

ROAD

Continued from Page B1

This sort of road beckons me to keep going, not so much for the potential view around the next bend or atop a knoll, but to see whether its progression is consistent — that the condition worsens the farther you go — or whether there are sections that seem almost untouched by nature.

I came across such a road recently in the mountains north of Anthony Lakes Highway.

I have an affinity for this area, where the granitic rocks of the northern Elkhorns give way to, and mingle with, the basalts that dominate the northern Blue Mountains.

There are no great peaks here, but it feels to me as wild and remote as ranges with loftier summits.

The dense forests are largely responsible, a mixture of doghair lodgepole thickets in places where the 20,000-acre Anthony Fire burned hottest in 1960, and old growth, with massive tamaracks, ponderosa pines, Douglas-firs and Engelmann spruces in some valleys.

One of those valleys is where the North Fork of Anthony Creek flows.

If you have a look at a map of the area you might well question my choice of “wild” and “remote” as adjectives.

There is certainly no shortage of roads.

Two roads to the north of the stream roughly parallel it for much of its length, and another road traces the valley south of the creek.

But none of these roads is heavily traveled.

And the one that I hiked earlier this month — the lower of the two northside routes, the one that stays close to the stream — looked to me as though it rarely has vehicle traffic



Above, a vine maple limb extends across a road along the North Fork of Anthony Creek on Oct. 9, 2021. Below, the North Fork of Anthony Creek is fed by springs in the mountains north of Anthony Lake.



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

other than an occasional ATV.

The exception is the first half mile or so from the road's start at the North Fork Anthony Creek bridge on Forest Road 7312. That road, by contrast, is something of a thoroughfare, a well-maintained gravel road that connects the Porcupine Road to the north, with the Anthony Lakes Highway.

The North Fork road — Forest Road 7312-150 — is in decent shape in that first section, and the reason seemed to me obvious, as it ends at a fine campsite beside the stream.

Immediately past the camp, though, the firs and the alders intrude, turning the road into a gantlet.

I'm not an engineer but it seemed to me, based on the road's condition, that it hasn't seen a bulldozer's blade for at least a few decades.

The roadbed is generally intact, but the drainage system much less so.

In several places a road-side spring or stream, rather than trickling harmlessly under the road through a culvert, flows freely onto the surface, making for a slightly mucky hike, albeit for short distances.

In its heyday, though, this road must have been a pretty easy drive. It's relatively wide, as mountain roads go, and based on the height of some of the cuts, a considerable amount of excavation, and probably some expenditure of explosives, were required.

Because the road is at the bottom of the valley — the flattest part, obviously — the grade is moderate.

I was hiking with my wife, Lisa, and our son, Max, and we turned back where two tributaries come together, about two and a half miles from the 7312 road. Another road branches off to the south at this confluence. The road once crossed the creek, but the two big culverts that made this possible were yanked out. They sit side by side near the stream.

It's not a difficult hike. The elevation gain from the 7312 road to where we turned back is about 900 feet. My map shows the road on the north side of the creek continuing up the valley for another half mile or so. The road on the south side of the creek connects to a network of roads in the High Mountain area.

I suspect many of these routes were built to aid firefighters working on the Anthony fire 61 years ago. The dense lodgepole thickets that thrive after blazes can all but obliterate hastily created fire roads, to be sure. But in an area that lacks official trails, this collection of “roads” entices explorers who don't mind brushing aside an occasional alder branch or fir bough.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2021

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Sweater sizes
- 4 Bone below the elbow
- 8 Player's turn
- 12 Perfume label word
- 13 Makeshift coathanger
- 14 Toe-stubber's cry
- 15 Head movement
- 16 Variety
- 17 Gentlemen
- 18 Falls upon
- 20 Atlantic Ocean st.
- 21 Watchdog org.
- 22 Most demure
- 26 Ticked off
- 29 Beattie or Blyth
- 30 RV haven
- 31 Aura
- 32 Feminine principle
- 33 Furniture wood
- 34 Broad st.
- 35 Cabinet div.

- 36 Pedro's father
- 37 Cincinnati NFLer
- 39 D.C. initials
- 40 Quicksilver, in chem.
- 41 Temple supply
- 45 Clown of fame
- 48 Meryl, in "Out of Africa"
- 49 Pharmacist — Lilly
- 50 Flock members
- 51 Plant parasite
- 52 Earth orbiter of yore
- 53 Bug repellent
- 54 Discreet summons
- 55 Shelley offering

DOWN

- 1 Warrior princess
- 2 Far East land
- 3 Froth
- 4 Messy
- 5 Eric Clapton classic

Answer to Previous Puzzle

M	T	V	S	E	A	M	A	S	S	T	
A	H	A	A	C	R	E	L	A	R	A	
R	O	M	B	O	N	A	P	A	R	T	E
S	U	P	E	R	A	S	I	A			
F	O	A	M	L	E	A	R	K			
A	L	I	O	A	T	E	E	E	K		
Y	E	L	L	F	R	I	O	B	E	Y	
H	O	W	L	O	F	T	C	P	R		
W	I	S	C	O	N	S	I	N	G	A	
E	L	L	A	I	O	N	S	U	R	N	
T	O	O	L	L	U	C	Y	A	S	K	

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- 6 Barely bites
- 7 Malt beverage
- 8 Saunter along
- 9 Si, to Maurice
- 10 Movie rental need, once
- 11 Codgers' queries
- 19 1960s hairdo
- 20 — Quixote
- 22 Blitzzer's channel
- 23 Just got by
- 24 Fly upward
- 25 Grab
- 26 Jezebel's spouse
- 27 Basilica area
- 28 Hidden valley
- 29 Assist
- 32 Mongkut portrayer
- 33 Duct —
- 35 Witch, to Shakespeare
- 36 Trouser feature
- 38 Apparition
- 39 Pesky bugs
- 41 Mother of Horus
- 42 "Nautilus" skipper
- 43 Went down
- 44 Colleen's home
- 45 Futon or pallet
- 46 Have a mortgage
- 47 Alphabet ender
- 48 Babysitter's bane

110 Announcements 110 Announcements 110 Announcements

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