

Whychus Creek Trail

Whychus (pronounced Why-Choose) Creek, formerly known as Squaw Creek, is a quick moving stream that parallels this trail. It is filled with many small waterfalls, and clear pools. When the flow slows down in the summer, it would be a refreshing dip. It is in the Deschutes National Forest and is about 4 miles south of Sisters, Oregon off of Elm Street, which turns into Three Creek Road. The trailhead is at about 3500 feet elevation, so it is accessible in all seasons by a paved road, although during winter storms the trail could be challenging. Summer hikes will be quite warm, so bring water and a wide hat.

The trail goes upstream and is usually within earshot of the creek, although I might term it a stream because of its liveliness and momentum. At times the trail clings to the steep canyon walls that were carved by the stream. The maintained trail kind of peters out after three and a half miles, so you can turn around then. If you want a longer walk you can take off on the Whychus Creek Overlook Trail at about two and a half miles from the trailhead. The views from this trail are spectacular, with the Cascade volcanoes clearly in view. The overlook trail also connects up with Three Creek Road, if you want a short, mile long vista-filled jaunt.

The forest cover, with the exception of the strip near the stream is primarily ponderosa pine, with a few western junipers in the drier spots. You will also find a few lodgepole pines sprinkled in. Nearer the water, you also find Engelmann spruce, Douglas-fir, and grand fir. These three conifers are not documented in any of the published trail descriptions I have read. They are also outside the boundaries of published tree distribution maps. Like some of the stream courses on the east side of the Cascades, such as in Shevlin Park, near Bend, Oregon, they will often possess trees that are normally found at higher elevations. They take advantage of the water availability, and the cooler breezes that often drain into the valleys.



A view upstream not far from the trailhead



Another view showing one of the many log jams (there was a fire upstream not long ago)

A sampling of the conifers in the area



Ponderosa Pine



Douglas-fir



Engelmann spruce



Grand fir



Lodgepole pine



The ubiquitous western juniper



One of the many mossy rocks near the stream - with little icicles



The nice Whychus Overlook Trail (the canyon part of the trail is dirt and rock)



A view looking west from the Whychus Creek Overlook Trail

