

PALOUSE REGION HIKES

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Land Ethic

It is the responsibility of every user of the areas described in this hiking guide to protect the resource he or she is using. Recreationists must leave the areas they visit free of garbage and any additional form of human disturbance. Practices such as "Leave No Trace Camping" must be the standard of all backcountry users. Please preserve these areas so the integrity of these ecosystems can be maintained and the others may be able to enjoy the beauty they have to offer.

Equipment Recommendations

Although the equipment requirements for these hikes will vary greatly according to trip length and seasonal variation, here's a general list for the basic day trip:

Day pack	Maps
Hiking shoes or boots	Compass
Rain shell (top and bottom)	First Aid kit
Extra insulating layers (sweater)	Sunglasses
Gloves	Water bottle (one liter)
Wool hat	Extra food (lunch)
Sun screen lotion	Insect Repellent

Moscow Mountain

Miles from Moscow: 10

HOW TO GET THERE: From downtown Moscow, follow Sixth Street east for about a mile until you come to Mountain View Drive. Turn left. Follow the drive for 2 miles, and then turn right onto Moscow Mountain Road. Continue for 2.8 miles until you come to a fork in the road. Stay to the left on Moscow Mountain Road. Past this fork, you'll travel 2.5 miles to arrive at a flat bench in the road where you can park on the right. This brings you to the base of the mountain. The other alternative is to continue following the road up the mountain through a series of switchbacks. The road becomes considerably rougher and steeper on this grade so it does require a vehicle with sufficient clearance. Approximately two miles past the first parking area, you'll arrive at the Four Corners.

From this intersection, road depart to the east and the west that can be used for further exploring the mountain.

HIKING: Moscow Mountain does not have any designated hiking trails but does offer opportunities for exploring on foot. The ridge crest provides many good views of the Palouse and is worth checking out. Much of the land is private on the mountain so respect posted signs. Many mountain biking trails do exist on Moscow Mountain so keep on your toes for a rocketing cyclist if on one of these stretches of single track.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, rock climbing, and camping.

Kamiak Butte County Park
21

Miles from Moscow:

HOW TO GET THERE: Drive the eight miles west to Pullman on highway 270 and follow the route into the downtown area. Turn right onto Highway 27 as if heading north to Palouse. About 13 miles north of Pullman you will see the signs for a left hand turn to Kamiak Butte County Park. Follow the signs.

HIKING: The trailhead in the parking lot will take you on a nice loop to the top of the butte. Panoramic views of the area await.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Camping.

Idler's Rest

Miles from Moscow: 4.5

HOW TO GET THERE: From downtown Moscow, follow Sixth Street east for about a mile until you come to Mountain View Drive. Turn left. Follow the drive north for 3 miles, until you come to a fork in the road. Turn right onto Idler's Rest Road. Travel on this road for about 0.5 miles until you see the signs for Idler's Rest on the left.

HIKING: Idler's Rest is a great place to kill an afternoon. The hikes consist of a couple short interpretive trails through some scenic fields or along a beautiful timbered portion of Paradise Creek. The area has some scenic cedar habitat and also one time farm fields progressing through the successional stages on their way back to becoming wild lands. The Nature Conservancy manages it.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Picnicking.

Palouse Divide / old North South ski bowl
40

Miles from Moscow:

HOW TO GET THERE: From downtown Moscow, drive 17 miles north on Highway 95 to Potlatch. Turn right onto Highway 6 and drive through Potlatch, Princeton, and Harvard. A couple of miles past Harvard is a turnoff to Laird Park, continue past the

turnoff until you see signs for North-South ski area. North-South is approximately 23 miles from Potlatch.

HIKING: East and West Dennis Buttes can be reached by hiking or driving west on USFS Road 377 and then bush whacking up to the summits. East Dennis Butte is approximately 2 miles from the North-South parking lot and West Dennis Butte is an additional 2 miles further out on the ridge.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, and camping.

Giant White Pine

Miles from Moscow: 35

HOW TO GET THERE: From Moscow, drive 17 miles north on Highway 95 to Potlatch. Turn right onto Highway 6 and drive 18 miles until you see the signs for Giant White Pine Campground on the right.

HIKING: A three mile loop hike takes off from the north side of the campground. Several ancient white pine trees reside along this trail to form one of the few existing old growth stands left in the region. Two other trails take off from this loop to destinations that are worth backpacking or day hiking to. Trail 228 climbs for 7 miles to Bald Mountain where there is an old fire lookout. Trail 26 goes to Three Tree Butte after climbing for 2 miles. A St. Joe Nation Forest map is recommended for the Bald Mountain and Three Tree Butte hikes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Mountain biking, huckleberry picking, and camping.

