

## TRAIL FACTOR Run Report #3 11/09/2008

### Fish Creek to Indian Henry and Back

It was another great Trail Factor Run Today. We had a very spritely group show for the Estacada outing. It was a solid group made up of 8 runners. Shawn, Jessi, Mallory, Rob, Ben, Paul, Chris and William made up the bulk of early risers. Both Chris and William were new to the Trail Factor group and they were certainly a great addition to this morning's run.

Today's TRAIL FACTOR run took us into and past Estacada. Estacada is located southeast of Portland and is the last small town that you hit before heading into the Mt. Hood National Forest on Hwy 224. It's about a 47 mile drive to the trail head, but takes a bit longer due to the nature of the roads traveled. Lots of lights and turns littered our pathway.

The planned route was to begin at the Fish Creek campground and trail head. Actually, I'm pretty sure it's called the Clackamas River Trail. Regardless, the trail starts at the Fish Creek Campground and travels about 7.8 miles to the Indian Henry Campground and then we run back. The trail has a total elevation gain of about 1,000ft, which is one of the main reasons we chose to run it this weekend. We've been running so many big hills lately that it was time for a bit of a "hill run up and down break". At least that's what my old knees were telling me.

We started off pretty casually down the trail. Today was another moist day, but at least it wasn't raining. The foliage has been so spectacular lately with fall in full swing, but one issue that arises is the number of leaves littering the ground. Some sections of this trail are very technical and it can make for some tricky running when the leaves cover up all the rocks and roots. It's kind of like running on landmines. You never know when you're going to hit a TRAIL FACTOR style root or rock explosion. That's basically what the first 2-3 miles of running was like on this trail.

We were all lined up like little piglets for the first mile, but soon started to separate. The first part of the trail is pretty rocky and starts with a good little climb. It doesn't climb much, but just enough to wake the legs up and get your pulse racing. This is one of my favorite aspects of this trail. No ultra long sustained climbs, which allow you to run faster, but just enough risers and turns to keep your pace in check.

The trail continues up stream. It's really beautiful running up and down right alongside of the Clackamas River. It's a tremendous looking river, with cool rapids and large clear pools of water for swimming and wading. It's a perfect summertime run location. There's nothing like a cool dip in the Clackamas River after a sweaty hot run.

Another really cool aspect of the trail is the waterfall that sits about halfway through the run. It's a great stop off that adds about a ½ mile to your overall trip, but is well worth the detour. It cascades into a big pool and would also be great in the summertime dip spot.

For some reason, I completely missed the turn to the falls today. Ben and I went right by, which was probably the precursor to what could have been a very sticky situation.

I know all of us have done this in some way or another, but we almost lost Ben's car key and got seriously TRAIL FACTORED today. We were cruising along and Ben calls to me and says, "Crap, Shawn. I think I dropped my car key." I think most runners who run in the Pacific Northwest know what that means. Foliage, ferns, and debris don't offer much open searchable trail. We were sure it was a goner. However, being goal oriented people that we are, we didn't give up. I'm glad we didn't. I found the key lovingly dropped on a leaf right in front of me. It's as if it wanted to be found.

Ben looked at his glove, which had a little pocket that previously held his key and wondered about its effectiveness. He said, "I'm going to put this key in my shorts zipper pocket." I think it put us on edge for a minute, but we soon relaxed back into smooth running.

Once you navigate the 7.8 mile trail, you end up in the Indian Henry campground. It's really convenient in the summer when all the bathrooms are open. It's fall and winter now, so everything is locked up. Regardless, Ben and I drank from the creek that runs out of the hills alongside the campground. I hope I don't get Giardia. I don't think I will, it was really fast moving water☺ and I don't think I noticed any large feces piles.

Robert and Chris soon made it to the other end of the trail. We had a little pow-wow and started the trek back to the cars. Not too long after starting back on the trail, we saw Paul, Mallory, William, and Jessi. We all performed a few TRAIL FACTOR high-fives and kept on going. Everyone looked strong and ready for round two of the Trail.

The Trail back is much more downhill. The run out is where you gain most of your elevation. You've already run the trail out, so you know what to expect, which makes it much easier.

On the way back you get more great views, leaves and twisty trail. Ben and I ended our run in 2:08 and the rest sporadically came in after that.

Even though the trail was wet, we were wet and a bit chilly; most of us opted for a post run Clackamas River soak. It was a great capper to our 15.8 mile run.

Afterwards, we all huddled together and chatted about the run and with our new TRAIL FACTOR buddies Chris and William. Chris is a med school and loves running new trail. William is an experienced trail runner with many big races under his belt. It was great to get to know them and hope to see them again.

Thanks for coming out and we hope to see you all next weekend on another great TRAIL FACTOR run.

For more information on TRAIL FACTOR, please visit our website under construction at:

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