate Freeway 90 take Exit 143. Cross to the north side of the road. Get on Historic Route 10 N toward the Frenchman Coulee Recreation Area. Stay on that road for about .6 mile and then turn left on the Vantage Road. The road is broad enough, but shared by walkers, cyclists and motorists, so be careful. At about 2.1 miles down the road there is a restroom on your left which is the only one close to the trailhead. After traveling 3.4 miles from the start on the Vantage Road, (or about 1.8 miles before the boat launch and picnic area with a restroom on the Columbia River) reach the trailhead on your right. There's zero signage other than a white gate and a few parking spots marked by large concrete ecology blocks. Park there and place your (mandatory) Discover Pass on the dash, put on shoes with strong soles, and go.

The trail offers spectacular views of Vantage area basalt lava rock cliffs, including faraway vistas of the Kittitas County Wildhorse Wind Farm windmills to the southwest. The trail heads

east, with a waterfall at the end. Do not drink the water, but take all the pictures you want.

Rocks abound during the first half of the trail, both on the trail and as monoliths alongside it. The second half of the trail is sandier and easier on your feet. The sand on the second half of the trail makes strollers a bad idea, so if you bring children prepare them for an hour-plus of walking with no bathrooms. Bring their bottle of water, ensure they stay close by, and that they don't run on the wobbly rocks. The trail is flat, with no hills to climb, unless you want to get really close to the waterfall.

About ¼ mile into the hike, there is a fork in the trail. Stay to your right for the quickest way to the waterfall though an alternate route may be taken by taking a left turn but it adds at least a ½ mile.

Consider bringing a light jacket or sweater, a hat and sunscreen, bottled water and a snack. In cold weather, wildlife is scarce, with a few bugs and birds keeping you company. From spring through the fall, there may be rattlesnakes present, so a large stick or trekking poles might come in handy. People have dumped large pieces of junk down the cliffs, so there might be car tires (if not whole cars) in the distance, as well as graffiti. The trail itself is pretty garbage-free. Signage is nonexistent, so stay close to the trail or on it.

The views of the cliffs and the cascading water at the falls offer all kinds of options for photos. The hike lasts about one hour 50 minutes roundtrip, detours included, and it's an enjoyable hike.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Sebastian Moraga



14 Ancient Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- QUINCY AREA

4-5 miles, roundtrip Gain: 400 ft. Difficulty: Easy to moderate



Experience: Waterfall Vistas/Wildflowers/Shrub Grasses/Variety of Wildlife

This trailhead is accessible from several approaches – turn south from White Trail Road (also called U Road NW) if approaching from State Highway 28 (northwest from Quincy). It is called Road 5 NW if approaching from State Highway 281 (north of Interstate Freeway-90). Turn south onto the gravel road identified as T NW toward parking lots at Stan Coffin Lake, H Lake, Quincy Lake, Burke Lake and Evergreen Reservoir. South from White Trail Road on Road T NW go .8 miles to the signed Ancient Lake trailhead which is the first parking area on the right (past the entry gate). There are no bathrooms or other signage.

This hike is a spectacular example of the Missoula Floods forces that shaped much of geography of the channeled scablands of central Washington. Here you will find plateaus covered with sage brush, grasses, and wildflowers framed by striking basalt canyons. The star attraction of this hike is the desert waterfall that tumbles down the rimrock and gives life to

the desert flora and fauna in the area. In spring, find several smaller waterfalls as snowmelt rushes down the rocks. Access to the main waterfall can be faster from the upper trailhead, but it is a steeper hike. Stroll along the single file path leading from the lower trailhead and consider saving the waterfall vista for the halfway point of the out-and-back hike. Either way hikers may be surprised at the amount of surface water visible on this desert hike.

While walking, rabbits, coyotes, deer, loons, duck, sparrows, quail and other fauna may be seen especially as they seem to gather around any water source in this region. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby. Arrowleaf balsamroot is among the first plants to make its appearance in spring while rabbit brush flares with color each fall, and the lichen on the basalt bedrock provides interesting hues of rust, yellow, and lime green year-round. The dramatic coulee walls of basalt lava rock were exposed as a result of erosion by gigantic floods that originated from Glacial Lake Missoula thousands of years ago, making this hike unique in history and beauty.

The route from the upper trail is a bit more challenging, as hikers descend down a portion of the trail on loose rock, called talus, beside the waterfall to get down into the main basin though the rewards are the sweeping desert views. Consider connecting the Upper Ancient Lake Trail with the Judith Pool Trail to create a loop hike, or come up with your own loop among the network of trails that weave around the lakes. The George Amphitheatre Trail (which starts near Dusty Lake) leads to the namesake location and provides an excellent view of the Columbia River.

The waters that sustain the lakes in the area originate from irrigated croplands to the north, south and east but the water sources on this hike are not potable. Bring your own water, pack your own food in and out, and enjoy the stunning desert topography that so many find surprising among the relatively flat farmland of central Washington. This is one hike where you'll definitely want your camera.



Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Lisa Laughlin

15 Beezley Hills Recreation Area Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- EPHRATA AREA

6 miles, roundtrip Gain: 800 ft. Highest Point: 2260 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Mountain Views/Wildlife

Have you ever noticed a boldly lighted star or flag glowing from atop Ephrata's Beezley Hill from a distance in the winter? Well, this is your chance to see it up close during the right time of the year! Always remember when hiking on Beezley Hill to bring plenty of water, a snack, wear a hat, sunblock, and if it's windy wear something that covers your ears. The weather can change pretty quickly, creeping up the hills before it smothers the valley. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby.

