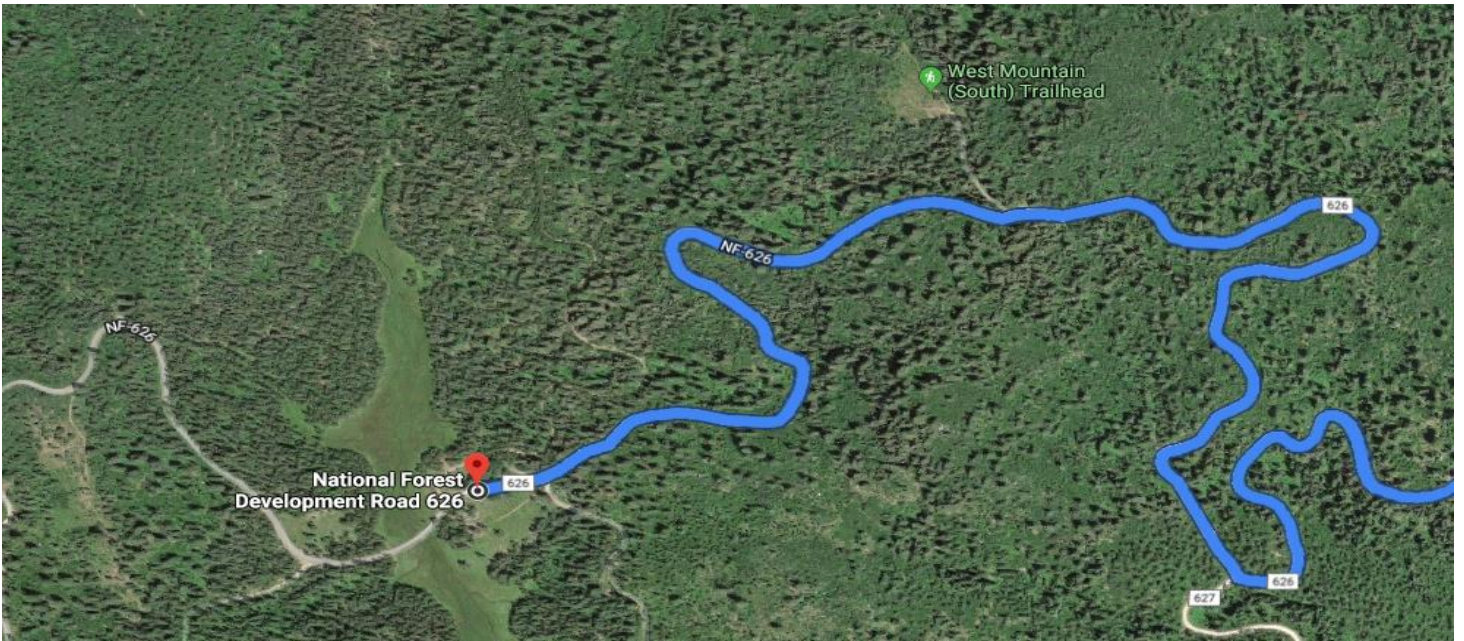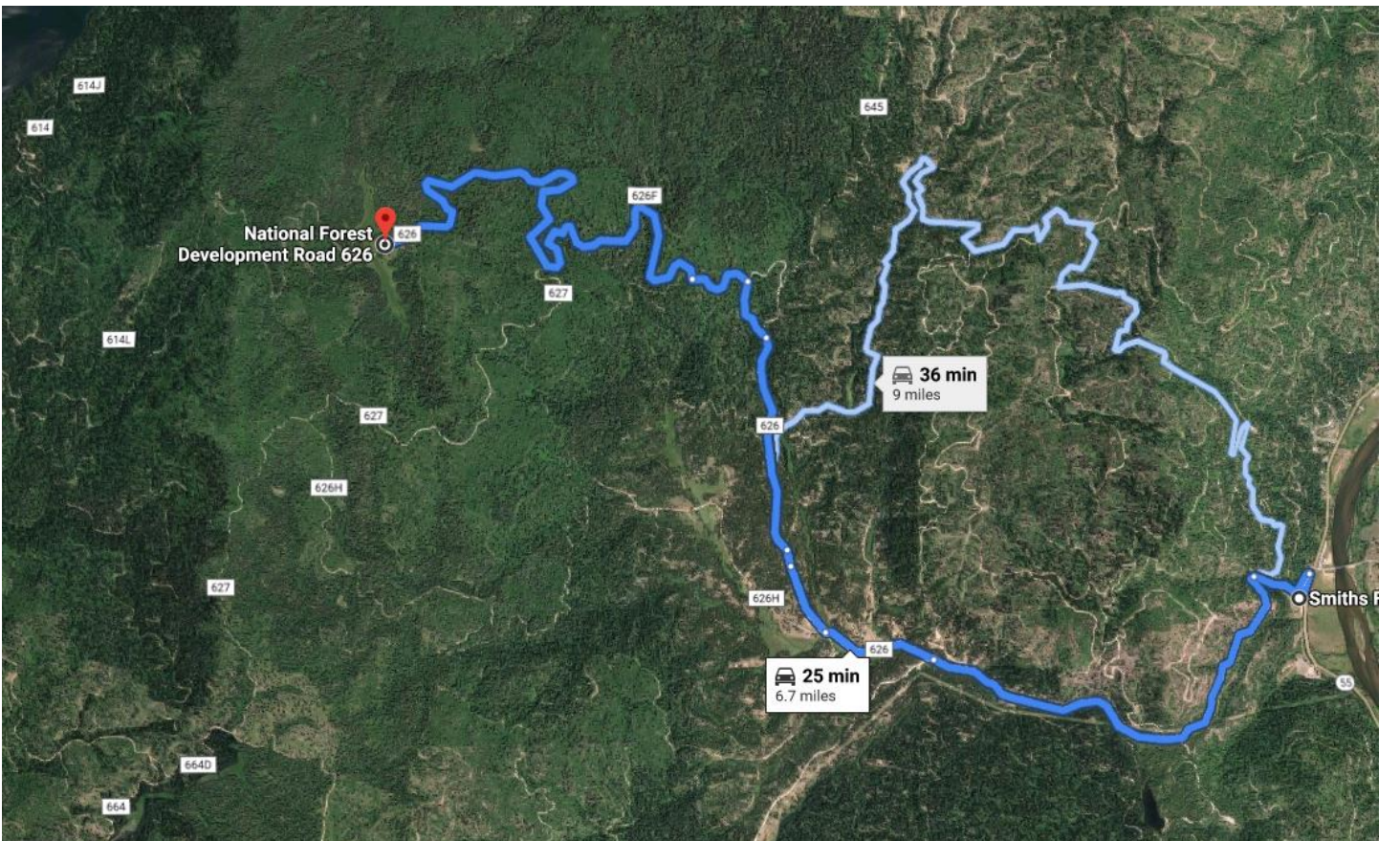# TR-131 South – West Mountain Trail Head

