



Good as New Wild Rogue Wilderness, Oregon

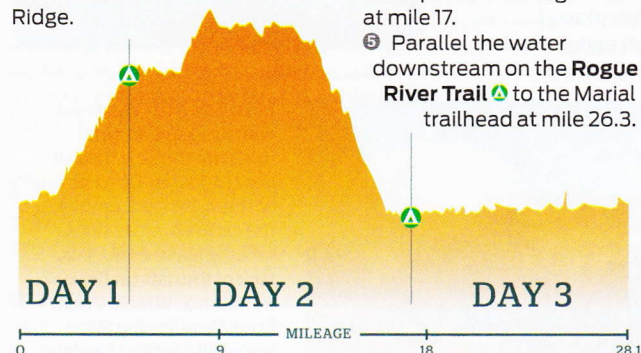
It's late afternoon when I finally catch sight of the Rogue River—a quick glance between the peeling bark of the madrones. A wildfire roared through here a decade ago, so I thought open vistas on the recently restored, 28.1-mile Wild Rogue Loop would be plentiful. But between the dense Pacific Northwest mist and the rebounding forest, I haven't had much in the way of views. When the canopy eventually opens atop Panther Ridge, I can just barely make out the river twisting through the cloud-shrouded ravine 3,500 feet below. Totally counts. **BY LAURA LANCASTER**



Turn-by-turn From the Mule Creek trailhead

1 Do the loop counter-clockwise and head 7.1 miles on the **Mule Creek Trail** as it wraps around to a dirt road on Panther Ridge.

- 2 Turn south (hiker's left) and take the road .1 mile to the Panther Ridge trailhead.
- 3 Take the **Panther Ridge Trail** 6.4 miles southwest to an intersection.
- 4 Veer southeast (hiker's left) onto the **Clay Hill Trail** and take it 3.4 miles south to the rapids of the Rogue River at mile 17.
- 5 Parallel the water downstream on the **Rogue River Trail** to the Marial trailhead at mile 26.3.



6 Follow the dirt road 1.8 miles to the original starting point at Mule Creek trailhead.



Campsite 1 Mule Creek (mile 5.2)

Knock out the majority of the climbing on day one, then take a pit stop for the night at this flat spot near the offshoot of Mule Creek. Look for it trailside upon exiting the canyon. Be sure to replenish your water before you take off next morning: There's no more until you hit the Rogue at mile 17.



Campsite 2 Tate Creek (mile 17.6)

Skip the first sites on the Rogue River Trail and continue to the flat spot just past Tate Creek. From camp, follow the short spur upstream to a deep pool at the end of a rock chute that doubles as a waterslide.



View

Panther Ridge is densely forested, but a unique outcropping—called Hanging Rock—near the high point of the trail provides a view of the Rogue River Valley. To reach it, look for an unmarked, .3-mile spur at mile 8.7.

DOIT TRAILHEAD 42.722299, -123.877330; 38 miles west of Glendale on Mule Creek-Marial Rd. **SEASON** Spring through fall; October is best for temps and solitude.

PERMIT None **CUSTOM MAP** bit.do/bpmapwildrogue (\$15) **CONTACT** fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou **TRIP DATA** backpacker.com/wildrogue

Trip stats

Distance: 28.1 miles (loop)
Time: 3 days
Difficulty: ★★★★★

FIRST
TRACKS
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Go for
a long
walk.

Complete the Superior Hiking Trail the way it was intended when construction began 30 years ago: as a 310-mile, continuous walk. The final 2-mile piece of the long path, which rides the edge of Lake Superior, extends the southern terminus of the trail into Jay Cooke State Park—which also happens to be where the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail begins (hmmm. . .). Check it out on an 8.4-mile out-and-back from the Grand Portage trailhead. Thru-hiker alert: You still can't camp on the lower 40 miles—yet—so you'll have to either start or end with a loooooong day. **Contact** shta.org