

Eagle Creek, Oregon, July 31,2008

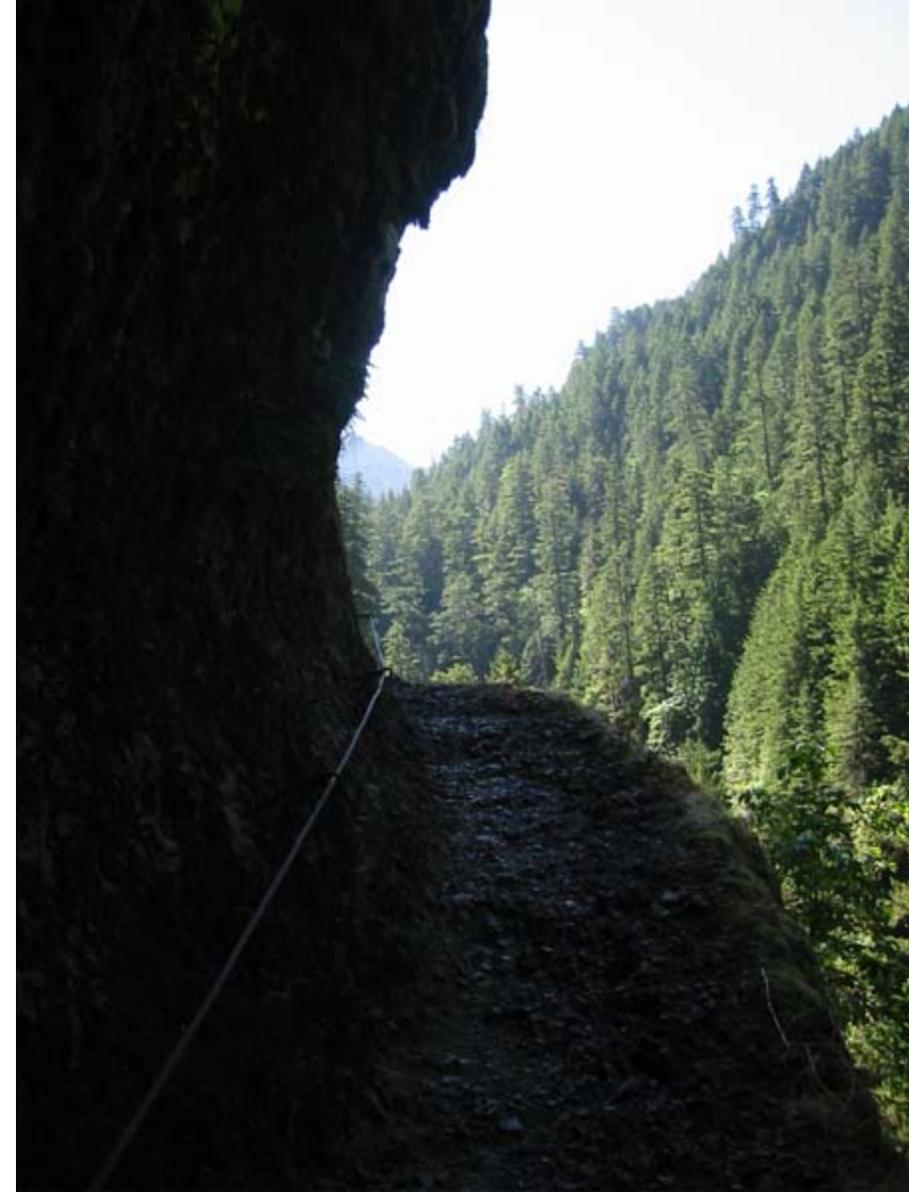
Perhaps the most popular single hike in the state of Oregon is that along Eagle Creek in the Columbia River Gorge. It offers numerous and wonderful views of waterfalls as well as exciting trail walking. This is NOT a place to bring youngsters though, for a fall could quickly become fatal. For that matter, anyone who is uncomfortable with an exposed trail should stay away.

