

West Mountain Trails

Poison Creek Trail #134



Length: 2.9 miles (4.7 km)

Difficulty

Horseback: A good trail for the first time west mountain rider, some steep sections

Hiking: Most Difficult

USGS Maps: Tripod Peak

Recreation sites nearby: Wilson Creek Trail, [West Mountain Trail](#), [Greenfield Flats](#)

Attractions and Considerations

This trail provides access to Greenfield Flats, one of most unique spots on the Emmett Ranger District. Greenfield Flats is a high mountain meadow that is covered with [wildflowers](#) in late June and July. The trail terminates on West Mountain, where it joins the Wilson Creek Trail. Wonderful views of Squaw Creek, Snow Bank, and Cascade Lake await trail users at the top.

Trail Beginning

Elevation: 7553 ft

The Poison Creek Trailhead is located at the end of National Forest Road 646E (NF-646E).

Trail Ending

Elevation: 5992 ft

The trail ends at its junction with the Wilson Creek Trail.

Access:

To reach the trailhead, go north from Ola approximately 22.5 miles on NF-618. Take a right on NF-625 and travel for approximately 5.4 miles to the junction with NF-646. Take a left on NF-646 travel 3.6 miles, then take a left on NF-646E. The trailhead is located at the end of the road.

Map: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise/emmett/trails/poisoncreektrailmaplarge.htm>

West Mountain Trail #131 (North End) // Squaw Creek Trail



Length: 16.1 miles (26 km)

Use: Light

Difficulty

Motorcycle: Most Difficult

Horseback: Very pretty trail, with some steep sections, rock & stream crossing. The trail stays in a canyon and is shaded. May run into snow into late July.

Hiking: More Difficult

USGS Maps: Tripod Peak, Sagehen Reservoir, Smith's Ferry

Recreation sites nearby: [Wilson Corrals Trail](#), Tripod Lookout, [Tripod Peak Trail](#), [Joe's Creek Trail](#), [Renwyck Trail](#), [Antelope Trail](#), [Gabe's Peak Trail](#), Willow Lake Trail, Campbell Creek Trail, [Poison Creek Trail](#)

Attractions and Considerations

The West Mountain Trail begins in a valley, crosses several creeks, and passes through meadows and forests as it gradually ascends West Mountain Ridge. Once on the ridge, the trail passes Snowbank Mountain, Jacob's Ladder, Hangman's Tree and Tripod Lookout, providing panoramic views of Round Valley, Long Valley, [Smith's Ferry](#) and Cascade. The trail is rich in Idaho [history](#). Wilson Meadows is named for Allen Wilson, a pioneer who grazed sheep there in the early 1900's. The origin of the name Jacob's Ladder isn't known, but it does resemble a ladder or steps cut from rock. There are conflicting but fascinating legends about Hangman's Tree. One says that a buckaroo of the early 1900's created a fictional "tall tale" by throwing a hangman's rope over a tree limb. Another early settler says the rope was there in 1915, but it was used to hang horse thieves who happen to be caught near a stout tree limb.

From the trailhead on National Forest Road 625G (NF-625G) to Tripod Lookout, the trail is open only to non-motorized use except for snowmobiles, which are permitted from December 1 to May 15. South of the lookout to the trailhead on NF-644 is open yearlong to all motorized vehicles. The section of trail between Wilson Meadows and Tripod Lookout will be difficult to find because cow paths bisect the main trail. Cattle graze the trail south of Wilson Meadows in the summer and fall.

The trail, bordered by huckleberry bushes, climbs gradually as it enters a forest of [lodgepole pines](#) and [Douglas-fir](#). The trail soon crosses Poison Creek and passes through several bogs. Within 2 ½ miles, the trail crosses Squaw Creek for the first time, then climbs steeply through a meadow. As it reaches a tributary of Squaw Creek, it changes direction abruptly from southeast to east. Recreationists should watch for a large arrow cut in a tree on the west side of the trail.

The trail is bordered by rock cairns and passes through a meadow, ascends a small hill, and passes the signed intersection of the [Wilson Corrals Trail](#). The trail soon reaches the northern end of Wilson Meadows, which is marshy in early spring. To avoid wet feet, hikers should skirt its west edge.

At the southern edge of Wilson Meadows, the West Mountain Trail is intersected by two other trails. An unsigned short trail near a stockman's cabin leads to the Snowbank Mountain road (NF-446). In the same area, the unsigned and unblazed [Gabe's Peak Trail](#) intersects the West Mountain Trail from the west. The trail gradually gains elevation as it travels south toward Jacob's Ladder. Within a mile and southeast of Jacob's Ladder, the trail passes Hangman's Tree, which is signed in a prominent saddle north of Tripod Lookout. Within a half mile, the trail passes the signed [Renwyck trailhead](#) and shortly intersects a short, steep [trail to Tripod Lookout](#).

