

## **TRAIL FACTOR RUN REPORT #6 11/30/2008**

### **Old Salmon River Trail 19 mile loop**

These TRAIL FACTOR runs just keep getting better and better. The trail that we ran this weekend, combined with the great weather, ranks among the top TRAIL FACTOR runs. On our way out to the trail I was skeptical as to whether we would have nice weather. It was cloudy, drizzly and very foggy. It looked like we were going to have a very wet and very cold run. However, luck was on our side. Just as soon as we hit the trail head and started running, the sun started peaking through the clouds and the fog burned off. We were stoked.

The trail that we slammed on this weekend is located on Salmon River Road. Salmon River Road is just off Hwy 26 once you get to the town of Zig Zag. You take a right onto Salmon River Road and drive about 2 miles. There is a sign just off to the right at the trail head and is titled, Old Salmon River Trail and is also labeled as trail # 742A. Here is the link to the map we used during the run.

### [Old Salmon River Trail 19 mile loop](#)

We had a great group show up for our run. Those attending included Chris, Rick, Jessi, Andrea, Reed, Jamie, and Shawn. Mallory was also there, but she got there a bit late and ran a bit shorter. She said that she overslept. Andrea, Jamie and Reed were new to the TRAIL FACTOR group run and we were stoked to have them there. They belong to PDX Adventure Racer and are how they found out about the run.

[www.pdxadventureracer.com/](http://www.pdxadventureracer.com/)

PDX Adventure Racer is a Portland based adventure racing resource that is doing a really great job of connecting people to adventure racing. They allow you to post training and find adventure racing team mates. Really cool site for those of you interested getting into adventure racing.

Everyone was eager to get started. We had a quick brief on the trail and distances everyone planned on covering for the day. Jessi, Reed, Jamie, and Andrea were planning on running 10-12 miles for the day and the rest of us were planning on running the 19 mile loop.

The 10-12 mile run would include only one trail #742A or Old Salmon River Trail. Navigating this trail is very simple. You basically follow the trail as it runs alongside the river. It jumps onto the road a couple of times and eventually crosses the road about 2.4 miles into the run. Once you cross the road, the trail meanders further back into the woods and soon begins to climb toward a couple of spectacular lookouts. I really enjoy running on this trail due to its excellent footing, gradual climbing and great views of the river.

The 19 mile loop option included a few more trails and would also offer up a couple of navigational challenges. It starts off on trail #742A (Old Salmon River Trail). You follow the river and climb past several lookouts, but instead of turning around there, you continue on and intersect trail #665. You take a left on trail #665 and start a very long climb. Trail #665 eventually dumps onto an old jeep road for

about 50 meters, but continues on toward Devils Peak. Trail #665 intersects with trail #793 (Hunchback Mt. Trail). You take a right on Hunchback Mt. Trail and follow it all the way to trail #793A. It's a left hand turn at trail #793A, but it's not marked, with the exception of a couple of orange tethers. You descend trail #793A for about 3 miles and it dumps you onto Salmon River Road. You can take a right or left to re-intersect Old Salmon River trail. If you take a right, you will have to run on the road a bit before picking up the trail. Once you pick up the trail, you simply stay on it until you reach your original starting point.

According to Jessi, the crew that tackled the 10-12 mile loop really enjoyed the run. Since the 19 mile crew ran out on the same trail, we all were able to see many of the same view. There is a point on the Old Salmon River Trail when you start to climb. This is where things start to get a bit challenging. It's not steep, but a sustained gradual climb. It's enough to get your heart pumping.

Jessi, Andrea, Reed and Jamie climbed this portion with consistency and determination to summit the first viewpoint. They were combining running with power hiking, which is a great way utilize many different muscle groups to get the work of climbing done. They climbed and climbed and eventually were able to summit the first view point. It was simply spectacular. The fog was still lingering down below, close to the rushing water in the Salmon River. It drifted upward, but was quickly burned off by the sun that was rising above the distant hills. The sky was a perfect blue. This is one of those moments when you wished you had a camera, but none of us did. Hopefully, we will at some point.

Andrea, Jamie, and Reed turned back for home after taking in the views. They had run about 5.5 miles out on the trail and would be finish up with a very solid and challenging 11 mile run. Jessi chose to run on a bit further. She said that she continued to climb out for another 8-10 min, but soon turned back toward home. She was just short of the second viewpoint, which again offered an amazing view of the far reaching hills. Jessi would finish up with a 12.5-13 mile run for the day. Nice job everyone.

Those of us running the 19 mile loop were predicting a 3.5 hour run. This would not be the case. It was the first time we had been up on the Hunchback Mt. Ridge and it offered up a few challenges.

Once we climbed the first gradual stretch up Old Salmon River Trail, we hung a left onto trail #665. This was the beginning of a grueling climb. It would climb all the way up to Devils Peak. It was a long climb but well worth it. It was littered with spectacular views and we even caught some great views of snow covered Mt. Hood. Once we hit the summit on Devils Peak the sky was open, blue and allowed our eyes to search into the distant landscape. It was sweet.

Right on the top of Devils Peak rests a lookout tower. We actually rolled up on a couple of fellows who had camped out up in the lookout tower the previous night. They said the night stars were awesome. They also had a couple of beautiful husky dogs with them that weren't even theirs. They had found the dogs up on the trail and would be taking them back to the owners that lost them. Those doggies and the owners are very lucky.

We spent a few minutes taking in the views, but quickly started running again. We had to cover 2.4 miles before intersecting trail #793A, which would take us down to our original Salmon River Trail. This

2.4 mile section was super slow running. It was littered with blown over trees and was more of a hurdlers dream rather than an ultra-runners dream. It took us forever to cover this section of trail.

We finally made it to trail #793A. At least that is what we thought. The trail was unmarked. We were keeping track of our time from trail juncture to trail juncture, so we assumed it was the correct trail. It was marked with an orange tether guiding us in the direction of the trail. The trail also headed down hill. Through a process of elimination, we concluded that it was trail #793A.

We started down and the descent produced some very steep grades. It's exactly what we expected, so now we knew we were on the right trail.

This descent would last three miles and it was the most plush and steep descent that I have ever encountered. It was really nice on the knees and eventually it dumped us out onto Salmon River Road.

We hung a right on Salmon River road, ran on the road for about 800 meters and re-connected with Old Salmon River trail. We followed the trail along the river and back to where we parked the cars. We had been out for almost 4 hrs.

Wow, what a run. It was long, lots of climbing, great views, and an excellent time spent with friends. We were a bit slower than anticipated, but much of that was due to navigation issues and trail conditions. It was an epic run and one I would definitely recommend.

If you would like to join us for future TRAIL FACTOR runs or you know someone who would like to join us, please visit.

[www.trailfactor.com](http://www.trailfactor.com)