

Bagby Hotsprings Oct 9, 2010

Bagby Hotsprings, Mt Hood National Forest

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-An anonymous group of alpine race coaches...

Skiing in October? Yeah, skiing... Resort ski season approaching fast out team planned a weekend get-together and training at Mt Hood. Weather prediction was turning sour, though leaving Seattle it felt like summer. Fall skiing at Hood is always a gamble, we would have to wait for morning and see if the system hit the mountain. Morning didn't bode well for the mountain. Rain, heavy clouds... resort stayed closed and in that weather not sounding like fun being in a wet whiteout.

And how does this pertain to hotsprings? read on...

After consuming a large breakfast we retired to old ski movies and talk including technical and strategic planning for the training and race year. New families joining, old leaving, new issues... Cabin fever soon set in and Martin pulled the idea of an hour drive and an easy 1.5 mile walk to Bagby Hotsprings. Sounded like a good idea for a rainy day. We took a single lane windy back road from east of Gov't Camp with a few turns and along the steaming river to the trailhead. Over ten cars in the parking lot. Hope it wouldn't be crowded. Besides being wet the hike in was very scenic. Giant firs, moss, crossing over a few bridges. Interesting being on a wide flat trail after so much XC this year. In short time we arrived at a Camp. Passing a building with half a roof and steam rising. Many cabins being restored from the 1913 last camp of the Forest Rangers (or something of the sort). We waited at a stump of a giant and able to stand up inside its log. Our group shot standing on the giant's stump looked like ten wet rats...

On the west end was a wall and platform with a tub to hold 8 (filled and a couple waiting). At the main area a platform, roof covered and sectioned into five private "tubs". A definition of tubs is needed. There was a fire that destroyed much of the hotsprings. In rebuilding some of the old "tubs" and some new ones were created. These tubs are large logs hollowed out. A plug in the bottom to drain and a small half log hollowed as a trench/aqueduct to feed the hot mineral rich water. At the end of the platform a tub of cold stream fed water and buckets to add water to your "tub" to keep from par-boiling. Attached to this platform a new platform under construction. The hot mineral water is fed from a small crack and puddle of the hot water being re-directed into the aqueduct.

Even with passing several obviously wet from the hotsprings happily soaked people and a ranger on the way in there were several couples waiting to access the private tubs. As a larger group with less than an hour wait we got access to the large tub and deck area. I was laughing at one small kid walking out in his dad's shoes. Looked like he'd gone in full grown and shrunk with shoes at least six sizes oversized. One bather stayed. Guess he'd been there all day to the dismay of some couples that weren't at ease with his presence. Our mob squeezed into the tub for some relaxing in the rain. A little "official training discussion" and some brave to get out and dump cold water over their heads.

An hour of soaking and we were happily ready to let the next group take our place. The guy that had been there for the previous three groups stayed... The rain didn't bother the gorgeous walk out, passing at least eight groups coming in. The Sprinter van driven by a world cup racer kept me awake (!!!) on the windy road. Once on the highway I was out like a light.

Not quite the skiing that we'd hoped, but a good salvage of a wet day. Extra helpings of snitzel and our gracious host refilling our beer and wine for hours as we chatted and laughed til late. A few weeks then off to Colorado, I'm sure there will be better weather there and some good skiing. Til then a few more hikes.

Happy trails!

fwb2

stats: 3miles and 11 wet skiers...