As it gradually descends, the trail splits with the West Mountain trail forking east and the unsigned [Joe's Creek Trail](#) forking south. An unblazed section of the trail overlaps an unsigned, well-traveled road for a quarter mile, enters the forest again, and within a mile intersects an old, narrow roadbed. The trail continues southwest and the old roadbed forks east. About a mile from NF-644, the trail parallels a narrow stream, then ascends steeply to a registration box and trailhead sign where West Mountain Trail ends.

Map: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise/emmett/trails/westmountaintrailmaplarge.htm>

Wilson Corrals Trail #135



Length: 5.3 miles (10.6 km)

Use: Light to Moderate

Difficulty

Horseback: Stream crossings, rocky areas, mud in lower section. Ridge ride with some steep area in upper section. Great views from the top of Wilson Peak. Makes great loop ride with Gabe's Peak trail.

Hiking: Most Difficult

USGS Maps: Tripod Peak

Recreation sites nearby: [Gabe's Peak Trail](#), [West Mountain Trail](#), Willow Lake Trail

Attractions and Considerations

The trail passes through open [conifer/aspen forests](#) and then travels an open ridge to an arm of Wilson Peak before descending to Squaw Creek. From the highest point of the trail there are good views of Snowbank, Wilson Meadow, and areas west. There are no sources of water for approximately the middle 3 miles. The first 3 miles of this trail are for multiple uses. The last 3.6 miles are designated for non-motorized use. Motorized users may wish to turn around in the flat meadow at 2.7 miles instead of at 3.0 miles where the trail is steeper and narrow.

The Wilson Creek Trail starts at a well marked trailhead, ½ mile up National Forest Road 653Q (NF-653Q). The trail itself starts at the north end of the open parking area. There is ample room to park, plus a dispersed campsite at the trailhead.

The trail follows along the Third Fork of Squaw Creek for the first 0.6 miles. At two points within the first 0.3 miles, the trail drops into the edge of the creek to avoid springs up above. At 0.6 miles, the trail begins to follow a side drainage of Squaw Creek. The trail crosses this

small creek five times, passes a dispersed campsite at 1.0 mile and breaks into the open just before crossing NF-653Q at 1.2 miles. The trail is evident north of the road and a tree blaze can be seen up the trail.

After crossing the road, the trail parallels a clear-cut for 0.3 miles, but there are enough buffer trees to provide shade and screening. The trail gradually gains elevation and reaches a small meadow at 2.7 miles. At 2.8 miles the trail crosses the last source of water for approximately 2 miles to 3.6 miles.

At 3.6 miles, the trail reaches a large open ridge. The trail tread stops part way up this ridge, but by following tree blazes and rock cairns, the trail can be followed to the ridge top just southwest of Wilson Peak at 5.0 miles. The trail then drops down the southeast corner of Wilson Peak, crosses a creek at 5.6 miles and comes to a small wet meadow at 6.0 miles where the trail briefly becomes visible again. Shortly after passing this meadow, the trail becomes a network of indistinct trails, but by using the topo map and heading southeast, one can come to a ford of Squaw Creek at 6.6 miles. The trail junction with [West Mountain Trail](#) is just across this ford.

Trail Beginning

Elevation: 5280 ft (1609 m)

The signed trailhead is at the north end of the parking area off of NF-653Q, 0.5 mile north of its junction with NF-653.

Trail Ending

Elevation: 7440 ft (2268 m)

The trail ends at its well-signed junction with [West Mountain Trail](#).

Access 1:

From intersection of State Highway 52 and the Sweet/Ola Road: go north on the Sweet/Ola Road (NF-618). Just past the unsigned [Third Fork Guard Station](#), turn right onto NF-635. Go east on NF-653 approximately 8 miles to junction with NF-653Q. This junction is signed for the trail. Turn left onto NF-653Q and go 0.5 miles to sign "Wilson Corrals Trail". Turn right and park in the flat. The signed trailhead is on the north edge of the flat.

Map: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise/emmett/trails/wilsoncorralstrailmaplarge.htm>

Gabe's Peak Trail #136



Length: 3.3 miles (5.4 km)

Use: Light

Difficulty

Horseback: Most Difficult > Gabe's has some steep sections that will really work your stock. The best way to ride this trail is as the down side of a loop ride with Wilson Corral trail. The views from this trail are some of the best in the area, and while it has steep sections, they are not dangerous for stock or rider.

