



Coordinates

Trailhead

N 44° 06.545'
W 115° 24.844'

Jackson Peak

N 44° 04.675'
W 115° 24.822'

Distance: 9.6 miles out-and-back

Total Elevation Gain: 3,650 feet

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Elevation Range: 4,650 to 8,100 feet

Topographic Map: Jackson Peak

Time: 4.5 to 6 hours

Season: Mid-June through October

Water Availability: A couple of small streams within a half-mile of the trailhead

Cautionary Advice: It is difficult to filter from the streams, so it is best to bring plenty of water. This is a steep hike, so you should be in excellent physical condition.

Additional Information: Boise National Forest, Lowman Ranger District (208) 259-3361

Pit Latrine: No

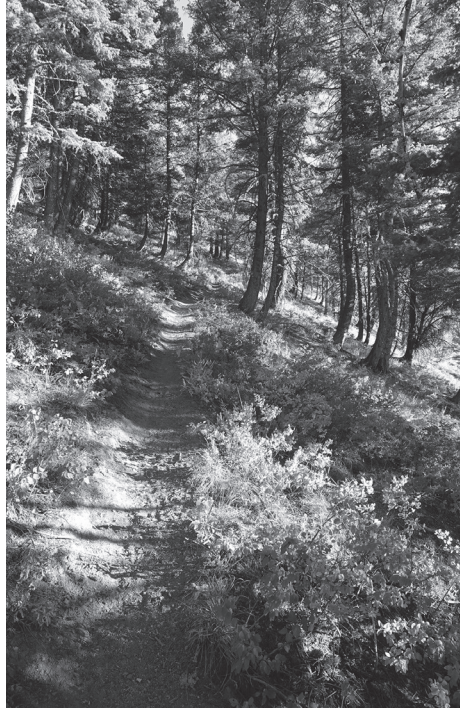
JACKSON PEAK

The 8,124-foot Jackson Peak rises abruptly from the South Fork of the Payette River drainage near Lowman and offers some of the best views to be found in this neck of the woods. Although the hike is demanding, the effort is well worth it. The panoramic vistas atop Jackson Peak are truly exceptional. Directly south, you see the 8,876-foot Wolf Mountain, 8,753-foot Tyee Mountain and several other notable peaks in the Boise National Forest. Looking east you will see the serrated west face of the Sawtooth Mountain range. The view north is equally impressive with a bird's-eye view down to the South Fork of the Payette River meandering nearly 4,000 feet below.

The hike is definitely a workout because it gains 760 feet of elevation—on average—per mile. The trail is well-designed though, so there are only a few, short segments of very steep climbs. Much of the forest along the first three miles of the trail (although there are pockets of old-growth forest) burned in the 1989 Lowman Complex Fire. However, many young pines, often more

than ten feet in height, are flourishing along the steep hillsides. The upper segments of the trail was spared by the fire, and there is beautiful old-growth forest. Outstanding views are a constant almost the entire length of the hike.

Because the trailhead is located at an elevation of 4,600 feet, make sure to get an early start if you are hiking in mid- to -late summer when temperatures are often over 90°F. You should pack plenty of water because there are no reliable water sources beyond a half-mile from the trailhead. Arrowleaf balsamroot and other wildflowers begin to appear in early June and are especially abundant along the lower elevations of the hike. Snowfields can linger near Jackson Peak until mid-June. Not surprisingly, there is an active fire lookout atop Jackson Peak, so please respect the occupants privacy.



Higher elevations of the hike are in forest.

TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS

From the junction of the Banks–Lowman Highway and ID 21, travel east on ID 21 for 12.5 miles, and turn right (between mile markers 85 and 86) on FR 530. There will be a sign for both the Ten Mile and Jackson Peak Trailheads. Follow the dirt-surfaced road 0.2 mile over the South Fork of the Payette River, and turn right on 025NB. Proceed another 0.2 mile, and turn left on Richards Creek Road. Follow the road to its end where you will find the trailhead (1.2 miles from ID 21).

THE HIKE

The trail starts in open forest and gains elevation quickly. At 0.2 mile, cross a small culverted stream, which you will cross two more times, and then turn through the first switchback at 0.3 mile. Over the next half-mile, the trail winds through three more switchbacks in a dense understory of willows, ferns, grasses and aspen. Near the fourth switchback, the views looking north down to the South Fork of the Payette River are stunning.

After the fourth switchback, the trail heads east and finally turns again at another switchback at 1.1 miles. There are many new trees in this area, and at 1.3 miles you enter a patch of old-growth forest on a hillside above the Richards Creek drainage. This is a good mini-hike destination with shade and sensa-

tional views perched about 900 feet above the trailhead.

At 1.4 miles, leave the old-growth forest and begin a 350-foot steep ascent on a finger ridge that winds through four switchbacks over the next half-mile. The trail continues climbing southeast and turns south at 2.2 miles. Here, the trail winds around currant, snowbrush, deadfall, grey snags and a few small trees. You will often hear songbirds and the constant thud of nearby woodpeckers. Looking southwest, you see the fire lookout atop Jackson Peak.

Enter two switchbacks on a hillside at 2.7 miles. Looking east, you get a great view down to the nearby Ten Mile Creek drainage. (For an excellent creek hike look for this trail description in the Best Easy Hikes Greater Boise book.) At 3.0 miles and an elevation of 6,800 feet, the hike takes on a different feel as you leave the burn behind and enter old-growth forest. The trail rises along the forested ridgeline and continues south, providing stellar views to the Sawtooth Mountains.

At 3.7 miles, wind through two switchbacks and continue a steep ascent through Douglas fir forest over the next half-mile. At 4.2 miles, the trail veers to the right (west) where snowfields often linger into late spring. Because the area is steep, the snowfields can be problematic. If there are snowfields, a footpath heads due south and then veers west along the sunny south side of the ridge (see map). The singletrack trail ends at FR 598 at 4.5 miles. To complete the hike, turn right on FR 598 and ascend to the top of Jackson Peak in 0.3 mile.

View north to the South Fork of the Payette River