I have hiked Eagle Creek many other times, and it is the kind of trip that is worth many visits. It had been a long time since I was on this one, and it seemed like a reasonable choice. So far this has been a really slow year for hiking and I was anxious to get out.

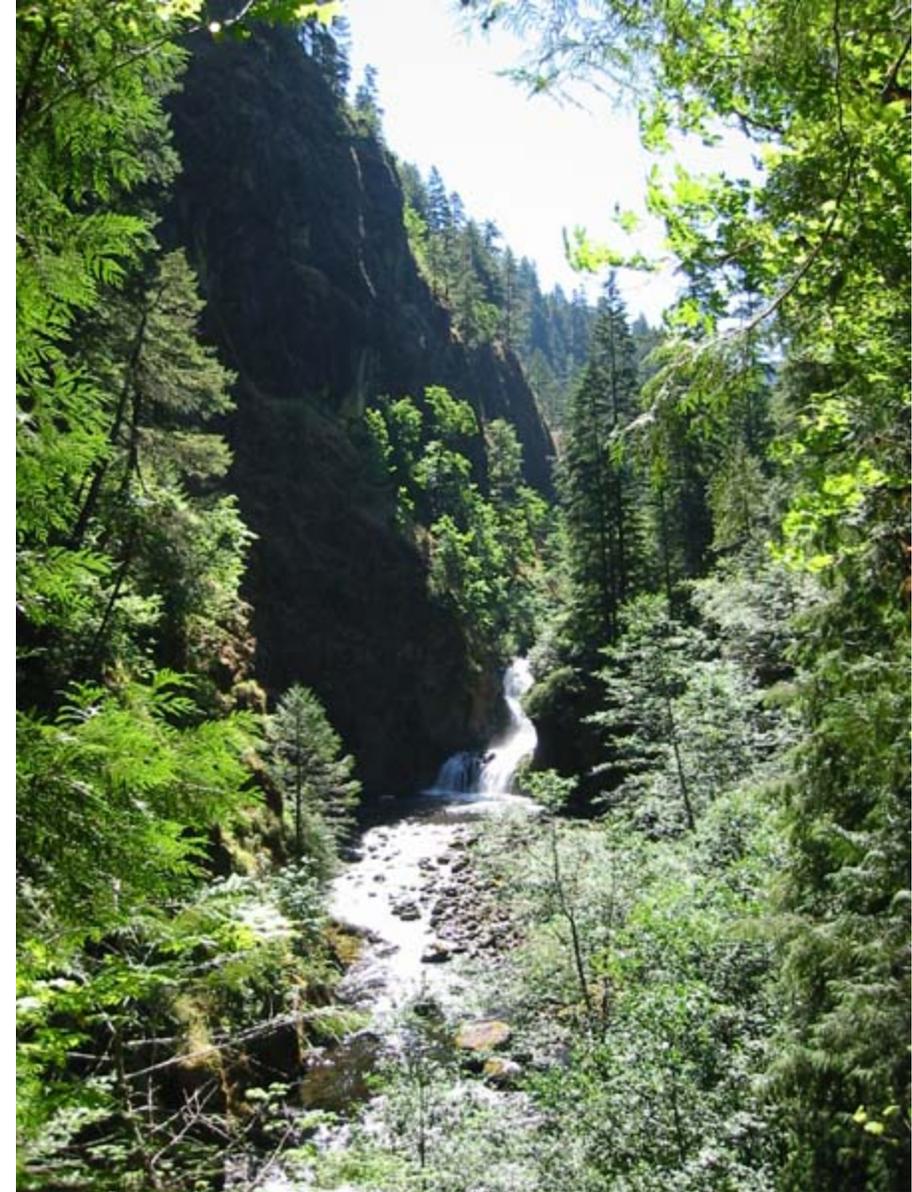
The hike starts slowly enough with a trail along a creek.



