

Salmon Watch®

SALMON RIVER #2

Flyfishing Bridge in Mt Hood National Forest

Allow approximately 1.5 hours driving time from downtown Portland.

DIRECTIONS:

From Portland take Highway 26 East through Sandy. Proceed on Hwy. 26 through Welches. About one mile past the stop light in Welches, turn right on to Salmon River Road, just past the “Zig Zag” sign. There are also signs pointing to “Green Canyon Campground” and “Welches Grade School.” Proceed approximately five miles on Salmon River Road. Just past the Green Canyons Campground, you’ll come to a bridge, park on the left side of the road, in the turnout immediately before the bridge. The trailhead sign reads “Old Salmon River Trail #742.” The trail extends on the upstream side of the bridge.

NOTE #1: There is typically a portable toilet at this site, but it is recommended that you make a stop in Sandy or Welches for a restroom break.

NOTE #2: The Forest Service has introduced a parking fee program for trailheads. NW Forest Passes (either an annual or daily pass \$5) are required for car parking. BUSES DO NOT NEED A PASS. Please mention this to your volunteers if they plan to drive themselves. We will provide passes for volunteers in the equipment kit, please be sure they are all returned to the kit.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Salmon River headwaters are on the upper slopes of Mt. Hood, carrying snowmelt down from Palmer Glacier. It flows 31 miles, 24 through national forest.

NATURE HIKE/RIPARIAN STUDY

Just past the “open area” mentioned in the Salmon Viewing section, you enter a spectacular and majestic old growth forest with outstanding biodiversity. There are trails that take off from the main trail that take you to the river’s edge. There are some great spots to view salmon if you have the time and patience.

MACROINVERTEBRATES

This is not the easiest site to aquatic macroinvertebrates, because the river is quite swift. It is highly recommended that you use side channels for your sampling. Be sure to bring hip waders and life vests for this site.

SALMON VIEWING:

Chinook - Immediately there may be salmon viewing from the bridge. There are spawning beds along the edges of the river. Hike in about 5-10 minutes through a dense forest along a side channel. Once you veer left and come to an open area you’ll find great spots to view

salmon with deep pools and spawning gravels. You can often see salmon carcasses in the rocky riffled areas just below here. This is also a good area to break into groups.

We have also discovered that if you continue hiking up the trail for about 1/4 to 1/3 of a mile that you will be able to view a large group of salmon spawning from the bench above the river. Look for areas where the gravels appear lighter as this is where the salmon have been digging redds. We have seen up to 30 salmon in this area. If you choose to set up your salmon viewing station at this point we recommend setting up your rotations so the riparian and salmon groups do the switch in the AM Groups 1 & 2, then in the PM have Groups 3 & 4 do the same rotation switching between riparian and salmon. Let us know if you have questions about this rotation schedule.

WATER QUALITY:

Water quality testing is best conducted near or just upstream from the salmon viewing area. Continue down the trail until you reach a good location to access the water.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

FISH FRIENDLY CULVERT. Just up the road from the bridge a couple of minutes by bus, is a creek flowing from the hillside through a huge culvert under the road and into the Salmon River. If you have time and are interested, check out this new fish friendly culvert with a fish ladder.

WILDWOOD UNDERWATER VIEWING STRUCTURE. If possible, set aside a good 45 minutes to stop at the Wildwood Recreation Site. Wildwood is on Hwy. 26, between Welches and the Mt. Hood Information Center. The Cascade StreamWatch Trail leads you to a brand new underwater viewing structure which provides a unique and accessible “fish eye view” of stream habitat and fish. Fingerling and juvenile salmon, trout and steelhead can be seen swimming and feeding. See map.

MEDICAL FACILITIES IN THE AREA:

Hoodland Fire Department, Welches Road
Dial 911

Dr. Murlan Grise
24461 E. Welches Rd.
503-622-3126

Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center
24800 SE Stark St.
Gresham, OR 97030
503-335-3500