

# **MOUNT ISABELLE**

## **RATED MODERATE TO DIFFICULT**

### **August 2014**

This 1.0 mile trail to the peak of Mount Isabelle is a connector to the proposed Applegate Ridge Trail (A.R.T.) and starts on the edge of the 5711 acre Wellington Wildlands (LWC – Lands with Wilderness Characteristics). This recently worked road/trail is on an incline that only levels out on the switchbacks and at the peak. The road/trail is mostly on the south side of the mountain with little shade, something to consider if the day is hot. But the views are consistent and just keep getting better as you climb. The peak houses a metal communication tower and small secure buildings with no windows.

Located at 4494' on the northern edge of the Siskiyou Mountains, Mount Isabelle offers incredible views of the Rogue and Applegate Valleys and played an important role in early fire detection. Named after Forest Creek resident Jake Smith's daughter, Elizabeth, this mountaintop served as a fire lookout for Southern Oregon and today is a major communication site for Jackson County. From 1933 to 1967, Mt. Isabelle had a 14' x 14' "Aladdin" lookout perched on a 50' wood tower. Aladdin's were kits with windows on all sides costing \$500 (FOB Portland). They were hauled in by mule trains and placed on mountain peaks all over the northwest. At one time there were 5060 lookouts of all types scattered across America. In a conversation with Annice, daughter of John and Marguerite Black (authors of the book "Ruch"), she said her sister Holly used to be the lookout. As a child in the early '50s, Annice used to ride with her father in a 1947 Willys Jeep loaded with supplies on weekly trips to the lookout during the summer months. Depending on the time of the year, water was drawn from the creek or the Oregon Belle Mine and hauled up the steep mountainside in milk cans carried by horses and later, by jeep. In 1940 the Forest Service developed a small spring under huge fire scarred fir on the west side of the mountain for a source of water a little closer to the top.

**For the 3 hikes on Mount Isabelle:** From the **Isabelle Trailhead** walk north approximately 175 yards on BLM Road 38-3-5 and go around the locked yellow gate. Continue a short distance to the next large flat area identified with piles of gravel and a green metal electrical box (on the far side). The 3 hikes start near the electrical box. The hike to the peak of **Mount Isabelle** (1.0 mile) is straight ahead up the wide steep road. The hike to the **Isabelle Quarry** (1.0 mile) is on the "level" gated BLM road 38-3-5 to the right of the road up to Mount Isabelle. Look for the start of the **Isabelle Spring Trail** on the left side of the road to Mount Isabelle, approximately 50' north of the green metal electrical box.

Note:

1. The **Isabelle Trailhead** (parking, kiosk and hidden picnic table), is the launching point for 4 different hikes: The Sundown Trail, the Isabelle Spring hike, Isabelle Quarry hike and the Mount Isabelle hike.
2. The elevation at the trailhead is 3520' and the elevation on Mount Isabelle is 4494'.
3. The gate is an effective barrier for large vehicles however you could encounter an OHV (Off Highway Vehicle).

**Directions (Suitable for 2 wheel drive vehicles):**

From Jacksonville, travel southwest on Hwy 238 (towards Ruch) 4.9 miles and turn right on Forest Creek Road. From Ruch, travel northeast on Hwy 238 (towards Jacksonville) 2.8 miles and turn left on Forest Creek Road.

Mile 0.0	Junction of State Highway 238 and Forest Creek Road. Go south on paved Forest Creek Road.
Mile 0.7	Keep right on Forest Creek Road at intersection with Longanecker Road and BLM Road 38-3-14 (Bunny Meadows Road, which leads to Bunny Meadows OHV staging area).
Mile 1.0	Pavement ends. Road remains wide with a granite surface.
Mile 2.5	Keep left on Forest Creek Road at intersection with BLM Road 38-3-10 (East Fork Forest Creek Road).
Mile 4.3	Turn left onto BLM Road 38-3-5 (Oregon Belle Creek Access Road) – single lane road with turnouts and worn asphalt.
Mile 5.0	Continue straight on BLM Road 38-3-5, passing BLM Road 38-3-5.1 on the left.
Mile 6.0	Continue straight on BLM Road 38-3-5, passing BLM Road 38-3-5.2 on the left.
Mile 6.3	Continue straight on BLM Road 38-3-5, passing BLM Road 38-3-6 on the right.
Mile 6.7	The <b>Isabelle Trailhead</b> is an improved gravel parking area (where the asphalt road surface ends & gravel begins) located at the ridge saddle and the intersection of BLM Road 38-3-5 and BLM Road 38-3-8. The relatively level BLM Road 38-3-8 to the left (south) leads to the Heart Trail (2 miles). BLM Road 38-3-5 to the right (north) leads to the 3 hikes on Mount Isabelle. Note the kiosk and hidden picnic table at the trailhead. Please do not block the yellow gates with your vehicle.
Mile 6.8	If parking beyond the trailhead on BLM road 38-3-5, please do not block the gate.

**GPS Readings**

Location	Latitude	Longitude
Gate across BLM Road 38-3-5 to Mount Isabelle	42° 17.776' N	123° 06.803' W
Junction of Mount Isabelle access road (wide, steep road), road 38-3-5 and the beginning of the Isabelle Spring hike - near the green metal electrical box on north end of flat area	42° 17.876' N	123° 06.704' W
Isabelle Spring	42° 17.953' N	123° 06.648' W
Junction of Isabelle Spring Trail (N end) and road 38-3-6	42° 18.467' N	123° 06.582' W
Junction of roads 38-3-6 and 38-3-5	42° 17.658' N	123° 06.569' W
Isabelle Trailhead – Junction of roads 38-3-5 and 38-3-8	42° 17.724' N	123° 06.825' W

This information is provided by the Applegate Trails Association, your local non-profit organization formed to develop a system of hiking, biking and equestrian trails in the mountains of the Applegate Valley. Our primary project is the creation of the Applegate Ridge Trail. Your support is much appreciated.

See [www.applegatetrails.org](http://www.applegatetrails.org) for more information or to make a donation. Thank you.