Laird Park

Miles from Moscow:

29

HOW TO GET THERE: From Moscow, drive 17 miles north on Highway 95 to Potlatch. Turn right onto Highway 6 and continue on to Harvard. Three miles past Harvard you will see the turnoff to Laird Park on the right (USFS Road 447). Laird Park is about 0.5 miles past the turnoff.

HIKING: The area around Laird Park offers mainly exploratory hiking opportunities. Several short trails exist for checking out the surrounding country. By continuing past Laird Park on USFS Road 447 for 1 mile then taking a right on to USFS Road 292 and traveling an additional 1.5 miles, the trailhead for Sand Mountain and Mica Mountain can be accessed. Trail 330 climbs for 3 miles to the summit of Sand Mountain and then continues another 2 miles to the top of Mica Mountain. A St. Joe National Forest map will come in handy for these hikes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Camping, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, huckleberry picking.

Spring Valley Reservoir

Miles from Moscow: 15

HOW TO GET THERE: Take Highway 8 east from Moscow to Troy. Past Troy, continue on Highway 8 for another 2 miles until you see the signs for the left hand turn to Spring Valley Reservoir. Travel this dirt road for 2 miles to reach the reservoir.

HIKING: Spring Valley Reservoir is a beautiful area to enjoy a picnic and a hike. A nice hiking trail circling the reservoir takes off from the last parking lot at the end of the dirt road. This is a great spot for families with children.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Fishing (including ice fishing in the winter) and non-motorized boating.

Moose Creek Reservoir

Miles from Moscow: 34

HOW TO GET THERE: Take Highway 8 east from Moscow through Troy, Deary, and Helmer. Continue for about 5 miles past Helmer until you see a sign indicating a left hand turn to Moose Creek Reservoir. The sign is a little obscure so you might miss it the first time. If you do, just continue down the hill to Bovill (1 mile) and then back track. Once you find the turn off, travel this dirt road for about 2 miles to the reservoir.

HIKING: There are several dirt roads that skirt the edge of the reservoir and wind around the surrounding hills that are pleasant to walk. In the winter, many of these roads are left unplowed and make great flat land snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Camping, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and fishing.

Elk Creek Falls

Miles from Moscow:

47

HOW TO GET THERE: From Moscow, travel east on Highway 8 through Troy, Deary, and Bovill. Approximately 11 miles past Bovill (just a couple miles before the town of Elk River) you will see the signs for the right hand turn to Elk Creek Falls Recreation Area. This is USFS road 1452. Continue on this dirt road for a couple miles to reach the parking lot.

HIKING: A network of trails allows access to several viewpoints overlooking and beneath the falls. Most of the trails can be hiked quickly (less than 30 minutes) to reach the great views Elk Creek has to offer.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Boulder Creek Campground

Miles from Moscow: 30

HOW TO GET THERE: Take Highway 8 east from Moscow through Troy and Deary. Past Deary you will come to the hamlet of Helmer. Take a right in Helmer on USFS Road 1963 and head south 3 miles to the campground.

HIKING: Some excellent exploratory hiking exists along the banks of the Potlatch River. This is a peaceful area to camp out for a night and take in the sounds of the flowing water.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Camping and fishing.

Freezeout Ridge

Miles from Moscow:

55

HOW TO GET THERE: From Moscow, take Highway 8 east through Troy, Deary, and onto Bovill. From Bovill continue north on Highway 3 to the town of Clarkia. Turn right off the highway and head into Clarkia. Just past the schoolhouse in Clarkia, take a left on USFS Road 301. About a half mile out of Clarkia, you will come to an intersection with USFS Road 321 (this road goes on to Hobo Pass). Take a right at this intersection and continue on USFS Road 301. The road follows Gold Creek for 4 miles and eventually crosses it at Gold Center. At Gold Center you will encounter a second intersection. Continue straight on USFS Road 301 and it begins to climb. During the winter, the road may or may not be plowed past Gold Center. Continue up USFS Road 301 to the crest of the ridge a White Rock Springs. There's an outhouse and picnic table at this junction in the road. From here the main road heads downhill, but in the summer, you can take a left and follow USFS Road 301 along the ridge crest for 3 miles to Freezeout Saddle. A St. Joe National Forest map might be helpful if it is your first trip up to the area.