On State Highway 28 (known as Basin Street) in the town of Ephrata, go northwest on First Ave NW, past the Grant County courthouse and start up the hill for .3 miles. Before reaching the canal, you'll see a large silver puzzle piece – a symbol of the Autism Society of Grant County which has a memorial up along the trail; turn left onto Cyrus Street towards it, and you'll see the trailhead reader board (in a parking lot next to a church). You can park

there or park in the (public) parking lot (below the Juvenile Facility) .1 mile farther on Abel Rd. Continuing up the hill there is a smaller parking pull out next to the water cisterns. Do not park beyond the gate with its multiple locks displayed (even if it is open).

The Beezley Hill Recreation Area trail system covers over 20 miles of trails. The trail system opened in 2012 to hikers, cyclists, walkers, joggers, and mountain bikers. The trails are fragile so please stay on an established path or road! Another reason to stay on designated trails is that some of them are on private property. Pet owners should clean up after their pets and everyone is asked to pack it in and out to help keep the trails/roads litter-free. There are lots of

options on the map to get an idea of what area of the hills to explore. The lower trails are often windy, rocky and sometimes washed out. The easiest, widest, best maintained trail is identified as the first trail on the trail guide handout located at the reader board mentioned above. It is called the Tower Road Trail, which leads to a total of three sets of towers in the hills and follows the established road. The wilderness vibe of these trails is extraordinary as they dip in and out of the hills' crests, and there are more flowers that way.

The Tower Road trail may be hiked to the first, second or third set of towers or any distance in-between. Mileage to the second set of towers is 1.5 miles from the bottom and 3 miles to the third set of towers which can make for a 6-mile roundtrip hike. Many people of all ages and skill levels, hike the trails/road.

This is a favorite trail for two reasons. First, it is close by to Ephrata. Second, it's good training and conditioning for trails outside of Grant County since the elevation gain is significant when compared to walking on the flats.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Shawn Cardwell and Mark Amara



16 Wilson Creek Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- WILSON CREEK

1.4 miles roundtrip GAIN: 0 Highest Point: 1276 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Wonderful Views/Variety of Wildlife and Birds

Wilson Creek, is 23 miles east of Soap Lake off State Highway 28 and consists of more than just tumbleweeds. Grant County has much to offer and tucked back in the corner is the small gem known as Wilson Creek, population 210 (as of 2016). Wilson Creek is one of the oldest towns in Grant County lying right on the Great Northern Railroad's route completed in 1892 linking Spokane west through many eastern Washington towns to Seattle. Wilson Creek empties into Crab Creek.

There are two primary ways to access the town from State Highway 28. From the west, go 7.1 miles east past Road J NE (by Stratford). Turn into the west Wilson Creek Loop road and go 1.5 miles to a stop sign. Stay straight and the road becomes Railroad Street. Go approximately ½ mile to the trailhead which is past a railcar in the city park. OR, from the east turn north on the east Wilson Creek Loop and follow it into town for ½ mile turning right into Railroad Street. The trailhead starts just beyond a four way stop sign past the Public Works-Fire District 12 building, a concrete block structure, on the right which identifies the name

of the walk as the Cottonwood Trail and points north to its starting point. Though there are no bathrooms on the trail, there are public restrooms in the city park next to the trail.

This trail may not be long but don't let that deceive you. The fully paved 0.7 miles one-way level trail takes no less than 20 minutes to walk. Along the trail notice stable roof covered benches to rest on and take views up and down the valley. Not only are there benches but there are also garbage cans to dispose of any unwanted items. Informational displays describe local wildlife. This trail seems to have been made for everyone to enjoy without a lot of effort. There is no need for any special permission to explore this area as it is open to the public. Even though it is paved, look out for rattlesnakes who may cross the path spring through fall.

What is enjoyable about this trail was the quiet environment it offers. As far as difficulty is concerned this trail is rather easy to complete whether you run, jog, or walk. Spend as much time you want because there is no saying you can't walk it 5 times! The trail is situated on a man-made levee that protects the town and parallels the Wilson Creek drainage. Depending on the time of year, the water in the creek could be high or it could be dry.

Wonderful views are all around. Nearby to the east on a terrace above town is a small airport. This airport functions as a runway for crop dusters and locals to use. Much of the town is centered in a small area though the football field seems to be a focal point. This is the place where important events regularly take place including an annual 4th of July celebration with fireworks, assuming it is safe to do so.

Not only will you have a great experience in a place you wouldn't see every day but the Wilson Creek Trail is a very good beginner trail. It is not far from civilization, but an oasis of the calming outdoors makes this a trail to put on your list!

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Madison White



17 Potholes Wildlife Area Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- POTHoles REGION

Many miles roundtrip Highest Point: 1050 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Wildflowers/Meadows/Dogs not Allowed/Wildlife/Good for Kids/Lakes

The Potholes Wildlife Area is made up of 40,000 acres of generous views and rolling hills. This trail offers up to 20 miles of pure gravel and wildlife beyond belief. Approach the trailhead from either east or west bound on Interstate Freeway 90. Take Exit 174 (Mae Valley/Hansen Rd) and proceed to the South Frontage Road E. Take a right (west), and continue on it for 4.3 miles to Road C NE. Turn south down this road and after .2 miles, park at the gate that blocks the road. There are no bathrooms though there is a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife sign, a white gate, and a green single-entry gate for walkers to access the area. Though it is gated, there are no signs forbidding entry and travelers who drive through should proceed at their own risk (of being locked in). The signage present is ambiguous. It says the area is: Regulated Access Parking – only people parked in the designated parking lot may be inside the posted regulated access area.

