

Hulls Gulch National Recreation Trail



Distance: 6.8 miles (round-trip)

Elevation Range: 3800'-4810'

Trail Type: singletrack

Difficulty: moderate

Season: April-October

Driving Distance: 4.5 miles from 8th & Fort (3 miles dirt)

Driving Time: 10 minutes

USGS Maps: Boise North, Robie Creek

Pros

This trail is well designed and has reasonable grades for both hiking and running. Informational signs are placed at various points along the way. These offer great information about the geology, ecology and cultural heritage of the area. The scenic highlight is a seemingly endless view down the gulch from the upper portion of the trail.

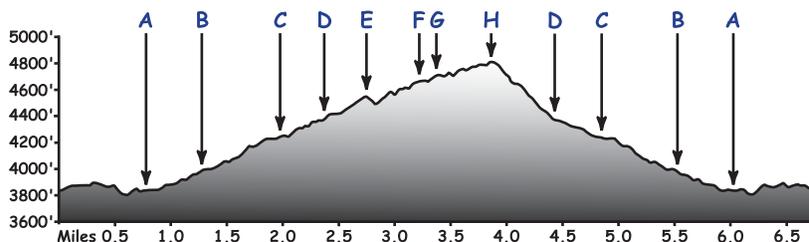
Cons

The 8th Street fire of 1996 heavily impacted Hulls Gulch. The effects of this burn are still evident. Some will likely see this as an eyesore, others as an opportunity to observe an ecosystem well-into the process of recovery.

Getting There

From the intersection of 8th Street and Fort Street, drive north on 8th Street. After a mile or so, 8th Street enters the foothills and becomes 8th Street Road (aka Sunset Peak Rd). It then turns to dirt surface at 1.5 miles. Continue up the road to the very large 8th Street Parking Area (4.5 miles). After entering the parking area, go left to reach the trailhead.

A second trailhead is located a short distance further up 8th Street Road. Starting here trims off the first 0.2 mile of the trail. A third trailhead, that accesses the upper end of the trail, is located much further up the road. During the winter months, a gate located 0.3 mile below the first trailhead might be closed (the road becomes very sloppy beyond here). If the gate is not closed, another gate that is located a short distance further up the road will be closed for sure.



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The Trail

The trail begins by contouring just below the ridgetop to another trailhead at 0.2 mile. One could start from this second trailhead, but there is no real advantage to it. From the second trailhead, the trail makes a contouring descent into Hulls Gulch. At 0.8 mile a spur trail merges in from the right (it accesses Lower Hulls Gulch) **(A)**. Just after this, the trail meets the creek and crosses it on a very sturdy bridge.

The trail now travels creekside up the gulch, passing by charred remnants of the 8th Street Fire. At 1.3 miles the trail crosses back to the left side of the creek via a second bridge **(B)**. At 2.0 miles a third bridge crosses back to the right side **(C)**. The surrounding hillsides now become increasingly peppered with salmon-hued granite boulders and outcrops. Burned-up forest comes into view on the ridgetops ahead. At 2.1 miles a fourth bridge crosses back to the left. At 2.4 miles the trail forks into a loop at a junction posted with a large wooden sign **(D)**. Continue forward alongside the creek to a fifth bridge at 2.8 miles **(E)**.

The trail now turns away from the creek, which is steep and rocky ahead. The course zigzags upward and crosses a couple of tiny tributaries of the main creek. At 3.2 miles an especially steep and boulder-choked side stream is crossed via a sixth bridge **(F)**. At 3.4 miles the trail crosses over the now diminished main creek once again (no bridge this time) **(G)**. It then contours upward above the gulch to a signed intersection and the trail highpoint at 3.9 miles **(H)**. Go left (forward leads to the upper trailhead) and follow the twisting trail downward past clusters of granite outcrops. At 4.5 miles the creekside junction is revisited, completing the loop **(D)**. Reverse the remainder of the trail, back down the gulch, to the trailhead at 6.8 miles.



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