Hiking: Most Difficult

USGS Maps: Tripod Peak

Recreation sites nearby: [Wilson Corrals Trial](#), [West Mountain Trail](#)

Attractions and Considerations

Gabe's Peak Trail and Gabe's Bathtub are named for Gabriel, one of Andrew Little's Basque sheepherders.

The trailhead is located in Ramage Meadows. There is a loading ramp and hitching rails provided for horseback users, as well as a large parking lot and several dispersed campsites with space for tents and travel trailers. The trail is well defined, but is narrow and steep in some places. Volunteers maintain the trail once each year.

From Ramage Meadows, the trail follows a logging road for about a mile. The logging road ends in a logging unit. From the logging road, the trail proceeds upslope through [subalpine fir](#), spruce thickets, and open slopes covered with [sagebrush](#) and willows. The trail ascends to the top of West Mountain through conifers, meadows and open ridge tops. It provides panoramic views of Squaw Butte and the Squaw Creek drainage.

The trail passes around Gabe's Peak and near Gabe's Bathtub, a small pond 1/4 mile north of the trail. The pool is used by livestock and is unsafe for drinking and swimming. The trail proceeds on around Gabe's Peak and ascends to the [West Mountain Trail](#). The trail ends at Wilson Meadows near an old stockman's cabin.

Trail Beginning
Elevation: 7519 ft

The trail begins at Ramage Meadows, near National Forest Road 653 (NF-653).

Trail Ending

Elevation: 5505 ft

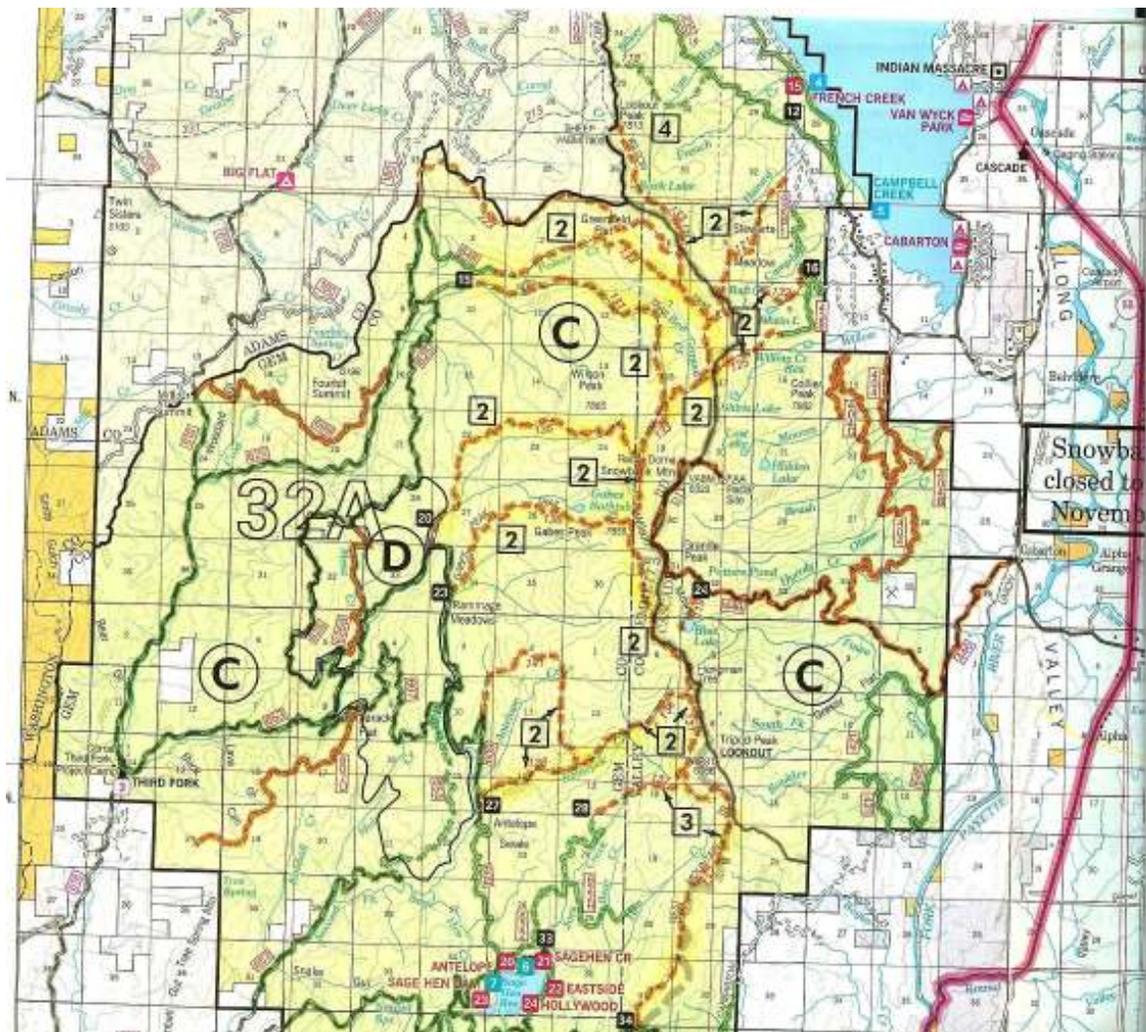
Trail ends at Wilson Meadows, just below the radar site on Snowbank Mountain.