This trail does require a Discover Pass so be sure to have one hanging from your mirror before entering this area. Within the first 4 miles there are three different and safe areas that

are made for people to take their firearms for practice. This being said anything you pack in must be packed out for the respect of not only the wildlife but fellow hikers who may stumble upon your area. Just because the trail is gravel doesn't mean you have to stick to it.

If driving (or walking), after the first 5 miles there is a fork in the road. If you follow the second fork off to the left for half a mile down, there is a rocky area with direct access to hills and trees within another mile

Overall this trail provides the opportunity to walk for miles in a relatively flat area where few will tread. The desert environment can be harsh if one is not prepared so always carry water, wear appropriate clothing including a hat and be aware that this area is also home to birds, snakes, and deer. During the spring, summer, and fall, rattlesnakes may be present so be aware they can be nearby. Finally, don't confuse this with the Potholes State Park because it is about 25 miles north of the park!

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photograph by Harley Price

Additional Photographs provided by Mark Amara



18 Desert Wildlife Area

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- POTHOLES REGION

3 miles roundtrip Gain: 50 ft. Highest Point: 1140 ft. Difficulty: Easy to Moderate



Experience: Sand Dunes/Deer, Coyote, Hawks and Sparrows/Waterfowl

From Moses Lake, drive on Interstate Freeway 90 west taking exit 164 at Dodson Road. Then, head south (on Dodson Road) for 3.4 miles. The trailhead will be on the left of the road. It is a large gravel parking lot with a public restroom marked "Public Hunting/Fishing." Try not to be discouraged by the garbage or vandalism – this location also seems to be a magnet for graffiti artists.

The Desert Wildlife Area is an open area for hiking at your leisure in a mostly flat, desert landscape. Located just north of the Winchester Wasteway near the Potholes Wildlife Area, this desert hike includes plenty of waterfowl, wildflowers, and open-sky views. The wetland was created/continues to function as the collection basin for the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project's runoff waters that drain to this low area of the Quincy Basin. Without the irrigation project, the area would have been even drier. There are several game trails that you can choose to meander on this hike. There's no one correct route, but staying north of the ponds provides the clearest stretch to hike northeast and enjoy the view of the water without wading through boggy areas. Enter the area following the road to the boat launch area and then head east along the sandy trail that skirts the edge of the wasteway onto a knoll above the wetland. OR, go through a single-entry gate east of the restrooms into the wildlife area staying north of

the wasteway. Beyond these entry points, the hiker will have to improvise.

The game and fisherman trails in this wildlife area are composed primarily of sandy soil – allowing hikers to walk along the sand dunes, after all, which plays surprisingly good host to the desert shrubs, grass, and trees that allow animals like deep coyotes, hawks, and sparrows to take shelter here. In spring and summer there are a variety of wildflowers to marvel at or walkers can enjoy the sound of the wind pushing through the reeds and grasses in every direction. Sounds of waterfowl such as ducks, geese, Blue herons, and loons may also be present, as they take short bursts of flight from one pond to another in small groups overhead.

This wildlife area provides a beautiful desert color palette during any season with its tall, grass called phragmites, and cattails, a variety of greenery from Russian olive trees to sagebrush, and shadowy purples and blues in the evenings as the backdrop of foothills turns dusky. Find some sublime sunsets in this area, and hanging out with the wind and waterfowl is sure to create a peaceful atmosphere. Larger birds frequent the stands of trees to the north, so be on the look for crows, eagles, hawks, owls, or their nests.

While the walking is relatively easy, trail signs are non-existent beyond the trailhead, which is why this hike could be considered moderate in difficulty. One easy way to stay on course is to take note of navigational markers as you walk. Notice that there are notable hills and powerlines to the west, which indicates the direction of Dodson Road and the parking lot. Hikers should also take precautions during tick and rattlesnake seasons to stay safe and wear appropriate clothing. In summer, hikers can face extreme weather in this area as temperatures soar into the triple digits and a lack of trees creates an expanse without shade. It is recommended to bring sunscreen, water, and snacks.

Those interested in fishing or exploring the area via water can enter the wasteway by way of a small watercraft launch near the gravel parking lot. Whether walking or gliding along the wetland you'll find great examples of what this area has to offer with its desert wildlife, plants, and scenery. If walking, the best hiking occurs within the first two or three miles, so take hour or so to take in the subtle surroundings and turn around at your leisure.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Lisa Laughlin



19 Frog Lake Trail and Rimrock Trail Loop

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
3 miles roundtrip Gain: 200 ft. Highest Point: 1080 ft.
Difficulty: Easy to Frog Lake – Moderate on the Rimrock Trail Loop



Experience: Native Grasses/Sage Brush and Seasonal Flowers/Wildlife

From the stoplight at the intersection of State Highway (SH) 17 and Kittleson Road (just north of Interstate Highway 90) in Moses Lake, go south on SH 17 2.3 miles to Road M SE. Turn right (south) and go 6.6 miles to a T intersection. Turn right (west) and go 2.3 miles on SH 262 to the east end of O'Sullivan Dam. Turn south on K 2 SE, a gravel road that heads into the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. From the turn go south past the turnoff to Soda Lake at 1.1 miles, staying right after a Y intersection (left goes to Soda Lake Dam) 1.1 mile further, straight on the same road past the next unmarked turn (.4 miles farther) and left onto Morgan Lake Road (.3 miles farther). Go another 1.1 miles to a parking lot on the west side of the road across from erected basalt pillars that marks the start of the trail. This trailhead marks three trails, the Frog Lake Trail, the Marsh Loop, and the Crab Creek (south to north trailhead).

