

The Bonanza Mine Trail

Trail's there, but no mine

by MARK FLOYD
Sports Editor

The Bonanza Mine trail, listed in a day hike brochure offered by the Zigzag Ranger Station, is described as being four miles long and requiring four hours to complete. Four hours for only four miles? — I had to laugh. I shouldn't have.

Finding the trail was the easiest part of the longest Thursday afternoon I have ever spent. It's located south of Zigzag, just off Salmon River Road. Specific directions are available in the brochure.

The trailhead is a stone's throw away from a likely looking trout hole on the Salmon River. Three fishermen were trying their luck — the last contact with humans I would have for several hours.

The beginning of Bonanza Mine trail is an old road that winds through the woods. It was quite flat and easy walking with the only discomfort coming from a steady drizzle. After a half-mile or so the trail lead abruptly into Cheeney Creek. Finding no path along the creek, I decided to brave the water and ford the stream.

Off came the shoes and socks, and clutching my camera, I began to tiptoe across the creek. After 20 steps, I lost all feeling in my feet; the water was about 10 degrees colder than ice. Luckily, the creek was only about 15 feet across, or this column might well be my obituary.

There was a small path on the other side that meandered through the woods, basically parallel to Cheeney creek. The trail led through heavy underbrush which was soaking wet, courtesy of Oregon's liquid sunshine. The trail got narrower and gradually disappeared, so I backtracked to where I had crossed the creek and waded through, this time with my shoes on. At this point it didn't make much difference.

A few yards back up the road I discovered an unmarked trail that had somehow escaped my eye before. Although soaked to the waist, I decided to check out the trail in the interest of good journalism.

The trail wandered through a cut-over area, then headed up through the woods to the National Forest boundary. Soon a sign appeared assuring me that my path was indeed the Bonanza Mine trail.

This part of the hike was beautiful. The path went through the woods which now consisted of Douglas Firs instead of the second growth deciduous trees that marked the trails beginning. At one point, a side trail lead to a campsite just a few feet from the creek.

Under good weather conditions, the site would be an excellent place to camp, with a good water source, a sheltered sleeping area and a circle of rocks someone had left for a fire pit. As it was, I should have stayed there, but I pushed on.

The path wandered through the woods a little more, then began to climb, gradually at first, then steeply. The once smooth path got a bit rocky in spots as it wound up the side of the mountain. Halfway up, the trail became much steeper. The trees thinned out a bit and a few rhododendrons dotted the mountainside.

Before the hike, I had fancied myself to be in pretty good shape, but this trail took it all out of me. It became so steep that I had to stop every hundred yards or so to catch my breath. The camera equipment I was lugging around didn't help matter much. Where the cold water of Cheeney Creek had left me shivering, I worked up a pretty good sweat scaling that path.

I kept on the trail for over an hour, finally reaching the top. Unfortunately, I never saw the Bonanza Mine for which the trail was named. The path continued on for a ways, but by this time darkness seemed to be creeping in (although it was only about 5 p.m.) so I turned around and headed back.

Going down the path wasn't much easier than climbing up. It was so steep, that in some of the rocky places, descending the mountain was almost like riding a 20-foot wave in Hawaii.

The Bonanza Mine trail is rated for "hikers" by the Zigzag Ranger Station, meaning for those who hike regularly. The other two classifications are "family" (all ages) and "trekker", a trail that offers a challenge.

Anyone interested in the hiking the Bonanza Trail should carry water and a small amount of food with them. Although the path follows Cheeney Creek for some distance, water sources are limited when climbing the mountain. The distance of the trail is slightly longer than the four miles listed by the brochure; animal life is mostly limited to birds and slugs on the upper trail although deer can probably be spotted in the evening at lower elevations.

Hikers are warned by ranger station employees not to enter the mine shaft at the top of the mountain — if they can find it.

Although the Bonanza Mine will forever remain a mystery to me, the trip itself was an experience. The possibility of future trail reviews can't be ruled out, but examination of the trail description will be taken a bit more seriously. When they say four hours for four miles, you aren't going to catch me laughing.



THE HOME RUN SWING was in evidence last week as the sun finally appeared for a Men's League game.

Sports briefs

Blazers

You have to take the bitter with the sweet.

While the Portland Trailblazers have risen to the top of the National Basketball Association the last two years, so has the cost of running the franchise. As a result, Blazer ticket prices will go up next year it was announced Monday by business manager George Rickles.

Prices for all tickets will go up 50 cents. In addition, the 50 cent discount awarded to season ticket holders will be eliminated, in effect raising those prices \$1 per game for 11,500 fans.

Tickets for the remaining seats (the Memorial Coliseum capacity is 12,666) will be \$10, \$8.50, \$6.50 and \$4.50 for standing room only.

Competition will be held in four divisions: open, pinto, pony and 4-H. Lunch will be available and special features such as a greased pig contest will highlight the show.

track meet Monday at Sam Barlow High School in Gresham.

