

## Straight up

***It's steep, rugged and seemingly has no destination, but this trail is perfect if you want to escape from the world for a while***

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It is a trail to nowhere, steep as a cherry ladder, forgotten and unloved until a week ago, when Northwest Youth Corps crews hacked away the brush and revealed a narrow footpath.

Ogle Mountain Trail, though still needing installation of water bars and a lot of tread work, is once again open to explorers of upper Henline Creek, in the Opal Creek Wilderness a mere 43 miles east of Salem.

"It's a trail that might make people ask, 'Why would anyone want to go there?'" said Ray Crist, retired after 30 years of crawling around the rocky ridges of the North Santiam River drainage in a variety of jobs for the Detroit Ranger District.

"Well, there's people who walk steep trails into remote areas to get away from people," he said. "In a short distance, you can be really secluded."

The first half mile of the trail also is the Henline Falls trail, an abandoned mining road, and nearly all of its traffic continues an additional half mile to the 90-foot falls and the old mine shaft at its base. It's where the Ogle Mountain Trail branches off the Henline Falls Trail that the switchbacks start and the huffing and puffing commences.

"Ogle Mountain, whoa, that one is straight up," said Stephanie Stano, public relations director for the Northwest Youth Corps. "But it's so accessible for people who want to get out of the city and into the forest. It's such a quick drive from Salem."

The trailhead is 15 miles up Little North Fork Road, just past the intersection of forest roads 2207 and 2209, a 50-minute drive from Salem.

"It's not my favorite trail because it's steep, really steep," said Brad Peterson, trail crew foreman for the Detroit Ranger District. "It's a toughie. It gets you breathing and sweating."

The 2.5-mile trail dead ends at the edge of the Opal Creek Wilderness, on the Willamette National Forest Boundary. But it used to continue four more miles to Ogle Mountain Mine.

"You look at the old, old maps, and you can still see the mine, and it was the prospectors who built that trail in there," Crist said. "It dead ends now where you hit private land, so it's a trail that doesn't really take you anywhere, except you get to see some small waterfalls and some nice country."



### ***Huffin' and puffin'***

**WHAT:** Ogle Mountain Trail, in the Little North Fork drainage of the North Santiam River

**WHERE:** In the Opal Creek Wilderness, 43 miles east of Salem, about a 50-minute drive

**AESTHETICS:** A climb to some good views through mature timber to panoramas of the Little North Fork canyon, a chance to get away from crowds, an opportunity to scramble close to many cascading waterfalls along Henline Creek, and a popular side hike to Henline Falls and the Silver King mine shaft at its base.

**INCLINE:** The 2.5-mile trail gains nearly 2,000 feet of elevation in its final two miles. The first half mile is a relatively flat abandoned mining road.

**SPIFFY:** There's still plenty of work on the trail to be done, but it was badly overgrown with brush until a week ago, when a crew from the Northwest Youth Corps chopped the trail open and did preliminary work on its tread.

**GETTING THERE:** Take Highway 22 east from Salem to Milepost 23, then turn left for 19 miles on Little North Fork Road, which eventually becomes Forest Road No. 2209. Park at the intersection of Forest Roads 2209 and 2207, or veer left for a quarter mile to the trailhead off 2209. Trailhead signs direct hikers to Henline Falls and Ogle Mountain Trail.

**FEES:** A Northwest Forest Pass -- a \$3 day-use fee or a \$30 annual fee -- is required for trailhead parking.

**INFORMATION:** Call the Detroit Ranger Station at (503) 854-3366.

Once above Henline Falls, the trail parallels Henline Creek, but not close enough to provide views.

"There's a lot of potential up there to build access trails off Ogle Mountain Trail to some of those picturesque waterfalls," said Lee Slattum, an avid hiker with the Chemeketans, a Salem outdoor-activities club. "The miners and their mules, they weren't too much interested in picturesque views."

Slattum has scrambled off the trail in years past to see the many falls.

"Some of them are pretty spectacular," he said. "But you have to be part gorilla and part goat to get there." Crist also has bushwhacked above Henline Falls.

"Some of those small falls I'd call cataracts," he said. "They may not be 90-degree vertical waterfalls, but they are lots and lots of rapids coming down over rocks on Henline Creek."

Until the Northwest Youth Corps went in with handsaws, hog hoes and loppers, the trail had become a frustration even for those who had hiked it in the past and knew it well.

"We ran into a father and son from Salem who tried to hike it but had to stop due to overgrowth and lack of a defined trail," Stano said. "The father had hiked there before but just couldn't find his way. He wasn't sure where to go."

Peterson said it's been difficult to keep every forest service trail open because of a shortage of personnel and budget for maintenance.

"Now the trail is more defined, and the area is just gorgeous," Stano said. "You can explore a gold mine, see a waterfall, then go right up the peak to see more of those beautiful little falls."

Bill Sullivan, a Salem native who is the author of a series of popular hiking books, highly recommends the short hike to Henline Falls.

"The mine that's right at the base of the falls was closed in the 1920s," he said. "If all you saw was the waterfall at Henline, you'd be happy, but beside the falls is this door-sized entrance to the Silver King Mine. This was a prospect where they thought that, if they went back far enough, they'd find gold."

The tunnel goes a quarter mile through solid rock into the mountainside.

"They never found gold and abandoned the mine, and now you can hike in there and wind up straight below the mountain summit," Sullivan said. "For the first 800 feet, it's so straight you can see the entrance. You could do it without a flashlight. After that it turns pitch black, so you should bring a flashlight, and you should wear boots because it drips from the ceiling and there's puddles of water on the floor."

Sullivan added: "It's not dangerous. You're not going into a shaft that's going to fall, which could happen in a lot of mines. And ending up under the summit is kind of a cool thing."

Ending up at the termination of the trail, which really isn't anywhere near the summit, is quite another matter.

"Not everybody is going to physically be able to do a lot of the steepest terrain," said Brenna Kennedy, leader of the Northwest Youth Corps crew that worked on the trail. "But if someone wants a good short workout in a wilderness area that's not highly used, I think it's absolutely gorgeous."

Crist emphasizes that it's not a prerequisite to be a 20-year-old Superman to hike Ogle Mountain.

"It can be a dawdler type of thing where you just go out, walk slowly, and listen to the birds and look at the trees and shrubs," he said. "It's not a dawdler hike in terms of not being steep, but you can take a few steps, look around, study things, take a few more steps. It's a great pokey trail, a great place just to observe."

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