

The Gorges Trails

Nye Trail: This trail is located on the north wall of Little Blitzen Gorge. The trail begins at an intersection with Little Blitzen Gorge Trail and traverses 21 switchbacks for 1 mile to the rim-rocks at the top of the gorge. This trail passes through aspen groves and several springs run across the trail. The view from the rim is un-paralleled. The trail ends at Cold Spring Road, an unmaintained two track road that runs along the north rim of Little Blitzen Gorge intersecting Steens Mountain Loop Road. At top of the trail look for historic Nye Cabin. There are some nice campsites at the top of the trail.

Length: 1 mile

Trail Rating: Difficult with an elevation gain of 2200’

Best time to Hike: June-October

Wet Blanket Trail: This trail is located on the north wall of Little Blitzen Gorge. The trail begins at an intersection with Little Blitzen trail in the gorge and makes its way up a drainage alongside a spring-fed stream to the plateau above rim-rock. The trail continues across the plateau to the Steens Mountain North Loop Road. A trailhead sign and a small parking area mark the spot. This trail is steep and has few switchbacks. The views from the trail are spectacular.

Length: 1 1/2 miles

Trail Rating: Difficult with an elevation gain of 2000’

Best Time to Hike: June – October

Fred Riddle Trail: This trail begins off Cold Spring Road near Cold Spring Cabin. The trail heads west and passes through an aspen grove then runs along the rim-rocks along the north rim of the gorge. It passes through mountain mahogany groves, eventually switch-backing to make its way down the mountain. At the bottom of the gorge the trail turns back to the east and meets up with the Little Blitzen Gorge Trail near the river crossing. This trail was constructed in 2017 but has received little use and can now be difficult to follow. A georeferenced map and wayfinding skills are advised for those hiking this area. The BLM hopes to work with youth and volunteer crews to re-establish the trail soon.

Length: 6 miles

Trail Rating: Difficult with an elevation loss/gain of 2200’

Best Time to Hike: June – October

Desert Meadows Trail: This trail is located next to the Riddle Ranch complex. An abandoned road has been turned into a trail that begins at the ranch house complex. The trail meanders north along the rim-rocks of the Little Blitzen River then heads east to pass next to the Desert Meadows Reservoir. From there the trail continues on to intersect the Cold Spring Road. The trail may also be followed further to the intersection with Fred Riddle Trail and Little Blitzen Gorge Trail. This trail was constructed in 2017 but has received little use and can now be difficult to follow. A georeferenced map and wayfinding skills are advised for those hiking this area.

Length: 6 miles to Cold Spring Road, 8 miles to Little Blitzen Gorge intersection

Trail Rating: Moderate, elevation gain varies by route

Best Time to Hike: June – October

Levi Brinkley Trail: This trail begins at the Riddle Brothers Ranch complex, following the Little Blitzen River to the confluence with the main stem of the Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River. Look for remnants of the Willow Corral near the beginning of the trail. Campsites and great fishing can be found at the end.

Length: 1 1/2 miles

Trail Rating: Easy with an elevation gain of 200’

Best Time to Hike: June – October

Pike Creek Trails

Pike Creek Trail: Pike Creek Trail access begins at a turnout approximately 4 1/2 miles north of the Alvord Desert public access. Look for a parking area and kiosk along East Steens Road. Park here and hike the road for about 1/2 mile to reach the trailhead. The trail begins on an old mining road grade, passing through High Steens WSA into Steens Mountain Wilderness. The trail continues for another 2 miles up Pike Creek canyon to the upper Pike Creek drainages and Pike Creek Knob, a unique rocky outcropping. There are two creek crossings which can be difficult to cross in early spring and after summer thunderstorms. Look for signs of a historical uranium mine, including a mine shaft, cabin, and railcar track. Look for summer wildflowers, deer, cougar, and the ever-elusive bighorn sheep along this trail. Watch for the western rattlesnake, especially in rocky areas, as they are typically active spring through fall. Although the trailhead is typically accessible year-round, upper reaches of the canyon can be snow-packed well into the spring.

Length: 6 miles (round-trip)

Trail Rating: Moderate with an elevation gain of 1200’

Best Time to Hike: April – November

Dry Creek Trail: Dry Creek Trail begins at the end of Pike Creek Trail. In 2022, a section of historic two-track was converted to a singletrack trail connecting the two trails. Continue from the Pike Creek drainages along the road to trail conversion for about 3/4 miles. Dry Creek Trail follows former two-track roads along a plateau eventually ending at the boundary between Steens Mountain Wilderness and High Steens WSA. Spurs off of the main route allow connections to Indian Creek Road and the CMPA TMP ATV Route. Larger loops can be made following these roads. Look for wildlife, summer wildflowers, and sweeping views of the surrounding high desert.

Length: Varies by route

Trail Rating: Moderate, elevation gain varies by route

Best Time to Hike: May – October

Threemile Trails

Threemile Trail: Threemile trailhead is located 25 miles south of Frenchglen at a small parking area along Highway 205. Go through the fence gate, being careful to close it behind you. Continue along the trail as it passes through a rock wall, entering Threemile Canyon. Stay right at the trail intersection. The trail follows Threemile Creek, crossing it at times, currently ending in a small meadow. Look for birds and other wildlife along the way. This trail is a recent development and trail work is ongoing, some sections may be brushy. There are some creek crossing and trail obstructions that may not yet be passable for some equestrian users. Please share the trail. Threemile Creek is closed to fishing.

Length: 2 miles

Trail Rating: Moderate, elevation gain varies by route

Best Time to Hike: April - November

Huffman Trail: Huffman Trail takes off from Threemile Trail at the intersection about 3/4 miles in. Stay left at the fork. The Huffman trail is actually an abandoned road constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp in 1936. The old road is constructed of boulders and smaller stones laid out to create a road surface that winds its way up the steep side-slope of the mountain to come out on the rim-rocks high above Catlow Valley. Look for wildlife and sweeping views. This is a recent development. The route can be rocky and steep in areas. Experienced equestrian users recommended.

Length: 2 miles

Trail Rating: Moderate with an elevation gain of 1200’

Best Time to Hike: April - November