

NorPac Trail

Provided by Friends of the Coeur d'Alene Trails www.friendsofdatrails.org

Route Directions:

This route follows the Northern Pacific Railroad grade over Lookout Pass then down to Taft, Montana. You then ride up Rainy Creek Road to the East Portal of the Taft Tunnel on the Route of the Hiawatha (The Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound Railway). We start at the east end of the Trail of Coeur d'Alenes Trailhead parking lot in Mullan. The trailhead is near I-90 Idaho Exit 68. The NorPac Trail is paved for the first 4 miles. A mountain bike or other bike with at least 700x32c tires is needed for the rest of the ride. Most of the Forest Service roads are packed gravel, but loose gravel is found in some sections.

Mileage	Comments
0.0	Mullan Trailhead. At the East end of the parking lot you will see a NorPac Trail sign which points to a paved trail between the large brick building on your left and the store on your right. Follow this through town.
0.5	Ride past the ball park, join the I-90 Business Loop road present on your right, and pass by the freeway interchange, following the sign to "Shoshone Park." Proceed past the Lucky Friday Mine and over Willow Creek to an important fork in the road.
1.5	Take the lower road to the left. It is Larson Road and will take you through the "historic village" of Larson (2.7), which today consists of four houses and a barn. Stay right past the first fork and arrive at a junction marked "Shoshone Park"
3.3	The NorPac Trail continues along Mullan Pass Road, straight ahead. Shoshone Park is off to the left. There are rest rooms in the park. An alternate route is to ride past the park to the Hale Fish Hatchery. At the Fish Hatchery, turn left off the pavement onto NFD 133, which is packed dirt and gravel. DO NOT take NFD 6531 to the Little North Fork! Stay on the old railroad grade to the right. This will take you to the intersection of Mullan Pass Road and NFD 3026. Go straight across Mullan Pass Rd onto NFD 3026.
3.9	Turn right onto NFD 3026. You will pass under the interstate (5.0), pause at a post card view of Lone Lake Basin (5.8), and proceed to a junction with Willow Creek Road.
6.4	At the junction of NFD 3026 and Willow Creek Road, make the hard left switchback uphill to stay on the railroad grade (NFD 3026). The road becomes rougher. Check the kiosk for information about the "S-bridge". There is a toilet here. Don't take the uphill road on the right.
7.8	You just passed the site of the remnants of the Dorsey trestle and now can see the concrete foundation for old Dorsey Water Tank on your right.
9.2	Site of the remnants of the second trestle. Almost to the top.
11.5	Top of Lookout Pass. At the Lookout Pass Ski Area you will find rest rooms, a bar, a cafe, and a bike rental and repair shop from late May to early October. You can get your pass for the Hiawatha here. The NorPac trail continues straight ahead through the parking lot.
12.2	Marvel at the beautiful view of Copper Lake Basin, and then after rounding the next corner, the larger St. Regis Lake Basin comes into view further to the southwest.
12.7	The trail to lower St. Regis Lake begins at the hairpin turn with several dispersed campsites nearby.
13.7	The steep trail into Copper Lake begins further down the road, again with dispersed campsites nearby.

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15.5	Suddenly the trail enters the very dark and bumpy Borax tunnel. It is a wet and rutted jeep trail. Be prepared to stop and walk through the tenth-mile-long tunnel.
15.8	A hair pin turn heads you back West with the interstate visible far below you to the right. Soon, however, you will find yourself going under the freeway (16.8), and heading East again. Borax is where Highway 10 and the railroad tracks intersected. It was basically a construction site for the tunnel.
19.7	After following the freeway downhill for a while, you will pass within yards of a Highway Rest Area with clean bathrooms. You will ride back under the interstate and arrive at the junction of NFD 4208 (which we have been following since Lookout Pass) and NFD 507, (old Highway 10) merging from the right. Bear to the left onto NFD 507 to the I-90, Exit 5 (Montana) interchange area.
20.4	Continue around the huge "circus tented" sand pile to the view the sign "Route of the Hiawatha" at the beginning of Rainey Creek Road NFD 506. You are now at the location of Taft. The town at one time had 2000 residents. It was destroyed by the 1910 fire.
20.5	Follow this road approximately 2 1/2 miles uphill to the East Portal of the Taft Tunnel.
22.4	If you continue through the tunnel, have your day-use fee ready to hand to the concessionaire's trail marshals when you see them at the West Portal, 1.7 miles of darkness away. If you purchased a pass at Lookout, you are all set.



Lone Lake Basin



Dorsey Water Tower Remnants



Copper Lake Basin



Northern Pacific Tunnel 1 (Borax)