HIKING: A great overnight backpacking route takes off from Freezeout Ridge. By hiking north 2 miles on Trail 275 you can reach Grandmother Mountain (6,369 ft.), or by continuing an additional 2 miles, you can get to Grandfather Mountain (6,306 ft.). To hike this trail, find the trailhead that takes off from the wide turnout in USFS Road 301 at Freezeout Saddle and then climbs Marks Butte.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Prime backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, and camping.

Robinson Lake Park

Miles from Moscow:

6

HOW TO GET THERE: From downtown Moscow, follow Sixth Street east for about 0.5 miles until you come to Mountain View Drive. Turn left. After heading north for 2 miles take a right on Robinson Lake Road. Continue for 1.5 miles on this paved road to reach the intersection with the South Fork Palouse Road. Take a left and travel another 1.5 miles to the Y on the road. Take the left fork and you'll find Robinson Lake Park just beyond the Y on the right.

HIKING: Hiking is limited to exploring the hills around the park. Robinson Lake Park is a beautiful area close to Moscow to enjoy an outdoor meal with the family.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Picnicking.

McCrosky State Park
30

Miles from Moscow:

HOW TO GET THERE: Head north of Moscow on Highway 195. About 27 miles from Moscow you will reach the signs indicating that Latah County Line and that the highway is entering the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. Just beyond, watch for a sign marking a left hand turn onto Skyline Drive. This turn will take you in McCrosky Park area.

HIKING: There are two hiking trails starting from Skyline Drive that travel approximately 1.5 miles each to the summits of Huckleberry Mountain and Mission Mountain. Lone Pine Viewpoint offers a good view to the south towards Moscow Mountain.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and camping.

Palouse Falls

Miles from Moscow: 95

HOW TO GET THERE: Drive the 8 miles west to Pullman on Highway 270 and follow the route into the downtown area. Follow the road signs to Highway 195 leading to Colfax/ Spokane. In Colfax, take a left hand turn at the north end of town onto Highway 26 going to Walla Walla. Staying on Highway 26, drive 55 miles west to the town of Washtucna and take the left hand turn onto Highway 260. Just 6 miles south of Washtucna turn left onto Highway 261. After 8 miles you will see signs for a left hand turn to Palouse Falls State Park. Follow this dirt road 2 miles to reach the park.

HIKING: Hiking is limited to areas just around the rim of these spectacular falls. The drive out to Palouse Falls proceeds from the nutrient rich bioregion of the Palouse to the barren scab-lands of central Washington. This dramatic change in landscape bears witness to the massive scouring effect the Lake Missoula floods had on central Washington during the last ice age. These floods are what carved the dry channels and coulees around Washtucna and created the falls.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Camping.

Steptoe Butte State Park
38

Miles from Moscow:

HOW TO GET THERE: Drive the 8 miles west to Pullman on Highway 270 and follow the route into the downtown area. Follow the road signs to Highway 195 leading to

Colfax/ Spokane. Stay on Highway 195 as it goes through Colfax and proceeds north towards Steptoe. About 9 miles out of Colfax take the right hand turn onto Highway 27 to Oakesdale. Continue north another 5 miles until you see the signs for a left hand turn to Steptoe Butte State Park.

HIKING: In the summertime you can get great views of the Palouse by driving the spiral road to the top of the butte. Hiking, however, is limited to exploring the summit of the butte. This is a great spot to kick back for a picnic and take in the scenery.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

Bill Chipman Palouse Trail

Miles from Moscow:

0

HOW TO GET THERE: You know that bike trail that follows the north side of Sixth Street across campus (past the SUB and the Forestry Building)? You got it. This paved path goes from Moscow all the way to Pullman.

HIKING: You can hike it, bike it, walk it, wheelchair it, skate it, rollerblade it, or even ski it (if they haven't plowed it).

OTHER ACTIVITIES: See above!

Inquire at the Outdoor Program Office for additional information on these hikes or to get the scoop on other recreation activities in these areas.

Resources

1. St. Joe National Forest Visitor's Map
2. Idaho/ Washington State Road Maps
3. Mountain Bike Guide to Hog Heaven by Jim LaFortune
4. 100 Hikes in the Inland Northwest by The Mountaineers

Copies of these maps and books are available at the Outdoor Program office for reference.

Palouse Region Hikes was written by Drew Grimes and Mike Beiser, 1997.