



Gold Peak:

State Line Road 391 Option:

Difficulty: Classic

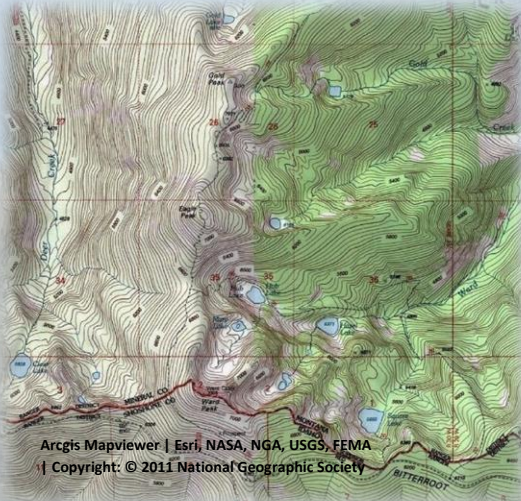
Distance: 3.5 miles

Trailhead Elevation: 6415 feet; Trailhead Lat/Long: 47°15'30.65"N / 115°22'35.83"W

Summit Elevation: 7055 feet; Summit Lat/Long: 47°17'44.22"N / 115°22'45.36"W

Getting There: The best route to get to the trailhead is to take the Little Joe Road (#282) out of St. Regis and then take the state line road (#391) north at the Idaho / Montana summit. Follow this

road for approximately 5.5 miles. The trailhead is about a mile past the Square Lake trailhead. The trailhead for trail #250 is on the shoulder of Ward Peak and has signage (maybe gone). There is a wide spot just back from that point or you can park at another pullout just down the road. There is another road from the Idaho side that connects just down from there to turn around. The state line road (#391) gets considerably narrower and rougher at that point.



Take the Ward Peak trail (#250) straight up the hill from the road. The trail is obvious as there has been motorized traffic up the first 100 yards or so in the past. At about the 1/2-mile mark there will be a primitive trail to the left that heads back down towards the road; stay right. Not long after there is another split; with the right (upper) trail heading up to Ward Peak.



The lower trail (#250) is the Up Up Mountain ridge trail that will take you down to the intersection of trail #280 coming out of Ward Creek, over to Eagle and Gold peaks and eventually to the road to Up Up Lookout. The trail (#250) drops moderately to the saddle between Eagle & Ward Peaks. You will intersect trail #280 coming out of Hub Lake. Stay straight and head up the hill. It is over 700 vertical feet to the summit with little relief along the way.





Continue down on trail #250 on the other side of Eagle Peak. As you approach Gold Peak trail #250 will cross a small meadow and swing down the hill to the basin below Gold Peak. Stay straight across the meadow and the unsigned trail to the summit will pick up in the trees. It is about a 1/4 mile on this primitive but easy to follow trail.

Ward Creek Trailhead Option:

Difficulty: Challenger

Distance: 6.0 miles

Trailhead Elevation: 4015 feet; **Trailhead Lat/Long:**

47°17'12.16"N / 115°20'19.52"W

Summit Elevation: 7055 feet; **Summit Lat/Long:**

47°17'44.22"N / 115°22'45.36"W

Getting There: Take the Ward Creek Road (#889) exit off I-90. The exit is only accessible from the East bound lanes and sits right on a sharp corner, if not paying attention you could miss it. Drive (~6 miles) to a switchback and bridge across Ward Creek where there is a sign for the trailhead and ample parking. Stay on the main road, you will pass the road that leads to Up Up Lookout at mile 3. The lookout is rentable, but not recommended for small children for safety reasons.

On the Summit



Trail (#262) starts out meandering through the bottoms and some cedar groves. The trail climbs moderately and after a mile or so you will get to a nice set of waterfalls. The trail splits at this



Water Stop & Pond

point with trail #262 turning left steeply up the hill and back towards the state line; there is (was) a sign at the intersection. This is not a shortcut to Hazel Lake, nor does it go to Square Lake. Rather it ends up on the state line road (#391) about 1/4 mile from the Square Lake trailhead. You can see portions of it along the hillside across the valley if you look closely.

Continue straight on trail #280 that heads back along the hillside to a couple of switchbacks before the trail lines out for

Hazel Lake. The trail has plenty of water for your dog, so no need to carry extra. Hazel Lake is about 3 miles from the trailhead. From Hazel Lake continue up the main trail. It is less than a mile up to Hub Lake with an elevation gain of less than 400 feet. The trail takes a sharp dip for a couple hundred yards to cross the Hub Lake outlet creek and then immediately goes back up and then quickly arrives at the lake.





Gold Peak from Trail 262

Continue around the right side of Hub Lake for the tough climb up to the saddle between Ward and Eagle Peaks. It is less than a mile, but it is a steep and rocky trail. Don't forget to walk over to the old mine opening that is a couple hundred feet up the hill from Hub Lake. Once at the saddle where trail #280 intersects with trail #250 turn right and head up towards Eagle Peak. You are still over 700 vertical feet from the summit, so it is a bit of a slog after climbing up from Hub Lake. There is very little relief over the distance to the summit.