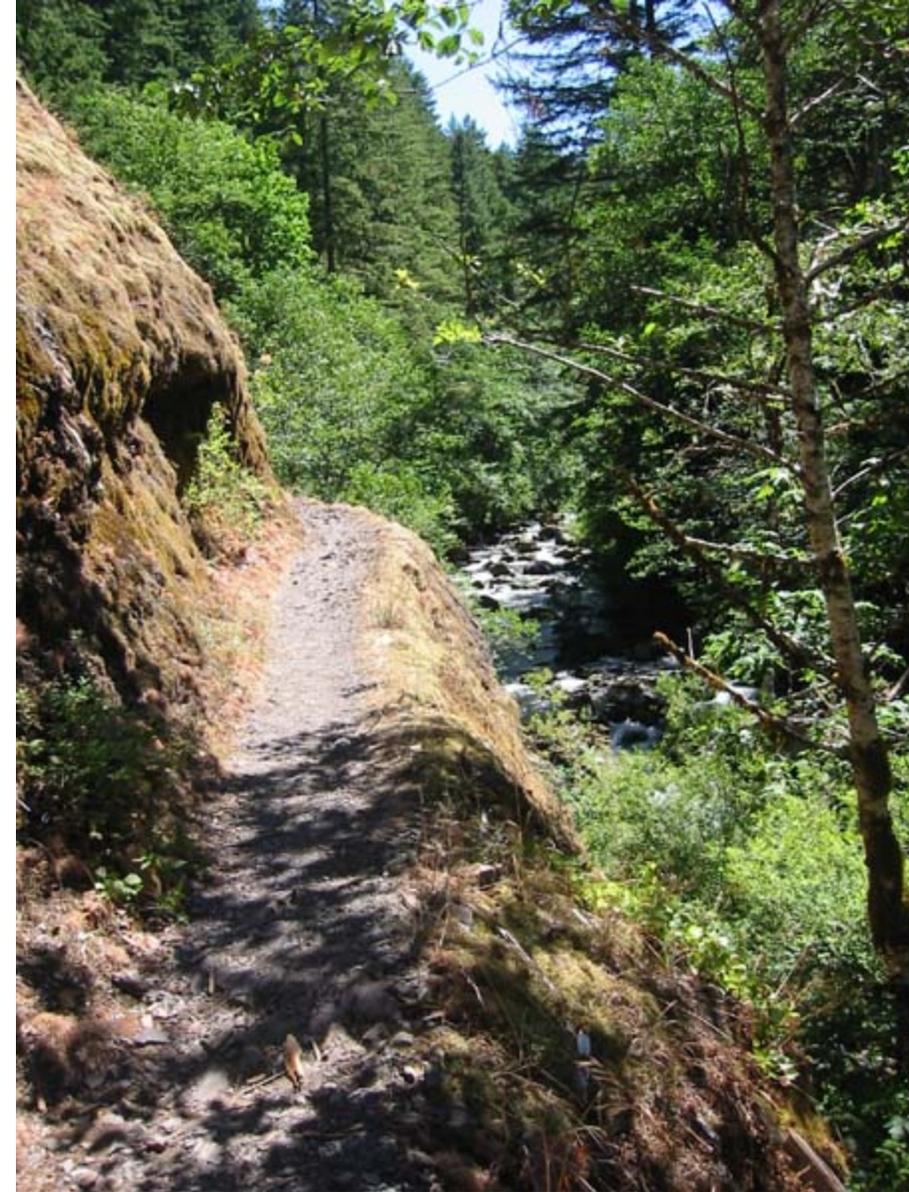
Eagle Creek down low on one of the calmer stretches.



Soon there is a hint that this trail may differ from many. Here the trail turns into a 3 foot wide path that is blasted into an otherwise vertical rock wall. A large fraction of the trail is built this way.



Water falls frequently appear all along the trail. Although not pictured, one is the famous Punchbowl Falls. The falls shown above was at about the 4 mile point on the trail.