You park in a meadow a bit west of the trail head – FR 626 from Smith Ferry

The trail head is around 40 miles from Horseshoe Bend, ID

[Oct 2008 - Tripod Lookout Ride](#)

[Oct 2010 - Tripod Peak Lookout Ride](#)

West Mountain Trail #131

Length: 16.1 miles (26 km)
Use: Light
Difficulty
Motorcycle: Most Difficult
Horseback: Most Difficult
Hiking: More Difficult
USGS Maps: Tripod Peak, Sagehen Reservoir, Smith's Ferry
Recreation sites nearby: Wilson Corrals Trail, Tripod Lookout, Tripod Peak Trail, Joe's Creek Trail, Renwyck Trail, Antelope Trail, Gabe's Peak Trail, Willow Lake Trail, Campbell Creek Trail, Poison Creek Trail

Attractions and Considerations

The West Mountain Trail begins in a valley, crosses several creeks, and passes through meadows and forests as it gradually ascends West Mountain Ridge. Once on the ridge, the trail passes Snowbank Mountain, Jacob's Ladder, Hangman's Tree and Tripod Lookout, providing panoramic views of Round Valley, Long Valley, Smith's Ferry and Cascade. The trail is rich in Idaho history. Wilson Meadows is named for Allen Wilson, a pioneer who grazed sheep there in the early 1900's. The origin of the name Jacob's Ladder isn't known, but it does resemble a ladder or steps cut from rock. There are conflicting but fascinating legends about Hangman's Tree. One says that a buckaroo of the early 1900's created a fictional "tall tale" by throwing a hangman's rope over a tree limb. Another early settler says the rope was there in 1915, but it was used to hang horse thieves who happen to be caught near a stout tree limb.

From the trailhead on National Forest Road 625G (NF-625G) to Tripod Lookout, the trail is open only to non-motorized use except for snowmobiles, which are permitted December 1 to May 15. South of the lookout to the trailhead on NF-644 is open yearlong to all motorized vehicles. The section of trail between Wilson Meadows and Tripod Lookout will be difficult to find because cow paths bisect the main trail. Cattle graze the trail south of Wilson Meadows in the summer and fall.

The trail, bordered by huckleberry bushes, climbs gradually as it enters a forest of lodgepole pines and Douglas-fir. The trail soon crosses Poison Creek and passes through several bogs. Within 2 ½ miles, the trail crosses Squaw Creek for the first time, then climbs steeply through a meadow. As it reaches a tributary of Squaw Creek, it changes direction abruptly from southeast to east. Recreationists should watch for a large arrow cut in a tree on the west side of the trail.

The trail is bordered by rock cairns and passes through a meadow, ascends a small hill, and passes the signed intersection of the Wilson Corrals Trail. The trail soon reaches the northern end of Wilson Meadows, which is marshy in early spring. To avoid wet feet, hikers should skirt its west edge.

At the southern edge of Wilson Meadows, the West Mountain Trail is intersected by two other trails. An unsigned short trail near a stockman's cabin leads to the Snowbank Mountain road (NF-446). In the same area, the unsigned and unblazed Gabe's Peak Trail intersects the West Mountain Trail from the west. The trail gradually gains elevation as it travels south toward Jacob's Ladder. Within a mile and southeast of Jacob's Ladder, the trail passes Hangman's Tree, which is signed in a prominent saddle north of Tripod Lookout. Within a half mile, the trail passes the signed Renwyck trailhead and shortly intersects a short, steep trail to Tripod Lookout.

As it gradually descends, the trail splits with the West Mountain trail forking east and the unsigned Joe's Creek Trail forking south. An unblazed section of the trail overlaps an unsigned, well-traveled road for a quarter mile, enters the forest again, and within a mile intersects an old, narrow roadbed. The trail continues southwest and the old roadbed forks east. About a mile from NF-644, the trail parallels a narrow stream, then ascends steeply to a registration box and trailhead sign where West Mountain Trail ends.

West Mountain Trail 131

Motorized/Non-Motorized Single Track

Legend

Trails

Designated Use
- ATV & Motorcycles
- Motorcycles
- Non-Motorized
- Featured Trail
- System Roads
- Streams
- Lakes
- 250 Ft. Contour

Lat 44.480856
Long -116.203986

Lat 44.441611
Long -116.150233

Lat 44.450431
Long -116.147440

Lat 44.431214
Long -116.151615

Lat 44.381249
Long -116.132578

Lat 44.394548
Long -116.133926

Lat 44.376601
Long -116.135815

Lat 44.323854
Long -116.146874

Tripod Lookout

West Mountain 131