

37

HAGA CREEK



Coordinates

Trailhead

N 43° 41.808'

W 115° 39.573'

Haga Creek Ford

N 43° 42.242'

W 115° 38.856'

Distance: 2.5 miles out-and-back**Total Elevation Gain:** 500 feet**Difficulty:** **Elevation Range:** 3,450 to 3,650 feet**Topographic Map:** Twin Springs**Time:** 1.5 hours**Season:** All year**Water Availability:** Middle Fork of the Boise River, Haga Creek**Cautionary Advice:** There are a couple of short segments along the trail with steep drop-offs, so the hike is not advised for small children.**Additional Information:** Boise National Forest, Mountain Home Ranger District (208) 587-7961**Pit Latrine:** No

HAGA CREEK

If you have not discovered this seldom-traveled trail, you will likely be surprised by the beauty this outing offers. The journey starts with a 150-foot, switch-backed ascent up a steep hillside that is the most strenuous segment of the hike. It soon levels and provides outstanding vistas up and down the crystalline waters of the Middle Fork of the Boise River. From here, the trail—cut high into hillside above the river's north bank—parallels the river for nearly a mile.

The trail eventually turns north at the confluence of Haga Creek with the Middle Fork of the Boise River. You can venture off trail about 500 feet to a level area set under a canopy of lofty ponderosa pines along the river's edge—a perfect location for a contemplative break or backpack. If you continue north, the trail crosses the tree-lined Haga Creek, which is the end of the hike. You can extend the hike with a couple of options either along the Middle Fork of the Boise River or up the Haga Creek drainage.

Because of the area's low elevation, the hike is accessible year-round ex-



View southwest near the trailhead

cept after a heavy snow. Arguably, the best time to experience the area is late April and early May when the open hillsides above Haga Creek explode in an outrageous show of yellow. Here, the yellow-flowering arrowleaf balsam-

root grows thick on the steep hillsides. If you time your hike for the flower's peak bloom, you will likely return the following spring.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Warm Springs Avenue and ID 21 on the east side of Boise, drive north on ID 21 for 9.3 miles. Turn right onto the paved FR 268 towards Atlanta. Reset your tripmeter. Wind 29.7 miles. (The road turns into a dirt-surface at 5.3 miles.) The signed trailhead is on the left side of the road, just before the bridge over the Middle Fork of the Boise River. Although there is a pullout for a single vehicle on the south side of the road, it is best to follow FR 268 over the bridge to a large parking area for the Sheep Creek Trail on the north side of the road. (See hike 38.)

THE HIKE

From the signed trailhead, ascend through two switchbacks as the trail temporarily levels at 0.2 mile. The views from this perch are outstanding. Make a gentle descent of 100 feet to an easy ford of a tiny stream at 0.4 mile.

