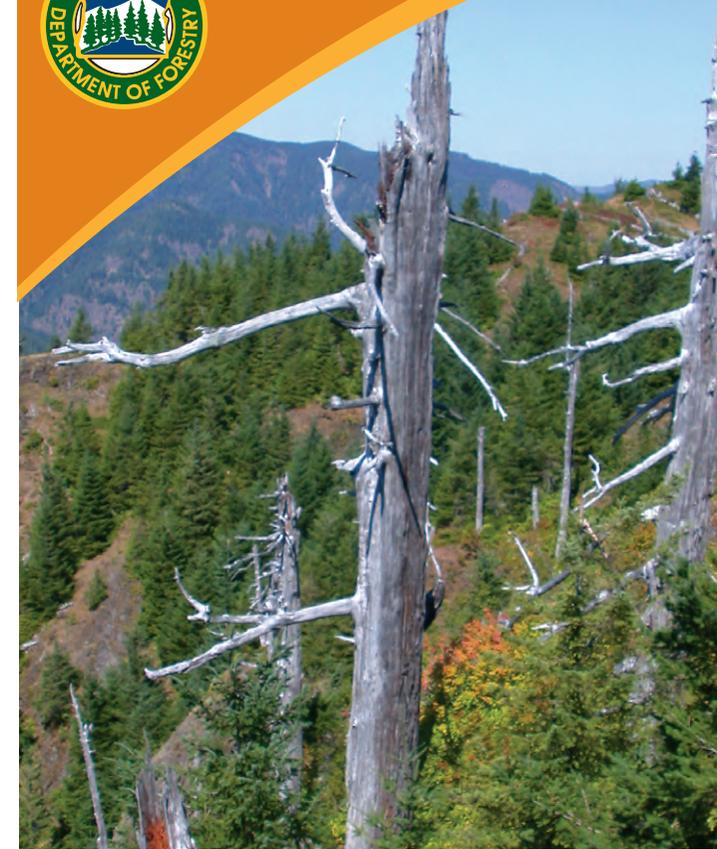


Tillamook State Forest TRAIL GUIDE Kings Mountain, Elk Mountain & Elk Creek Trails



Elk Mountain Trail

 **LENGTH:** 4.3 miles, 1.5 miles to summit
DIFFICULTY: Very Difficult

Elk Creek Trail

  **LENGTH:** 4.0 miles
DIFFICULTY: Moderate

Kings Mountain Trail

 **LENGTH:** 3.8 miles, 2.5 miles to summit
DIFFICULTY: Very Difficult

Be Prepared

- Let someone know your plans
- Lock your vehicle
- Read trailhead signs
- Pack plenty of water

Protect the Forest

- Stay on designated trails
- Share the trail
- Pack it in, pack it out
- Check current fire conditions



For More Information

Oregon Department of Forestry
Forest Grove District Office
801 Gales Creek Road
Forest Grove, OR 97116
(503) 357-2191
www.oregon.gov/ODF

CAUTION

Use extra caution when driving on single-lane gravel roads in the forest. Drive slowly and watch for truck traffic. Be prepared for changing trail and weather conditions, steep terrain and loose rock.

Highway
Gravel Road
Hiking Trail
Hiking & Mt Biking Trail
Miles between points
Trailhead **State Land**
Camping **Private Land**
Highway Milepost Markers

0 0.5 1



Kings Mountain, Elk Mountain & Elk Creek Trails



TRAIL INFORMATION

Trailhead Access

Both Elk Creek and Elk Mountain Trails are accessed from Elk Creek Trailhead.

Elk Creek Trailhead

Travel on Oregon Highway 6 to milepost 28. Turn north onto Elk Creek Road, continue through the campground and cross the bridge to the trailhead. Elk Mountain Trail begins directly behind the information board. Elk Creek Trail begins on the old road past the large boulders at the far end of the trailhead.

Kings Mountain Trailhead

This trailhead is located on the north side of Oregon Highway 6 near milepost 25.