No trail or car pass is required. It is in that part of the Columbia Plateau's Drumheller Channels portion of the channeled scablands created by the ancient Missoula floods which swept

Grant County Tourism Commission

through the area more than 12,000 years ago. It lies in the Crab Creek valley and starts along a path that parallels Crab Creek through shrub-steppe habitat.

Proceed down the hill from the pillars to the east. The path runs to the east side of Crab Creek, which is a year-round creek. The trail crosses a dam with a grated spillway through which the hiker can hear the roar of water and see it rushing through the pipes to a lower part of Crab Creek. Go left at the T intersection. A variety of birds always seem to be present and can be a major focus for viewers. Other animals also use the habitats which range from wetlands to dry shrub-steppe uplands. Evidence of coyote and deer was present.

The trail to Frog Lake is easy and there are several interpretive signs along the route describing the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, flora and fauna. That part of the hike takes about 20 minutes (one way) but the hiker has the opportunity to see more farther up the trail. Though there is an interpretive sign describing Frog Lake as a permanent fixture in the landscape, imagine where it lies in a closed drainage basin because there is no water present. There are a few dried up cattails but no evidence of water and hence no frog activity.

For a slightly longer hike, continue up the trail following strategically placed interpretive and directional signage which leads the hiker to the top of a circular basalt mesa. There are trails to overlooks on the top or the hiker may walk on a trail that follows the edge of the rimrock around the perimeter of the mesa for a short loop (.6 miles). The views from the top of the mesa are spectacular. Observe many features in the Drumheller Channels including exposed basalt lava, columns, mesas, scabland lakes, miles of rangeland, and the Crab Creek valley.

In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge is open during certain times of the year. There is no shade on the trail and hikers should consider carrying water during the spring and summer.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara

tourgrantcounty.com



20 Blythe and Chukar Lakes Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

3 miles roundtrip Gain: 100 ft. Highest Point: 1000 ft.

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate



Experience: Seasonal Wetland with Salt Grass and Russian Olives/Variety of Wildlife

From the stoplight at the intersection of State Highway 17 and Kittleson Road in Moses Lake (just north of Interstate Highway 90), go south on State Highway 17 for 2.3 miles to Road M SE and turn right (southwest). After 6.6 miles turn right (west) onto State Highway 262. Go 6 miles crossing O'Sullivan Dam to reach Mardon Resort. Turn south at Mile Post 14 onto a gravel road identified with a faint weather-beaten wooden sign marked: Corral Lake, Blythe Lake, and Chukar Lake. Drive 1.6 miles to the road end at a boat launch and parking lot on the west end of Blythe Lake. Blythe and Chukar Lakes lie in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. No trail or car pass is required and access is moderately easy. It is in a part of the Columbia Plateau's Channeled Scablands created by the ancient Missoula floods which gouged out the area more than 14,000 years ago.

Direct access to Blythe Lake is from the parking lot/boat launch on the west end of the lake. There is no signage or restrooms. There is no official identified trail to either Blythe Lake or Chukar Lake but there are jeep roads and paths. A metal gate lies about 250 feet east of the Blythe Lake parking lot up a gravel road extension and unofficially marks the beginning

of the Blythe Lake-Chukar Lake trail. The trail alternates between a two-track road and a single lane trail. Since this hike has no shade, fall, winter and/or early spring hiking is recommended and the hiker should bring water. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because these lands are open during certain times of the year.

Follow the two-track graveled jeep road east over rolling hills with a few basalt lava exposures in native shrub-steppe desert habitat that lies above the south side of Blythe Lake. After 1/3 mile, the road becomes a trail which winds around the north side of a seasonal wetland with salt grass, Russian olive, and patches of exposed salty soil. From the bottom of the wetland, the trail winds up a short steep north facing slope, with nice vistas of Blythe Lake, through native blue bunch wheatgrasses onto a high upland bench. Farther south the trail continues out-of-sight of the lake. After about 1/2 mile hikers should bear left onto another two-track 4x4 road. This area has rolling relief with miles of native bunchgrass surrounded by steep vertical basalt cliffs which both border the lakes and plateaus above it. After rounding a high basalt bluff (on the right), the trail heads downhill. Views of and access to Chukar Lake can be done by getting off the trail and heading north to overlook it. From these vantage points, notice that the lake edge is rimmed with a tall reed called phragmites, cattails, and scattered Russian olive trees. Heading downhill is a junction marked by a metal post about 4/10 mile from the last intersection. Go left down the hill where Chukar Lake merges with Scaup Lake. The trail runs along the top of a man-made levee to a four-way intersection of the trail with the Marsh Unit 1 road trail at 1.5 miles. Turn around and head west on the same trail to retrace your steps.

