



## West Zigzag Mountain Prospectus

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Hike: West Zigzag Mt.   | Elev Gain: 3,635 feet         | Highest Point: 4,530 feet                     |
| Difficulty: Difficult   | Date: Saturday, April 4, 2026 | Leader: Paxton Alsgaard                       |
| Meet: Trailhead 7:45 AM | Start Hike: 8:00 AM           | Estimated Return Time: 3:30-ish (Parking Lot) |

### When you get this prospectus:

- Read it thoroughly and contact Paxton ASAP by email [paxton.alsgaard@gmail.com](mailto:paxton.alsgaard@gmail.com) to let him know that you received it
- Email Paxton immediately if you need to cancel your spot on this hike
- Forward a copy of this prospectus to someone in town (usually your emergency contact)
- [Sign up for the carpool](#) even if you have travel plans, we need to know what they are

### Driving directions:

**Please follow these directions. Google maps will lead you astray!!!**

From Portland, OR (Approx. 1 hour - 45 miles)

Take US Highway 26 East towards Zigzag.

Turn left onto Lolo Pass Road.

In about 0.5 miles, turn right onto E Mountain Road.

Trailhead parking is a dirt pulloff on the right side of the road in about 1 mile.

### Pre-Hike Safety Briefing:

Before we set foot on the trail, we will hold a brief safety meeting to:

- Review the hiking plan, weather conditions, and estimated timeline.
- Ensure everyone has proper gear and sufficient water.
- Discuss any allergies, medical conditions, or injuries that others should be aware of in case of an emergency.

**\*\*If you have any specific health considerations (such as asthma, knee pain, if you carry an EpiPen or have food allergies), please share them confidentially with the group leader so we can provide appropriate support if needed.**

**General Info:**

The West Zigzag Mountain Hike makes numerous switchbacks up the west side of the Zigzag Mountain ridge, taking you to the site of an old fire lookout with great views along the way of Devils Peak, Flag Mountain, Mount Hood and the Sandy and Zigzag river valleys.

Please bring a compass if you have one. We will practice navigation on the hike.

**Trail Overview:**

- Location: Mount Hood area, Oregon
- Trailhead: West Zigzag Trailhead,
- Total Distance: 11.2 miles round trip
- Elevation Gain: 3,635 feet
- Highest Point: 4,530 feet
- Hike Type: Out-and-back
- Estimated Time: 7+ hours round trip

**Trail Description:**

Start on the Zigzag Mountain Trail (#775) which goes directly uphill from the trailhead. The trail rises, crossing a small gully in an understory of vine maple, cascara, lady fern, salal, sword fern and Oregon grape. You'll make seven switchbacks in salal/ Douglas-fir woods, traverse up, and then make six larger switchbacks. Vine maples light up the understory. Make three more long switchbacks and reach the ridge crest, where rhododendrons appear. The trail keeps up the spine of the ridge, where you'll be wading through salal and then alternately traversing below the crest and along it. Eight more switchbacks take you higher in Douglas-fir, hemlock, vine maple, rhododendron, salal woods (prepare to get soaked if the overhanging salal is wet!). Head up the wooded crest for quite a while, and then switchback at a square-shaped rock before crossing over the crest to make a short traverse up the dark west side of the ridge through a carpet of oxalis. Three more switchbacks take you over to the east side of the ridge. As you're heading up along the ridge crest, you'll get a view of Devils Peak through the trees. Western white pine and silver fir begin to appear in the forest mix. You're now in the bear-grass zone, with chinquapin, mountain ash, boxwood, juniper, and pine mat manzanita growing in rocky openings. Pass some contorted rocks where the trail reaches the top of the ridge again.

The path dips to a saddle and offers views south to the ridges of the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness. Then the trail continues up under a silver fir, mountain hemlock, and noble fir canopy. You'll traverse below a peak on the ridge and drop below a rocky outcrop, coming out at an open crest. Drop again on the north side of the rocky ridge and get a view to the Sandy River Valley. Switchback up to an open viewpoint and then make three more switchbacks to reach the ridge crest again and get a magnificent view of Mount Hood. The trail levels and then drops in silver fir/ hemlock/ Douglas-fir/ noble fir woods with a bear-grass carpet. Descend more steeply and get a view of the cliffs below the old lookout location. Pass under a rock face and then rise, switchbacking twice along the ridge. The path descends past a deep cleft in the rock face, and you'll get a view down the Sandy Valley. Then, where the trail bends a sharp left, you reach the site of the old lookout, with four concrete foundation posts and a few rusted nails remaining in a grove of young lodgepole pines. The view is splendid across the Zigzag River Valley down to Flag

Mountain and across to Devils Peak, with Mount Jefferson's snowy peak visible on the horizon.

## Gear Checklist

Being packed and ready at the meeting time makes your whole team happy! X=required, O=Optional

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### Clothing

- ☒ sturdy hiking boot or trail shoes
- ☐ Gaiters
- ☒ wool or synthetic socks
- ☐ liner socks (# pairs \_\_\_\_\_ )
- ☐ thermal underwear top/bottom
- ☒ Hiking pants (no jeans or cotton)
- ☒ warm jacket – down/synthetic/fleece
- ☒ wind/water resistant jacket and pants
- ☒ mittens or gloves
- ☒ thin liner gloves
- ☐ hat with visor or brim (for sun)
- ☒ fleece or wool hat or balaclava
- ☐ synthetic T-shirt

### Food

- ☒ lunch(es)
- ☒ extra food or energy snacks for the hike along the way
- ☐ carbohydrate or Gatorade-type mix for water (in addition to straight water)
- ☐ yummy climb team treats

### 10+ essentials (bring them if you have them)

- ☒ Whistle
- ☒ navigation (map and **compass**)
- ☒ sun protection (sunscreen, lip balm and sunglasses)
- ☒ headlamp/flashlight, with extra batteries
- ☒ extra food (Clif bar)
- ☒ extra clothing (socks, gloves, hat)
- ☒ fire (matches/lighter in waterproof container and firestarter)
- ☒ Knife
- ☒ first aid kit (no drugs or medicines that will make you drowsy or dizzy)

### Other

- ☐ watch (with alarm)
- ☐ electronics (GPS , altimeter)
- ☐ Camera
- ☒ water bottle or water bladder (at least two liters - fill them at home)
- ☐ trekking poles (super recommended)
- ☐ instant heat packets (buy at hardware or outdoor store)
- ☐ handkerchief / bandanna (drippy noses are a drag)
- ☐ large heavy duty garbage bag (pack cover, emergency rain gear)
- ☐ Tec Nu for poison oak

### Climbing

- ☒ Helmet
- ☒ Harness
- ☒ 3 locking carabiners

☒ 2 Prusik loops (waist and leg)  
☒ Personal pro  
☒ Belay/rappel device  
☐ 2 non-locking carabiners

**References:**

[https://www.oregonhikers.org/field\\_guide/West\\_Zigzag\\_Mountain\\_Hike](https://www.oregonhikers.org/field_guide/West_Zigzag_Mountain_Hike)