About the Trails

These trails can be enjoyed separately or combined to make loop options of varying lengths and difficulty. The Wilson River Trail connects Kings Mountain and Elk Creek Trails offering hikers another loop option for an extended day hike.

Elk Mountain Trail

This trail is extremely steep and narrow. Reaching the summit requires gaining 1,900 feet elevation in 1.5 miles, challenging even the experienced hiker. Because this trail is strenuous, make sure to pack plenty of water and be prepared for changing weather conditions. The reward for this hike is the beautiful view stretching from Mt. Hood to the Pacific Ocean.

To reach Elk Mountain Trail, climb 0.2 mile on the Wilson River Trail. The junction for Elk Mountain Trail turns upward and views of the Wilson River Canyon soon appear. After skirting a false summit,



Elk Mt. Summit (Photo: Brad French)

hikers are greeted with the real Elk Mountain summit offering a meadow full of bear grass and Indian paintbrush flowers in the summer. A summit register is available for hikers to record their thoughts and experience to the top.

From here, hikers can choose to retrace their steps down the mountain or continue on to either Elk Creek or Kings Mountain Trails. To make a loop, follow the sign near the summit where the trail dives downward. Be cautious, as the next mile is loose scree that often requires using your hands to guide you along the craggy ridge route. One mile beyond the summit, Elk Mountain Trail begins to follow an old road. Continue one more mile to reach the junction with Kings Mountain Trail. To the left, Kings Mountain summit is 1.3 arduous miles, or hikers may continue on Elk Mt. Trail 0.75 miles to Elk Creek Trail which returns to Elk Creek Campground in 4.0 miles.

Elk Creek Trail

This trail is located on the old Elk Creek Road that has been converted to a trail, and is open to mountain biking and hiking. The trail follows the main fork of Elk Creek where steelhead spawn and river otters have been spotted. After the 0.5 mile mark, the trail passes the confluence of Elk Creek and the West Fork Elk Creek. Red alder and sword fern in the valley bottom dominate this portion of the trail. Look for the small yellow monkey flower near seeps along the canyon wall.

The route continues along the West Fork for about 1.0 mile before it begins the ascent out of the canyon. As the trail leaves the streamside, Douglas-fir becomes

the primary tree for the rest of the route. The trail switchbacks and begins climbing to the west. The trail then turns north for about 0.75 mile before finally switchbacking to the ridgeline and the junction with the Elk Mountain Trail in 4.0 miles.



Wildflowers, like this gentian, are abundant in the spring and summer.

Kings Mountain Trail

This trail is a challenging hike. In order to reach the summit of Kings Mountain, hikers face a 2,546-foot elevation gain in 2.5 miles, but the panoramic views from the top are worth the effort. The trail is a steep but gradual climb that in some places can be a scramble, making sturdy boots and plenty of water essential.

The young forest you walk through at the base of the mountain was planted after the 1945 Tillamook fire. Nearing the ridge, you can see smaller trees that were seeded by helicopter during the replanting efforts, along with standing dead trees, sometimes called “gray ghosts.”

Signs along the trail allow hikers to note their elevation. A short distance from the summit, a picnic table is a pleasant sight and an inviting place to rest before tackling the final very steep push to the top.

Make sure to read and sign the summit register to be among those who have conquered the mountain. Ambitious hikers can continue hiking on to Elk Mountain or Elk Creek Trails.

The 1.3 miles of trail between Kings Mountain Summit and Elk Mountain Trail are even more challenging. Sections of this segment are steep, narrow and traverse along narrow ledges running above and below cliffs with sheer drop-offs in some areas. This trail can be difficult to see and follow in places, particularly during the winter or in inclement weather.

Tillamook Treasures

As the name of the area suggests, elk are often spotted here. Fall is rutting season, when the males are showing their antlers and calling out for mates. Both antlers and calls define the health and size of a bull. Large, straight antlers denote a strong, fit elk and a low pitch call signifies a broad chest. In the winter the males lose their antlers, but they grow back by the following spring to repeat the cycle. Look for evidence of antler rubbings on red alder trees along the trail.