On the return trip, the views of Chukar Lake and Blythe Lakes are easy to see and the hike across the bunchgrass covered area offers open vistas and chances to view a variety of wildlife.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



21 Upper Goose Lake Plateau Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2+ miles roundtrip Gain: 65 ft. Highest Point: 1000 ft. Difficulty: Moderate



Experience: Lake Views/Variety of Natural Grasses and Plants/Wildlife

From the stoplight at the intersection of State Highway (SH) 17 and Kittleson Road (just north of Interstate Highway 90) in Moses Lake, go south on SH 17 2.3 miles to Road M SE. Turn right (south) and go 6.6 miles to a T intersection. Turn right (west) and go 2.3 miles on State Highway 262 to the east end of O'Sullivan Dam. Turn south on K 2 SE, a gravel road that heads into the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. From the turn go south past the turnoff to Soda Lake at 1.1 miles, staying right after a Y intersection (left goes to Soda Lake Dam) 1.1 mile further, straight on the same road past the next unmarked turn (.4 miles farther). When Morgan Lake Road is reached, go straight for another .6 miles to Upper Goose Lake. Park away from the boat launch area.

This area is owned by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife so a Discover

Pass is required and it is posted before reaching the parking area. There are no other signs, no bathrooms, and no other identifying features. It is in that part of the Columbia Plateau's Drumheller Channels portion of the channeled scablands created by the ancient Missoula floods which swept through the area more than 12,000 years ago. The trail is rated as moderate.

The trail initially starts steeply uphill and then levels out and rises gently following a rough jeep road into the back country. Much of the vegetation was burned in a wildfire in the last 5 years. Recovery appears to have been slow and there are many annual and perennial weeds which are clogging access and can challenge hikers. There is a preponderance of mustard, cheatgrass, and less of knapweed and rabbitbrush. Yarrow

and Sandberg's bluegrass are common with scattered crested wheatgrass plants. Burned sagebrush stumps are present. The trail is desolate yet beautiful in its own way sandwiched in a narrow valley between vertical basalt lava walls. The basalt lava flows display their characteristic jointing patterns and flows are stacked one atop the other which the hiker can see in profile. There are side valleys that could be explored by going cross country. The burned area extends for some distance in this area and the trail becomes less distinct with distance from the trailhead though it is visible on maps of the area. The hiker may proceed on the trail or go off trail for miles eventually ending up on Morgan Lake Road. There was evidence of deer and other smaller animals. Badger holes were common. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because state wildlife land is open for hunting during certain times of the year. Consider carrying water especially during the spring and summer as there is no shade.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



22 Crab Creek Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
2 miles roundtrip Gain: 40 ft. Highest Point: 900 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Scablands/Wetland Plants/Waterfall/Basalt Lined Cliffs

From the stoplight at the intersection of State Highway 17 and Kittleson Road (just north of Interstate Highway 90) in Moses Lake, go south on State Highway 17 2.3 miles to Road M SE. Turn right (south) and go 6.6 miles to a "T" intersection. Turn right (west) and go 2.3 miles on State Highway 262 to the east end of O'Sullivan Dam. Turn south on K 2 SE, a gravel road that heads into the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. From the turn go south past the turnoff to Soda Lake at 1.1 miles, staying right after a "Y" intersection (left goes to Soda Lake Dam) 1 mile further, straight on the same road past the next unmarked turn (.2 miles farther) and end at an unsigned parking lot on the south side of the road (.4 miles from the last intersection). Go back if you reach Morgan Lake Road. At the parking lot, walk south 100 feet to a trail sign marking the start of the Crab Creek trail – north trailhead.

The Crab Creek trail was built in 1988 and lies in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. No trail or car pass is required. It is in that part of the Columbia

Plateau's Drumheller Channels portion of the channeled scablands created by the ancient Missoula floods which swept through the area more than 14,000 years ago. The trail is rated as easy with one short climb up to the top of a bluff above the wetland near the south end of the trail.

The trail runs on the west side of Crab Creek, which is a year-round creek. This part of the trail is wide where it is mowed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Cross the creek at .1 miles using a wooden bridge. The hiker can see the variety of wetland plants that cover this area including cattails, Russian olive and willow trees, basin wildrye, rose, currant, greasewood, and tall reeds called phragmites. Away from the wet plain big sagebrush grows taller than 6 feet in height. Several information signs describe wetland plants, animals, and other features. By staying left at an unmarked intersection at .3 miles and left on the return trip, a short loop trip can be made. An unnamed seasonal waterfall empties water into Crab Creek; the waterfall's output is controlled from water released from Soda Lake (which lies to the northeast). After another .5 mile, the trail leaves the plain. Up a short steep hill, the hiker climbs to the top of the bluff where the plants are more typical of shrub-steppe desert habitat. The trail ends next to Morgan Lake Road marked by a Crab Creek - south trailhead sign. Tall basalt columns stolen by thieves on the refuge were rescued and erected there in 2015. Return to the starting point on the same trail by going north.

Along the Crab Creek trail the hiker may see a variety of plants and wildlife along the wetland and upland, and views of the basalt lined cliffs that lie above the creek. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because the Refuge is open during certain times of the year.

