

## Iron Mountain Lookout Trails

This hike is very popular, but for good reason. The views are spectacular, both to the Willamette Valley and Mount Jefferson to the west, and the central Oregon high desert to the east. To the southeast you can easily spot the Three Sisters mountains. And in late spring and early summer, the wildflower display is hard to beat. I have hiked it twice, both times in early July, and we still had a great spectacle of flowers. The top is almost 5400 feet elevation, which is about the same as the nearby peaks, Cone Peak and South Peak, which both can be reached from the loop if you want a little diversion.

The loop that I show on the map at the end of the article starts at the Tombstone Pass Trailhead (elevation of 4200 feet) is a popular way to make the hike, but you can start there and just pick one or the other segments. The left loop segment is shorter. The whole loop is a little under seven miles. You can also drive Road 035, a gravel road, about three miles to Iron Mountain Trailhead, and make a 2.4 mile roundtrip to the top. The Road 035 access is off of Highway 20 about 45 miles west of Bend, Oregon. The Tombstone Pass Trailhead is about a mile shorter from Bend, off of Highway 20. There is a toilet at the Tombstone Pass Trailhead, but remember your Forest Pass for parking.

The mountain provides a good sampling of Cascade trees:

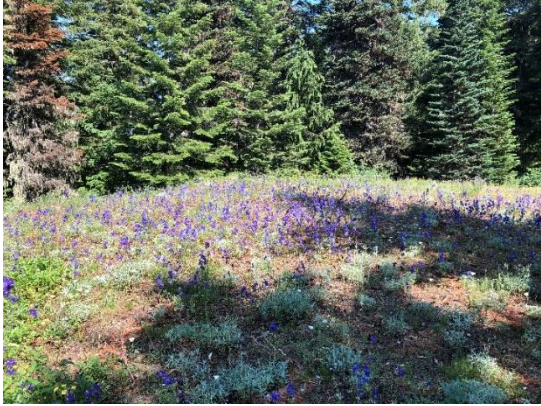
- Washington red cedar
- Common juniper
- Mountain hemlock
- Western hemlock
- Grand fir
- Subalpine fir
- Pacific silver fir
- Noble fir
- Engelmann spruce
- Douglas-fir
- Pacific (or western) yew



*The Willamette Valley to the Southwest from the lookout*



*The Three Sisters Mountains to the southeast*



*Lupine*



*Columbia tiger lily*



*Douglas-fir*



*Common Juniper*



*Mountain hemlock*



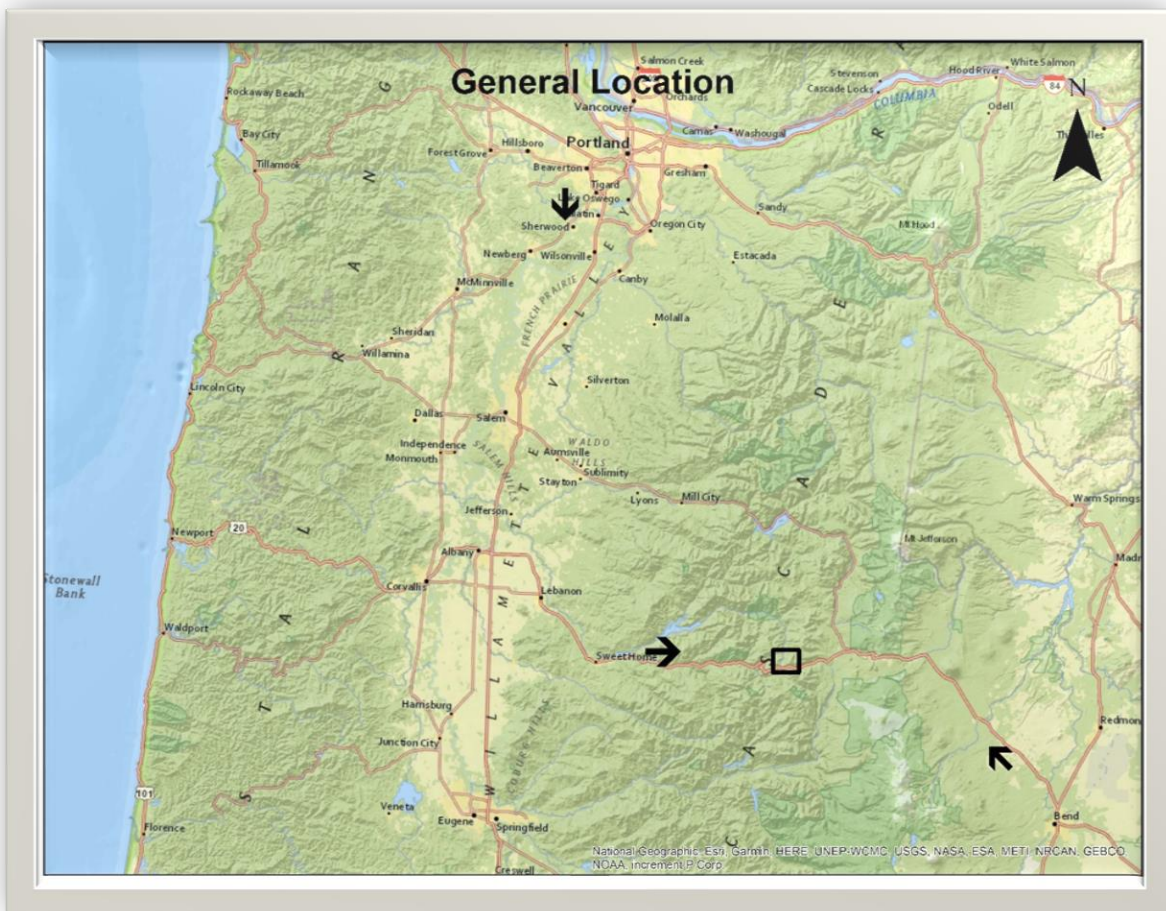
*Grand fir*



*A wetter meadow*



*A drier meadow*





All pictures and photos by Bob Earle.