

EAST BANK TRAIL

The East Bank Trail with its lakeside setting and general hiking east is a good trail for family trips. The trail travels through lowland forests with frequent views of Ross Lake and the surrounding peaks.

The trail extends 52km from its trailhead along Highway 20 to Hozomeen Campground a short distance south of the Canadian border. This trail is not a loop trail, but for the convenience of those people who have a limited amount of time and don't wish to travel the same trail twice, it is possible to arrange boat transportation to or from any of the boat-in campsites. Arrangements should be made in advance with Ross Lake Resort (206-397-4735, through the Mt. Vernon operator.) .

The trailhead is located along Highway 20, just west of Panther Creek. The gravel parking lot is well marked and is located about 15km east of Colonial Creek Campground. The trail begins 100m along the gravel road behind the parking lot. Once across the Ruby Creek bridge, the trail splits in two directions, with the East Bank Trail heading west(left) parallel with Ruby Creek to Ross Lake. To the east (right) begins the south end of the Devil's Dome loop.

Four km from the trailhead is a junction with the Jack Mtn. Trail heading north-east and the trail to Ruby Pasture Horse Camp, Hidden Hand Hiker Camp, and Ross Lake (1km away) heading west. The East Bank Trail heads north, skirting the pasture, ascending to a low pass, and then descends gently to Roland Creek Camp (6km from the junction), passing through stands of mature Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, and groves of alder, birch and maple.

One km beyond Roland Creek Camp the trail approaches Ross Lake and follows it to the May Creek Horse Camp. Beyond May Creek Campsite 1½km is the Rainbow Point Hiker-Boater Camp. Like many of the boat camps on Ross Lake, Rainbow Point Camp receives heavy camper use. The ground is quite worn and little privacy is afforded the camper.

Beyond Rainbow Point, the trail parallels the lake closely, affording excellent views of the lake and surrounding peaks. This stretch of trail is open and can become quite hot hiking on summer days and quite wet on rainy days. Devil's Camp is situated 8km north of Rainbow Point, near the junction of the north end of the Devil's Dome Loop.

Six km beyond Devil's Camp, the trail crosses Lightning Creek. Lightning Creek Camp lies on a spur trail ½km north of the Lightning Creek suspension bridge. It is situated along the lake and receives heavy camper use, with little privacy when the camp is full.

After crossing the Lightning Creek bridge, the main trail heads inland and up the Lightning Creek valley. The trail climbs 200m in less than 1km and, since it is relatively open, can be hot and dusty. After the initial climb, the trail rises and falls gently following the Lightning Creek Gorge. Water is not reliable along this stretch of trail.

It is 7km from Lightning Creek Camp to the Lightning Creek crossing at Deerlick and a junction with the Three Fools Trail. The cabin at Deerlick is a historic structure and is not available for public use. The campsite is located about

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300m east of lightning Creek, and is in fairly poor shape.

Nightmare Camp is situated 4.5km beyond Dearlick Camp and immediately beyond another Lightning Creek crossing. (The Freezeout Creek Trail, joining the Lightning Creek Trail just east of the crossing, was abandoned in 1975.)

Beyond Nightmare Camp, the trail climbs for 2km and levels off for another 2km, passing along Willow Lake to the Willow campsite between the trail and the lake. Willow Lake water is not potable. It is best to carry water to camp from the creek along the trail 2km east of the lake.

Three km beyond Willow Camp is a junction with the Hozomeen Lake Trail. Hozomeen Lake Camp is a well-planned camp which receives heavy visitor use. It is located only 5km from Hozomeen Campground.

The sites at Hozomeen Campground are designed for car campers. The campground has boat launching facilities, interpretive programs several times a week, and a Ranger Station about 3km north along the main gravel road, just a few meters from the U.S. - Canada boundary. The main road (Silver-Skagit Road), after 65km of rough gravel, arrives at Hope, British Columbia along the Trans-Canada Highway.

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