The trail is well maintained with exceptions; the slats in the wooden bridge near the beginning of the trail are held together with metal strapping so be careful crossing to keep shoes from getting caught. Finally, the short steep climb from the lower part of the trail onto the bench above it requires climbing over and around some loose railroad ties, some of which are being used as steps.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



23 Marsh Loop Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, POTHOLES
2.5 miles roundtrip Gain: 30 feet Highest Point: 880 feet Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Channeled Scablands/Basalt Columns/Seasonal Wildlife

From the stoplight at the intersection of State Highway (SH) 17 and Kittleson Road (just north of Interstate Highway 90) in Moses Lake, go south on SH 17 2.3 miles to Road M SE. Turn right (south) and go 6.6 miles to a T intersection. Turn right (west) and go 2.3 miles on SH 262 to the east end of O'Sullivan Dam. Turn south on K 2 SE, a gravel road that heads into the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. From the turn go south past the turnoff to Soda Lake at 1.1 miles, staying right after a Y intersection (left goes to Soda Lake Dam) 1.1 mile further, straight on the same road past the next unmarked turn (.4 miles farther) and left onto Morgan Lake Road (.3 miles farther). Go another 1.1 miles to a parking lot on the west side of the road across from erected basalt pillars that mark the start of the trail. This trailhead marks three trails, the Marsh Loop, Crab Creek (south to north trailhead) and the Frog Lake trail.

No trail or car pass is required. It is in that part of the Columbia Plateau's Drumheller Channels

portion of the channeled scablands created by the ancient Missoula floods which swept through the area more than 12,000 years ago. It lies in the Crab Creek valley and follows a path that winds around three man-made controlled ponds. The trail is rated as easy.

Proceed down the hill from the pillars to the east. The path runs to the east side of Crab Creek, which is a year-round creek. The trail crosses a dam with a grated spillway through which the hiker can hear the roar of water and see it rushing through the pipes to a lower part of Crab Creek. Follow the levee trail following signage pointing the hiker to the southwest side of the man-made ponds which may be filled or dry depending on the season. The ponds each have water control structures or gates that allows water in or out. A variety of birds always seem to be present and can be a major focus for viewers. Other animals also use the habitats which range from wetlands to dry shrub-steppe uplands. Evidence of coyote, deer, and porcupine were present.

Follow the wide graveled path south to where the ponds end. At an unsigned intersection, bear east following the edge of the last pond around the backside of a large gravel pile bearing left (past another road that goes east) and close to the edge of the valley to view some vertical basalt columns. There are a couple of places to turn back across the dams that separate the ponds for shorter hikes. However, it is easy to follow the entire route which returns on the east side of the ponds. At a marginally signed intersection marked by an arrow, bear right onto a well-traveled trail which winds up and down through the sagebrush to intersect with the Frog Lake Trail and loops back to the start of the Marsh Loop trail.

In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge is open during certain times of the year.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



24 Artesian and Black Lake Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- MOSES LAKE AREA NORTH

3.8 miles roundtrip Gain: 34 ft. Highest Point: 1270 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Vertical Basalt Cliffs/Variety of Wildlife/Variety of Birds

From State Highway 17 in Moses Lake, turn north onto Stratford Road and go 3.2 miles. Turn east (right) on Road 7 NE and go 3 miles. Turn north (left) onto Road M NE. After 3.1 miles turn east (right) onto Road 10 NE. Go .9 miles and turn north into the Bureau of Reclamation fenced and signed bare earth parking lot which has a permanent restroom with a vault toilet and a van accessible sign. Additional signage indicates the trail prohibits off road vehicles. No trail or car pass is required and the hike is easy. Consider carrying water as there is no shade. Be aware that snakes and ticks could be present at certain times of the year. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because these lands are open during certain times of the year. A variety of birds and mammals may be present.

The trail begins by zigzagging through a wooden walk-through rail fence and winds its way to the north along a jeep road. The walk is through a portion of Black Rock Coulee. The coulee is a channel created and enhanced by multiple ancient Missoula floods which

gouged out the area more than 14,000 years ago, and is considered part of the Columbia Plateau's Channeled Scablands.

Artesian Lake and Black Lakes used to be full year-round. However, with the agricultural drilling of several groundwater wells in the area to facilitate irrigating croplands, the lakes have all but dried up. There are plans by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to rehydrate the lakes by installing a 9200 feet long buried pipeline from the East Low Canal (south) to Artesian Lake which would also flow through a cut in a swale between the lakes to fill Black Lake.

The beginning of the route parallels some short columnar basalt cliffs on the west which quickly disappear. Much of the walk is through gently sloping shrub-steppe habitat which consists of big sagebrush, forbs and grasses that are common in this part of central Washington. The road intersects with other access roads but the walker should bear north along the primary route. The jeep road crosses one seasonal drainage which has short cut banks along parts of its course and drains toward Artesian Lake. Both Artesian Lake and Black Lake lie in the bottom of Black Rock Coulee, are rimmed by vertical basalt cliffs and both appear as natural seasonal water bodies. Close to the lakes the vegetation changes to greasewood, basin wildrye and salt grass with sagebrush especially where salts and alkaline soils are dominant. From the trailhead, Artesian Lake is 1.3 miles from the start. Between Artesian Lake and the jeep road are the remains of a historic homestead inhabited in the early 20th century. Hikers should be aware that there is an uncovered open cement well head approximately 3 feet in diameter that could be a hazard for people or animals. From Artesian Lake, follow the jeep road another .5 miles along the top of the ridge to the northeast to the basin occupied by Black Lake. Depending on the time of the year, Black Lake may be dry or seasonally wet. If the planned rehydration project is implemented, the lakes will be full once again.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: None

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



25 Gloyd Seeps South Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- MOSES LAKE AREA NORTH

3 miles roundtrip Gain: 30 ft. Highest Point: 1150 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Waterfowl/Perennial Grasses, Shrubs and Trees/Wildlife

From the State Highway 17 – Stratford Road NE intersection in Moses Lake drive north on Stratford Road for 6.9 miles. Turn west (left) into a graveled signed parking lot with a kiosk. This hike is on Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife land (WDFW) land. There are no restrooms and a Discover Pass is required since it is on state owned land. Access for hikers is between large boulders and follows a wide gravel road. The trail is rated as easy.

