

Boundary Trail 245
National Trails Day Project

I should have been more specific when I commented to Mike Mullin, West Payette National Forest trails manager, that I would like to check out Boundary Trail before the National Trails Day project. Mike mentioned we might have to hike an extra mile or so from the trail head if the latest round of rain had made the road too muddy. Hike? As in, on foot? Isn't that why God made horses? I stopped hiking two years ago after I bought one. I packed a quick lunch and, leaving a perfectly good horse standing in the pasture, headed toward town.

Mike was healing up from an upper respiratory infection when I swung by the Weiser district early Saturday morning to pick him up. I felt bad for thinking it, really I did, but the thought crossed my mind that if the guy was only running on partial lung capacity, there might be a sliver of hope that I could keep up with him.

To get to Boundary Trail, you take a left out of Cambridge Idaho towards Brownlee and drive 14.5 miles to Seid Creek Road and take a right. Several miles up Seid Creek, the road "Y's;" from here, you take a right and drive, or hike in our case, another mile to the Boundary Creek Trail head. As expected, the road at the Y was fairly slimy. We would park and walk from this spot.

I knew I was in trouble the minute our feet hit the dirt road. I had to practically trot to keep up with Mike's brisk walk. I should probably pace myself and hang back. Pride prevailed over common sense and I quickened my step. Maybe if I exaggerate an existing slight limp, he'll take pity on me and slow down. I could tell him how old I am, toss in a couple of years for added sympathy - that might help. Nah, I can do this. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger, if you don't pass out first.

The hike up the road to the trailhead wasn't too bad. A mile long gradual incline leads to the Boundary Creek Trailhead #245. There looks to be plenty of room for parking 5 or 6 trailers, maybe more if we park next to each other at an angle. All of the trails are clearly marked with excellent signage.

From the trailhead, the terrain gradually winds up for a couple of miles before peaking out at a knoll overlooking Cambridge/Manns Creek. It's a beautiful view of the valleys and rolling, timbered hills. The trail is well kept and easy to traverse. I noticed as Mike walked ahead of me that he suffers from the same condition that I do: I call it automatic habitual occupational duty disorder. Mike could not pass a rock or a limb without reaching down and clearing it from the trail. I am the same way with merchandise. A product of being raised in a family owned grocery store, I cannot walk into a retail outlet without rotating old merchandise and straightening shelves.

We were surprised to find no deadfall across the trail. The recent high-winds had been kind to us and other than a few limbs that Mike disposed of as he walked, the trail is virtually clear. I told Mike he should leave us a little something to do!

From the top of the knoll, the trail descends rather steeply into the East Pine drainage. The only thing I dislike worse than going up-hill is the constant hammering to your knees going downhill. By the time we

reached the bottom, my knee felt like it was now located somewhere in the area of my lower back. Mike didn't seem to notice at all. I think he might have bionic limbs.

The project we will be working on is located along East Pine Creek. We will be tearing out an old corduroy that crosses a marshy area about 60 feet long. Mike will go up a head of time and pull out the old logs, fall a few trees to use as bumpers, and dig a drainage ditch. We will build up the 60 foot section with local sand/gravel and make it more horse friendly.

After checking out the area and formulating somewhat of a plan, we stopped for a bite to eat before heading back towards the truck. The first couple miles of that steep incline only confirmed why I got a horse in the first place. Sitting behind a keyboard for a living did not help. I trudged after Mike. The steep climb and limited lung capacity seemed to have no effect on him at all. Shouldn't he be breathing harder than this? I believe it's possible he may have bionic lungs to match his bionic legs.

I stopped to pick up what little trash I found along the way. Litter is not only another one of my pet-peeves, but it gave me an excuse to stop and catch my breath now and then. I *may* have tossed the same can on the ground from time to time, "Oh look! Another Pepsi can! – I'll just stop here and pick it up for a few minutes. .." I don't think Mike was fooled. It's hard to fool a Cyborg.

I had left my rain coat at the top of the ridge on the way down. Mike offered to carry it out in his backpack. I didn't argue, although I did consider rolling up a big rock in it while he wasn't looking. That should slow him down. Call it a handicap – they do it in horse racing, bowling and golf, why not?

Once the trail leveled out – it was an easy mile or two back to the truck. It felt good to get out and get a little exercise. It also makes you appreciate what we ask of our animals. Don't be surprised, if in the future, you see me leading my horse up and down a few hills now and then.

It is not the greatest spot for camping out – but it is doable. If we find we don't like the surrounding area of the trailhead as a place to camp – we can camp 6 or 7 miles up Mill Creek Rd. Mill Creek has some very nice spots to camp that are secluded and close to water for the horses. The entire area is miles and miles of awesome riding trails of all technical levels. June is between hunting seasons and we should have the place mostly to ourselves. I think it will be a fun project and a great way to spend National Trails Day.