

# Eagle Creek Trail Closure

by Steve Jones

Our recent rains have created multiple landslides in area burned by recent forest fires. This affects the Oregon side of the Chinook Trail. Also on the Oregon portion of the Chinook Trail the September windstorm blew down over 40 trees across the upper Eagle Creek trail in the Mark O Hatfield Wilderness. The trees along this section of the trail are large second-growth trees and it will be sometime this spring before they are cleared with cross-cut saws.

This week I went on two work parties on the CLOSED Eagle Creek Trail clearing mud, sticks, and rocks covering many sections of the first mile of trail. There are also two sections where the trail slid away. This smaller washout, which is near the trailhead is nearly repaired but the larger section further along the trail has not been worked on yet.

The trail may remain closed for two or three more months as repairs are completed and logs cut out of the trail along the creek. Of course if we have another four to six inches of rain in a single storm there will be more slides and trees that will come down onto the trail and cause the trail to be closed even longer. The narrowness of this trail and its popularity make it very difficult to work on this trail when it is open.

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# Bluff Mountain Trail

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Last Saturday on 1/16/21 Rod Hooker from Washington Trails Association and myself hiked on the Bluff Mountain Trail. The Forest Road 41 is in terrible shape and regular passenger cars will bottom out in the plethora of potholes on the way to the Bluff Mountain Trailhead. There was no snow on the road until almost to the trailhead where there were shallow ruts in the snow.

This trailhead is lightly used due to the horrible road conditions. The parking lot has a couple of places where pallets have been burned for a campfire and the nails left in the parking lot. We had a nice day for the hike and the view from the parking lot is stunning.

The first part of the trail is an old Forest Service Road which was once blocked off but people have moved the boulders out of the road and are again driving down the old road. The ruts are quite deep for the first mile but then the ground gets very rocky and the trail looks like an old gravel road. Even in the first mile there are some spectacular ridgeline views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, and Mt. St. Helens. Mt Jefferson can be seen in the distance and we spotted Saddle Mountain 45 miles to the west.

After about 2.25 miles the trail leaves the old road to the right. You have to know where to look for the trail and it looks like a little gully. Missing this turnoff causes you to go over the top of the next hill and scramble through the brush back down to the trail.

The trail is getting pretty brushy and is Washington Trails Association and the Chinook Trail Association are tentatively

planning to brush this trail this summer.

The Chinook Trail Association has also been in contact with the Forest Service about vehicles again using this old forest road.

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## **Bells Mountain Weekday Trail Closure**

Update 2/6/2021 – Logging has finished in this area of the trail. There is still some debris but the trail is now open all days.

Logging operations in the Yacolt Burn State Forest are causing weekday closures on the Bells Mountain Trail about 5 miles north of Cold Creek Day Use Area through March 31st, 2021.

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by Steve Jones

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