The meet is open to competitors in five age groups: 8-and-under, 9-11, 12-14, high school, and 18-and-over. Entry fee will cover the cost of ribbons which will be awarded to the top three competitors in each event.

equestrian

A Family Equestrian Show is scheduled this Saturday at the Canby Fairgrounds in Canby.

The event is being sponsored by the Sandy Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

track

There will be an all-comers

The meet will start at 6 p.m.

Fish and Wildlife News

Bluegills overrunning Oregon lakes



by Ken Durbin

Although fish managers are usually concerned with too much fishing pressure, there is at least one place in Oregon where they would like to see more.

Tennile Lakes, located on the coast between Reedsport and North Bend, offer some of the finest fishing for bluegills in the state. There are two lakes, North Tennile and South Tennile, connected by a channel. Both teem with blue gills but also have good populations of largemouth bass, trout, and bullhead catfish.

So far, bluegill numbers have remained in reasonable balance with the lake habitat and grow to fairly good size. But bluegills tend to thrive in most lakes, eventually overpopulate, outstrip their food supply, and exceed the capacity of predator species in the lake to keep them under control. What you have when this happens is a very large number of bluegills, few of which ever reach a size most anglers would care to keep.

Larry Bisbee, warm-water fish specialist for the Fish and Wildlife Department, says the best way to stave off a bluegill population explosion is to fish very heavily for them and throw none back.

Because bluegills are so inclined to overpopulate, there is no closed season and no bag limit. Anglers can keep as many as they wish and are encouraged to keep as many as they can catch.

Although bluegills are not usually very large, they are delicious on the table and you can make up in numbers what they lack in size. Bluegill filets, dipped in beaten egg, tossed in cornmeal and fried to a golden brown, are a real delicacy. But it takes a lot of patience and time to fillet enough for a meal.

A quicker way to prepare them is to cut off heads and tails, remove entrails, skin with a pair of pliers, and then follow the procedure above. You can then pick them up with your fingers and eat the fish from the bones, just like eating corn on the cob.

Bluegills are easily caught by many methods including still-fishing with bait such as worms or small grubs, or use of artificial lures including small jigs, spinners, and flies.

Because they are numerous, easily caught, and scrappy fighters, they make an excellent fish for a family expedition. The kids can usually catch lots of them and, again, you can keep as many as you like without feeling guilty.

Situated between North and South Tennile Lakes is the town of Lakeside. There are good overnight facilities in and near the town and many campgrounds within reasonable distance. There are also marinas where boats can be rented and excellent launching facilities are available.

A few anglers have been caught short by new regulations which set minimum lengths for salmon caught in the ocean south of Cape Falcon. In these waters chinook salmon less than 22 inches long and coho shorter than 16 inches must be released unharmed. Before

1978 salmon of any size could be kept south of Tillamook Head. Cape Falcon is about 12 miles south of Tillamook Head.

The Fish and Wildlife Department says a number of anglers, apparently unaware of the new regulation, have been landing with undersize fish, especially in the Winchester and Coos Bay areas.

Misidentification of species has been another problem. With differing minimum lengths for chinook and coho salmon, anglers need to be able to tell one from the other. Directions to help tell chinook from coho salmon can be found on page 10 of the 1978 angling regulations booklet available free where fishing licenses are sold.

License agents will also have a one-page supplement to the 1978 sport fishing regulations that details a number of rule changes adopted in April after the 1978 synopsis had already been printed. The changes were adopted to make Oregon's ocean salmon fishing regulations compatible with rules adopted by the Secretary of Commerce for the ocean zone from 3 to 200 miles offshore.

North of Cape Falcon, the minimum length for chinook salmon is 24 inches; for coho it is 16 inches.

Controlled hunt regulations and application cards have been mailed by the Fish and Wildlife Department to license agencies throughout the state.

The first application deadline, for antelope and elk hunts beginning in September, is coming up fast. Applications for these hunts must be in the Fish and Wildlife Department's Portland headquarters on or before July 5. The deadline for application for all other controlled hunts is July 18.

One important change this year requires an application fee with each application; a double fee if two names are submitted in a party application. The application fee is nonrefundable and will cover the cost

of processing controlled hunt applications.

Hunting licenses and deer, elk, and bear tags are available now at all license outlets. The regulations booklet for 1978 general big game seasons is being printed and will be available at license agencies by mid-July.

Pioneer and disabled veteran license holders are entitled to an elk tag available only from the Portland office of the Fish and Wildlife Department. Norm Goodfellow, supervisor in the department's licensing section, urges orders for these tags to be placed as early in the year as possible.

New wildlife management unit maps have been printed this year and are being mailed to license agents this week. Maps were revised to reflect several unit boundary and name changes. Exact boundary descriptions are given on the back of the maps.

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