Continue down on trail #250 on the other side of Eagle Peak. As you approach Gold Peak, trail #250 will cross a small meadow and swing down the hill to the basin below Gold Peak. Stay straight across the meadow and the un-signed trail to the summit will pick up in the trees. It is about a 1/4 mile on this primitive but easy to follow trail. This is a tough route.

Up Up Mountain Trailhead Option:

Difficulty: Classic

Distance: 4.0 miles

Trailhead Elevation: 5700 feet; **Trailhead Lat/Long:** 47°18'43.03"N / 115°21'9.10"W

Summit Elevation: 7055 feet; **Summit Lat/Long:** 47°17'44.22"N / 115°22'45.36"W

Getting There: Take the Ward Creek Road (# 889) exit off I-90. The exit is only accessible from the East bound lanes and sits right on a sharp corner, if not paying attention you could miss it. Drive (~3 miles) to Road 3816. There is signage for the lookout. Stay on this decent road for about 11 miles to the trailhead for Trail #250, there is a hiking marker in addition to a lookout marker. The trailhead is a small level pull/back in with room for a tent and vehicle.

The trail immediately heads steeply up the ridge for a couple hundred yards before easing up a bit as it switchbacks up the ridge for about a mile. The trail then flattens out and follows along the ridgeline for another 3/4 miles, staying mostly on the right side. As the trail approaches Gold Peak, it swings over to the left side of the ridge and descends into the upper part of the small basin below Gold Peak. There is a small pond and water source there at mile 2.75. This is the only water source that I am aware of between the trailhead and the state line road #391.



Water Stop from Summit





Lakes of the Great Burn & More



Camp at Trailhead

The trail then climbs back up to the gentle ridge between Gold and Eagle Peaks. The trail to the summit takes off to the right of the meadow on the ridge top. It is a decent trail that takes you directly to the summit, a distance of 1¼ mile.

On the Summit: The summit is rather rocky with a bunch of cables and broken glass scattered about from the old lookouts. Take care if you have a dog with you so it doesn't accidentally cut a paw. The original lookout tower was a 38-foot pole tower in 1914; later replaced by a D-6

cupola cabin in 1928; destroyed in 1955 (see pictures below). The views are good but not as great as Ward and Eagle Peaks. You do get a good view of both peaks but the only lake visible is Gold Lake below to the North. You can see into the basins of the other lakes to the South and West, but the lakes themselves are not visible.

Bonus Route – Climb Ward, Eagle & Gold Peaks: It is possible to make all three summits starting at the Up Up Trailhead in a day. From Gold Peak, go back to Trail #250 and follow it North to Eagle Peak. It is a 350 foot climb from this side, but 700 feet when you come back from Ward Peak. Continue over Eagle Peak and down to the saddle where you intersect trail #280 coming up from Hub Lake. Continue on trail #250 until you reach the intersection with the un-signed trail to the Ward Peak Summit. Return the same way. I would rate this a bit harder than starting at the Ward Peak Trailhead on road #391 as the distance is a bit farther and you have to climb the full elevation of Eagle Peak on the way back. I have done the 3 peaks in a day from the Ward Peak trailhead but not this way.

Lookout Photos
Courtesy of
Firelookout.com



Lookout 1920



Lookout 1933

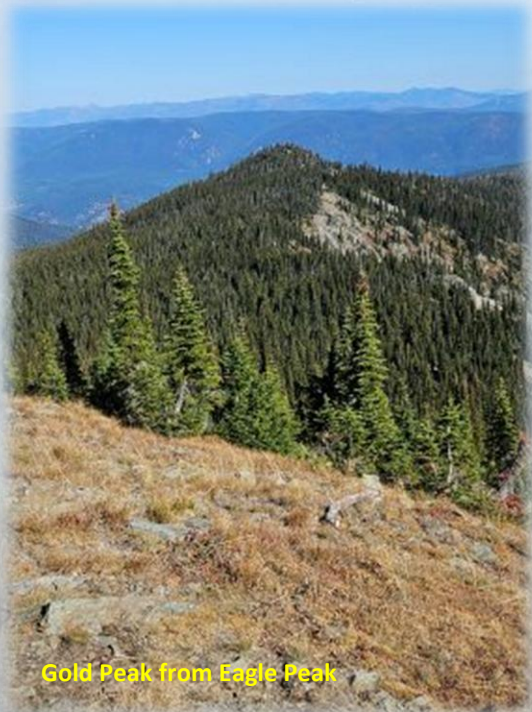




Lakes of the Great Burn & More



Gold Peak Benchmark



Gold Peak from Eagle Peak



Gold Peak Summit



Gold Peak Summit

