

SUNDOWN TRAIL
Formerly known as
ABOVE BALLS BRANCH
RIDGELINE HIKE - RATED MODERATE
ALTERNATE LOOP HIKE INTO WWL - RATED MODERATE TO DIFFICULT
August 2014

Some hikers say this is best and most accessible hike currently available on the proposed Applegate Ridge Trail (A.R.T.). This 1.5 mile section of the ART runs along the northwest boundary of the 5711 acre Wellington Wild Lands (LWC – Lands with Wilderness Characteristics). Much of the trail runs along the ridge top on the edge of a vast open bald sprinkled with oak, mountain mahogany and the occasional pine or fir tree. In the spring the waves of grass are overlaid with bursts of blooming flowers, more than 50 species including California poppy, mountain tarweed and the uncommon showy thistle. Pause to take in the breathtaking views of the Wellington Wildlands, Thompson Creek and the distant Red Buttes framed on the southern skyline. Turn around and get to know Mount Isabelle, Mount McLaughlin and Forest Creek from a whole new vantage point.

From the **Isabelle Trailhead** walk around the somewhat hidden yellow gate (located about 150' to the left of the kiosk), and hike south uphill on the BLM road. At 0.4 mile a trail intersects and the road continues southeast. This trail to the right is a bit longer and steeper but reaches the ridge top faster. Either route (road or trail) will lead you to the same spot on the ridgeline with those fantastic views. From where the road meets the trail on the ridge (with the great view up Thompson Creek), there is another mile of hiking southeast along the ridge to where the road/trail ends at a small logging landing. The landing at the end of the ridge is now covered in young pine trees about a decade old. Most people will turn around here thereby creating a hike of about 3 miles total, out and back.

OR: One can continue further on a **loop hike** to the Heart Trail and the Long Gulch trailhead by following the steep and eroded user created OHV (Off Highway Vehicle), trail south down a rocky ridgeline into the Wellington Wildlands. From the logging landing follow the OHV trail back along the ridge about 300' and take the left fork downhill. In less than a mile you will emerge on the Heart Trail (old ridgeline mining road; BLM road 38-3-7.1). Follow the Heart Trail left (north) 0.3 mile to the Long Gulch trailhead/saddle at the intersection of BLM roads 38-3-8 and 38-3-7. A concrete barrier 400' from the Long Gulch trailhead blocks larger vehicular traffic from accessing the Heart Trail. To return to your starting point at the Isabelle trailhead, follow the relatively level BLM road 38-3-8 to the left, northwest, 2 miles back to your vehicle. This loop hike is approximately 4.5 miles total.

Note:

1. The elevation at the **Isabelle Trailhead** (the intersection of 38-3-5 and 38-3-8) is 3495' and the highest point along the main ridgeline hike is 3992'.
2. The gate (and concrete barrier on the Heart Trail), are effective barriers for large vehicles however you may encounter an Off Highway Vehicle (OHV).
3. The trail is named after the Sundown Mine (entrance has mostly collapsed) which is located about 1 mile from the Isabelle trailhead on the sunny side of the trail a little below the ridgeline. There are two piles of tailings maybe 150' apart. The mine is located at the lower pile.

Directions (Suitable for 2 wheel drive vehicles):

From Jacksonville travel 4.9 miles southwest on Hwy 238 (towards Ruch) and turn right on Forest Creek Rd.

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

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 and 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 Isabelle Trailhead 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.

GPS Readings

Location	Latitude	Longitude
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 for more information or to make a donation. Thank you.