From here, ascend



View west from the Haga Creek Trail

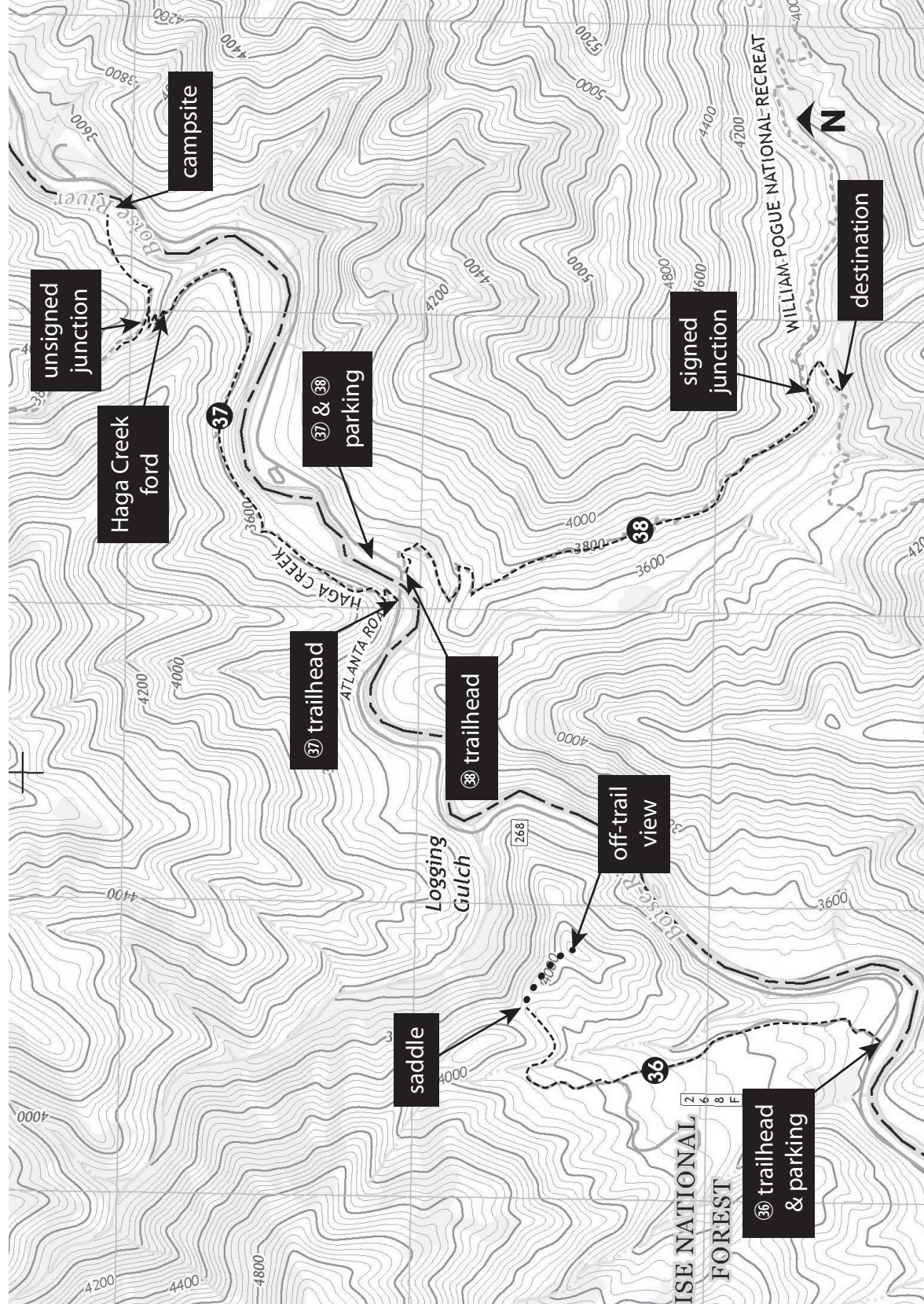
about 50 feet as the trail undulates over the next half-mile along the sloped hills above the river. At 1.0 mile, just before the trail turns north away from the Middle Fork of the Boise River, you can venture off-trail and descend 100 feet to the river's bank where you will find ponderosa pines, mine tailings and a level area where you could certainly establish an easy backpack.

If you are hiking in midspring, you will see many blooming arrowleaf balsamroot once you turn up the Haga Creek drainage. The trail soon comes to Haga Creek, which you will ford at 1.25 miles. If you want to extend the hike, ford the narrow Haga Creek, then ascend through three switchbacks to an unsigned junction at 1.5 miles. If you turn right (east), the foot trail descends about 200 feet in a quarter-mile to a level area with ponderosa pines along the Middle Fork's bank. You could establish a campsite here too. The only negative is that FR 268 is on the other side of the river, so you will occasionally hear vehicle traffic.

Another option at the unsigned junction is to continue north on the main trail alongside Haga Creek. The trail is fairly level for a half-mile and soon comes within feet of Haga Creek near a few rock outcroppings. This area is a good turnaround location. Beyond it, the trail's grade is much steeper as it parallels Haga Creek. There are many scenic outcroppings, occasional dense forest and great over-the-shoulder views as you move higher. As you make your way north, you will find good backpack destinations at 2.9 and 3.1 miles.



Rock outcroppings along Haga Creek



36 SADDLE ABOVE LOGGING GULCH

37 HAGA CREEK 38 SHEEP CREEK TRAIL