Though the trail head is not officially named, it is referred to as the Farm Unit Parking Lot. This is because before WDFW acquired the land in the early 1970s, a portion of the area was in crop production with water delivered through Columbia Basin Irrigation Project structures to this Farm Unit 178, Irrigation Block 40.

The road is wide and stays high above the flooded areas associated with seeps and springs. The road acts as a dike which dams a lake with the overflow running in large underground culverts under it downstream. The apparent lake behind the dam collects the drainage from the Gloyd Seeps and from other naturally occurring springs and is not a part of the Crab Creek channel proper. However, all the waters (including those from Crab Creek) intermingle

at this point and run south in the well defined channel together. The first .6 miles passes by a variety of habitats including dry shrub-steppe and wetlands.

At .65 miles, the road turns northwest out of the wetlands into drier well drained soils and parallels a concrete lined ditch which delivered water from the irrigation project to till irrigate the farmland when it was in production. Once the land transferred hands, the focus shifted from crop production to managing habitat for wildlife. WDFW continued planting grain for geese, ducks, and pheasants until 1987. That was when some of the fields were retired from farming and planted to perennial grasses, shrubs, and trees funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Reserve Program. Initially a mix of five species of grass were planted but the dominant species remaining appear to be basin wildrye, crested wheatgrass, blue bunch wheatgrass, and tall wheatgrass while Siberian wheatgrass fared less well. In the 1970s, a 350 foot long Austrian pine and Rocky Mountain juniper habitat development/windbreak was planted adjacent to Crab Creek proper west of the road (at .85 miles). Between 1987-1989, additional plantings of Rocky Mountain juniper were planted and irrigated out of the concrete lined ditch east of the road. The concrete lined ditch ends near a huge cement structure that stands several feet high (1.3 miles).

The cement structure is the weir box associated with a siphon pipeline structure that transports irrigation water through a buried pipe from the East Low Canal west underneath Crab Creek to deliver water to farmlands west of the creek. Following a trail west from the cement structure, the hiker can walk out onto the grass covered siphon dike along a wide part of the creek about where it crosses under it. Additionally, hikers may meander north and south along the Crab Creek shoreline.

A variety of wildlife may be seen including abundant waterfowl, other birds, and amphibians like frogs and beaver. In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands are open during certain times of the year. Consider carrying water as this hike is out in the open and can be particularly hot on a warm day.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass

Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara



26 Gloyd Seeps North Trail

CENTRAL WASHINGTON -- MOSES LAKE AREA NORTH

1-mile roundtrip Gain: 20 ft. Highest Point: 1200 ft. Difficulty: Easy



Experience: Native Shrub-Steppe Habitat/Wildlife/Fish

From the State Highway 17 – Stratford Road NE intersection in Moses Lake drive north on Stratford Road for 16.5 miles to Road 20 NE. Turn west (left) on Road 20 NE and go 5.2 miles to Road E NE. Turn south onto E NE which is paved another .6 miles before turning to gravel. At 1 mile from the E NE intersection, turn into a signed parking lot at the intersection of Road E NE & 19 NE. Though there are multiple signs designating the area as open to Public Access and on land belonging to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the trailhead is not officially named but is referred to by WDFW staff as the Road 19 NE Parking Area. There are no restrooms. This property borders both sides of Grant County Tourism Commission

the Crab Creek and since it is state land, a Discover Pass is required. Access for hikers into the area is between vertically spaced metal posts that bisect the fence.

The trail follows a jeep road through native shrub-steppe habitat with sagebrush and grasses. It is easy walking, relatively flat, and wide open. Some of the area was replanted to perennial grasses in the 1970s with crested wheatgrass and basin wildrye to help combat weeds and to enhance habitat for wildlife. Additionally, there are several rows of woody shrubs like rose and currant that are surviving in linear rows of black fabric mulch from around that same era. There are several conspicuous hunting blinds that were also erected in the 1970s or before which were designed initially to attract quail. At approximately ½ mile, the hiker reaches Crab Creek. Depending on the time of the year, the water level can be low or high. If crossing the creek, waders and sure footing make the trip across easier. An additional name for the hike is the Island Unit because when the water is high on Crab Creek, there are islands between the channels. From the opposite side of the creek, the hiker can continue following the creek and there is a very rough track that can be taken which ends up eventually intersecting Road 16 NE. Landmarks include Crab Creek with its many channels, the hillside east of the creek, and a prominent basalt rock outcrop that is visible in the distance. A variety of wildlife, primarily birds or deer, may be seen, though fish in Crab Creek, may also be present.