Access:

From State Highway 52, turn north to Ola (17 miles). From Ola proceed north on NF-618 to the intersection of NF-653 and then on to Ramage Meadows (25 miles).

The trail provides panoramic views of the Squaw Creek drainage and West Mountain. From the upper end, the trail provides access to NF-446 and the Snowbank Mountain radar site.

MAP: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/boise/emmett/trails/gabespeaktrailmaplarge.htm>



CAMPING:

Directions: (Squaw Creek Campground) [15] From Ola, go North on Forest Road #618 for 5 miles and turn left on the 3rd Fork Rd. Do not cross the bridge on Squaw Creek at this point. Stay on this road for about 14 1/2 miles passing Nesbitt Ln. on the right, Dodson Pass Rd. on the left, and the 3rd Fork road on the right. Turn right on Forest Road # 625, going up the Main Squaw Creek. Go approx. 5 miles. About 300 yards past Forest Road #646, turn right into the campground area, (almost straight across the road from the West Mountain Trailhead Rd. and sign). The Squaw Creek campground has two areas suitable for horses. The most popular is to the right down in the trees. Follow the road into the camp ground and STOP with it "Y". I suggest you walk down to the right and if space is available; plan how you will park your trailer and set up your camp. The left "Y" is about a yards to another excellent area for horses, with better access to water, but not the large trees for shade and your farther away from the creek.

Trail: [133] Polson Creek – This is a fairly easy trail with only a couple of steep sections and one bridge crossing. The trail starts the same as Squaw creek trail, but about ½ in from the trail head, splits off to the left, and climbs a steep hill to road 646. Turn right on the road and take the left fork to where the official trail starts. Great view of Cascade reservoir and long valley from the top of the ridge in Greenfield flats.

Trail: [131] Squaw Creek – This is a more difficult trail that follows Squaw Creek up a canyon. There are some steep sections and the trail crosses some rocky areas. A very good camping spot is located in a meadow where trails [131] and [133] merge. A nice loop ride can be made of tails [133] and [131]

Directions: (Wilson Corral) [20]/[23] (Rammage Meadows)

There is camping at the Wilson Corral trail head, and along the road by the creek between the trail head and Rammage Meadows. The road into the trail head should be scouted as it can be full of ruts. Lots of parking at the trail head.

From Ola, go North on Forest Road #618 for 5 miles and turn left on the 3rd Fork Rd. Do not cross the bridge on Squaw Creek at this point. Stay on this road passing Nesbitt Ln. on the right, Dodson Pass Rd. on the left; turn on #653 the road on the right. There is a sign to Rammage Meadows which is a mile or so past the Wilson corral trail head. Camping is available at the Wilson Corral tail head, or along the creek on the west (right) side of the road heading to Rammage

Meadows Camp ground. The road into Wilson Corral [20] can be very rutted and should be scouted early in the season.

Trails: If you're interested in a nice ride up West Mountain with interesting trails and nice views we can recommend that you make a loop ride out of the Wilson Corral trail [135] and the Gabe's Peak trail [136]. We recommend you ride up [135] and down [136] but either way works nicely.

[135] Wilson Corral trail follows a creek in tall timber for the first couple of miles and then crosses a string of meadows ending up north west of the Radar Dome on Snow Bank mountain. In the meadows the trail gets quite indistinct, as cattle summers graze this area. You will see trees marked, and rock cairns. Continue up the meadows until you can not go any higher without dropping down into a small valley, around 7400 feet. Look to your right and you will see a small meadow down through the trees and a rocky hillside between you and the radar dome.

The trail heads down the hill through the trees into the north end of this meadow. You really don't want to cross the rocky slope as the going is dangerous on very loose rocks. A nice place to give your horses a drink is located in this meadow.

From here the trail heads south and is easy to follow. You continue south along this grassy valley until you come to a line shack. At this shack, the [136] Gabe's Peak trail branches off to the right. The trail goes left of some large rocks and works its way along a south facing slope into a series of meadows along a ridge. Stay in these meadows and on the crest of the ridge and you will have little trouble following the trail. The trail leaves this ridge on the north side and works its way through some large timber coming out on an old logging road. Follow this road to Ramage Meadows.