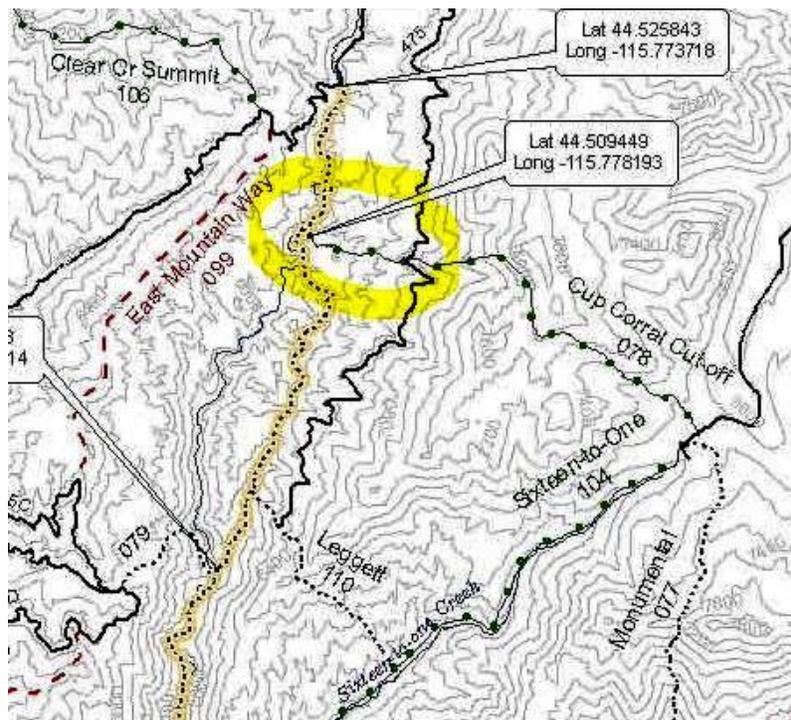


## Cupp Corral Cut-off Trail – August 31, 2014

Rob Adams



After our Middle Fork of the Payette trail project was unable to open up trail 033, I wanted to see if we could access the Middle Fork Trail by using the west end of the Cupp Corral Cut-off trail TR078. The trail crosses FR 475, so that was my destination.



On Sunday, August 31, I drove to where the trail crosses FR 475. There was a good parking area for a trailer and a camp fire ring; I expect is popular during hunting season. This is a good area for deer. I saw half a dozen doe's and two nice bucks in this area and at the Cupp Corral meadow. I had two goals for this exploration trip. One, to see what the condition of the western end of the Cupp Corral cut-off trail, and the second to check out the Cupp Corral Camping area. I arrived at the trail crossing around 10:00 and talked to the hunter for a while, he was looking for signs of wolves. The eastern section of the trail was easy to find and well used. It is a popular trail with dirt bikers who appear to be maintaining it.



The west side of the trail down to the Middle fork seems to have been forgotten. I could find no evidence of it from the parking lot, so I started searching a few hundred feet below the truck and found trail flagging and a faint trail bed. Looking west and downhill from the orange flag, I could see other orange plastic ribbons and some cut logs indicating the trail path. I put on safety gear, grabbed a chain saw and a roll of pink flagging tape, and working from this original orange flag, clear the trail back to the parking lot.

I decided to see if I could open and flag the trail down to the middle fork trail. I had only one rule, I would only go as far as I could determine the original trail path, I needed to see cut logs, orange tape or defined trail bed to continue. This worked well for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. The trail followed a ridge down towards the Middle fork, on the south side was a creek in a very steep gully and to the north were major blow down and a steep hill side.

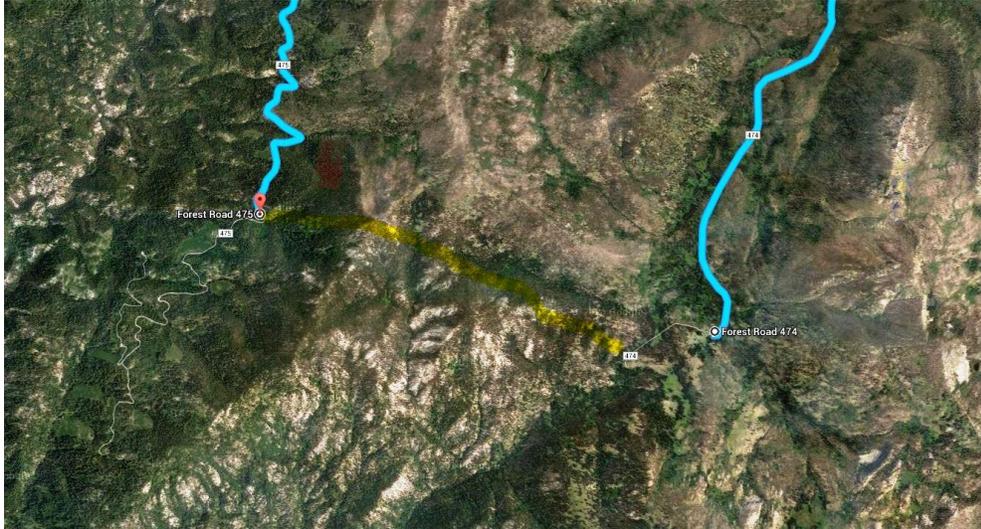
I came to a meadow full of three foot high brush, the kind with the deep green waxy leaves. At the top of this meadow was the last orange tape I found. It is obvious that the trail should go down this meadow, but after looking for about 30 minutes I failed to find another flag. In all I spent three hours, flagging and cutting out down fall to open the trail to this point. The TOPO map on my GPS was about useless in following the trail, but it did tell me I was in the right general area. I had tracking running and you can see from the track, I spent a lot of time wandering around looking for the next orange flag or cut log. There also seems to be an east off-set as to where the TOPO map and my GPS think things are. From the TOPO map it looks like I completed about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the trail to the river.



I had my buddies Payette and Moosely with me. While working on the trail I walked leading Payette while Moosely followed carrying all the tools. They both enjoyed the mountain grasses.



When I ran out of trail, I tightened my cinch and rode back to the truck and we loaded up. I had a second goal and that was to check out the Cupp Corral camping area and trail head. While it is not all that far as the crow flies, by road it is an hour.



Forest road 474 is a typical Boise Nation Forest back road, about a trailer and ½ wide with periodic wider spots to pass. It is a popular road with wood cutters and hunters. From the Yellow Jacket trail head the sign says 7 miles to Cupp Corral, at the 6.5 mile mark is a meadow that is used as a camp ground. I walked around a bit, there is space for may be 10 trailers and trees for high lining. I didn't see a stock water source, but you are not far from the South fork of the Salmon River.

The road past this point is very rocky going up a hill to Cupp Corral. The area marked with the sign has deep grass and is marshy, so I didn't think it made a great camping area, but the deer love it. I stopped exploring at this point because it was getting late. Checking later with Google Maps, from the camping area to the trail head is .6 miles. There maybe camping at the trail head, but I think it would be a dry stock camp.





Pictures of the area around the sign "Cupp Corrals"