In the spring through fall, rattlesnakes may be present and care should be taken to watch out for them. Hikers should also check hunting seasons because Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands are open during certain times of the year.

Parking Pass/Entry Fee: Discover Pass



Narrative and Photographs by Mark Amara

1 Banks Lake WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) maintains public fishing parking areas with outhouses at the southwest corner of Banks Lake and north of the Million Dollar Mile (where State Highway 155 cuts through and over the basalt cliffs). There is a parking area, without an outhouse, on State Highway 155, at the south side of the Million Dollar Mile. At Osborne Bay, a few miles north of Steamboat Rock State Park, WDFW maintains a primitive road that provides access and parking around the part of the Osborne Bay that is east of the highway.

2 Billy Clapp Lake WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Elk, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

In addition to the paved parking area, there is a primitive parking area on the east side of the Billy Clapp Reservoir that is about two miles from the west end of county Road 26NE off the county Road Q NE.

3 Desert WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

At the Audubon Trail, ¼ mile south of Road 1 SW, there is a parking area and an outhouse. At the Winchester Wasteway on Dodson Road there is a large parking area with a gravel boat ramp and an outhouse. At Frenchman Hills Wasteway on Dodson Road there is a large parking area and an outhouse. The Birdwatcher's Area on Frenchman Hills Road is a small parking area with no other facilities. The parking area on Road 1 SW is a large gravel lot with an outhouse. The four access roads and parking areas on Frenchman Hills Road between 1 Road SW and Hwy. 262 are small and primitive and do not have an outhouse. WDFW maintains four parking areas on the Harris Road Access. The eastern parking area, known as Harris Road #1, is at the Winchester Wasteway and it has an outhouse and a footbridge across the wasteway. The three other parking areas, on the wet fork of Harris Road Access, provide public access to sandy uplands, small ponds and seasonal wetlands. Two of those parking areas, # 2 and #4, also have outhouses. The middle parking area, #3, is a primitive site that provides car top boat access to some shallow ponds there.

4 Gloyd Seeps WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

WDFW maintains several parking areas accessed by County roads or primitive roads within the wildlife area. There are no outhouses. WDFW parking areas and access roads can be found at the following locations: From Stratford Road; east on Road 7 NE just east of Crab Creek; at Road 9.5 NE on Stratford Road; on the south side of Crab Creek, On the west side of Stratford Road ½ mile north of Road 10 NE; one mile west of Stratford Road on Road 12 NE; one mile west of Stratford Road on Road 14 NE, Two miles west of Stratford Road on Road 16 NE and Five miles west of Stratford Road on Road 20 NE.

5 Goose Lakes WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

The Upper Goose Lake access road leads to a primitive parking area with a concrete boat ramp on the south side of Upper Goose Lake.

6 Lower Crab Creek WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

WDFW has five primitive access roads and small parking areas that are accessible from the Lower Crab Creek Road. Nearer the wet end of the unit, the Lenice Lake and the Nunnally Lake parking areas are larger, graveled and both have an outhouse.

7 Potholes Reservoir WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

The two WDFW parking areas on Sand Dunes Road, at the north and south Moses Lake outlets, both have large parking lots with outhouses. There are no outhouses in the North Potholes area or at the Road A SE parking area. The parking area at Lind Coulee Wasteway on Road M SE is large and has two outhouses and a concrete boat ramp. The Glen Williams parking area on Hwy. 262, is also a large, partially paved, parking lot with two outhouses and two concrete boat ramps. The Blythe Access has two outhouses, some pavement, an overnight parking area, a day use parking area and a concrete boat ramp.

8 Priest Rapids WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

One mile into the Priest Rapids Unit from the end of Road 26 SW, WDFW has a large parking area with an outhouse and a concrete boat ramp on the left bank of the Columbia River.

9 Quincy Lakes WDFW Unit



Larry Umthun

Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

The WDFW gravel road through the wildlife area is open to vehicles from March 1st through September 30. There are several marked parking areas, camping areas, boat ramps and outhouses that are accessible from the four-mile-long gravel access road. Another WDFW gravel access road, at the west end of Rd 3 NE, leads to two parking areas, outhouses and boat ramps on the east ends of Burke Lake and Babcock Reservoir.

10 Seep Lakes WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

There are several parking areas in the Seep lakes Unit. There are outhouses and boat ramps at the Heart lake, Windmill Lake and Long Lake parking areas.

11 Sun Lakes WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians, and Wildflowers

WDFW maintains two parking areas with outhouse on Lenore Lake. They are both marked with signs on State Highway 17. At Alkali Lake, there is one parking area with a boat ramp and an outhouse near the south end of the lake. The WDFW parking area, outhouse and boat ramp for Blue Lake is on the east side near the middle of the lake. The east side access road (Blue Lake Road) connects to SR 17 just north of Alkali Lake. WDFW does not have a developed parking area on Sun lake, but there is a public fishing area on the southeast part of the lake just north of Laurent's Resort.

12 Winchester Reservoir WDFW Unit



Birds: Birds of Prey, Eagles, Shorebirds, Songbirds, Upland Birds, Wading Birds, and Waterfowl

Mammals: Deer, Small Mammals

Other: Butterflies, Reptiles/Amphibians

There are primitive parking areas at the north and south ends of Winchester Reservoir Unit. WDFW has a gravel parking area with an outhouse and gravel boat ramp at the west end of County Road 3 NW.