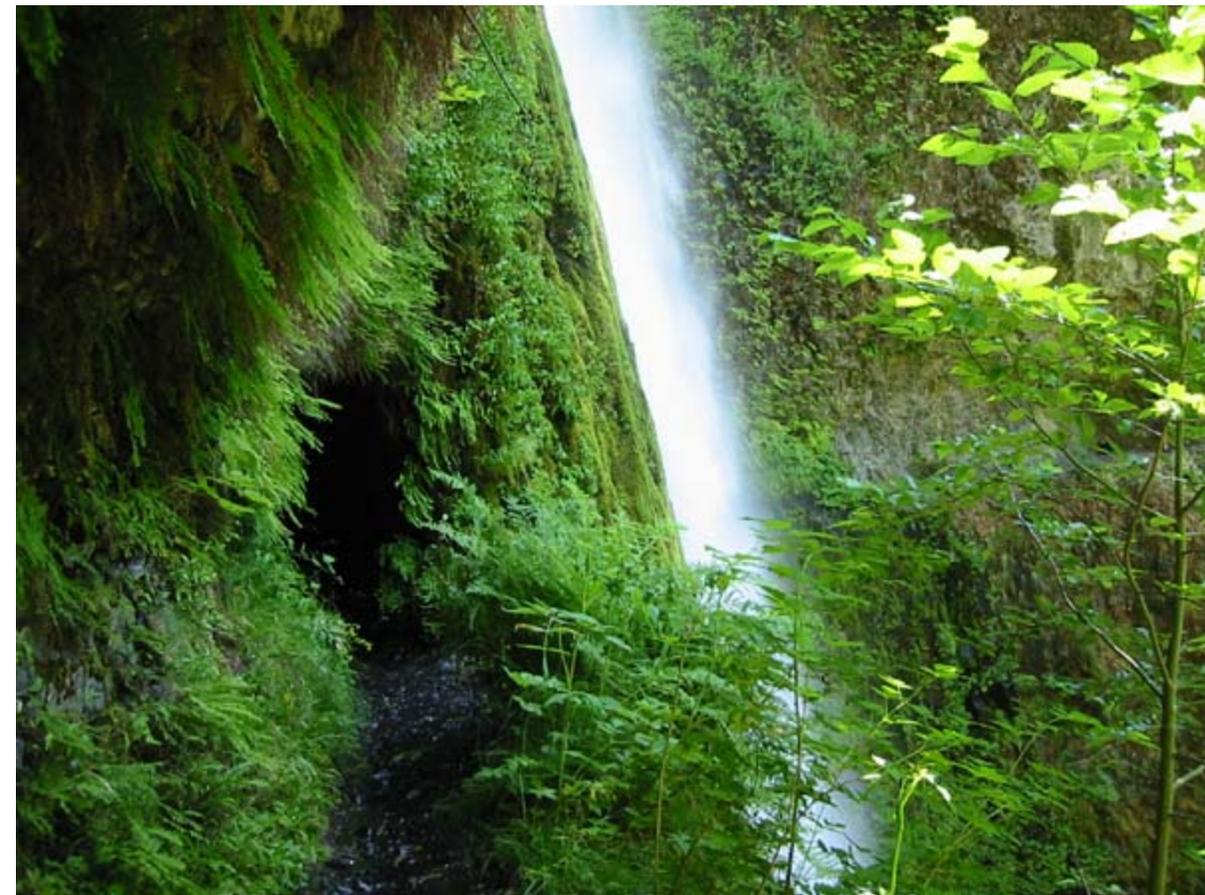
A typical stretch of trail.

One of the most famous waterfalls along Eagle Creek is at a point where a tributary of the main creek flows into the main branch. The tributary has a huge waterfall just prior to the junction with the main creek.



This is

about the first view of Tunnel Falls. Note the two fellows on the trail on the other side of the falls. This is a dramatic illustration of the trail itself.



This is a view of the

water fall just before I passed into the tunnel that was blasted into the rock behind the water fall. The constant presence of water allows moss, ferns, and other plants to grow from the walls.



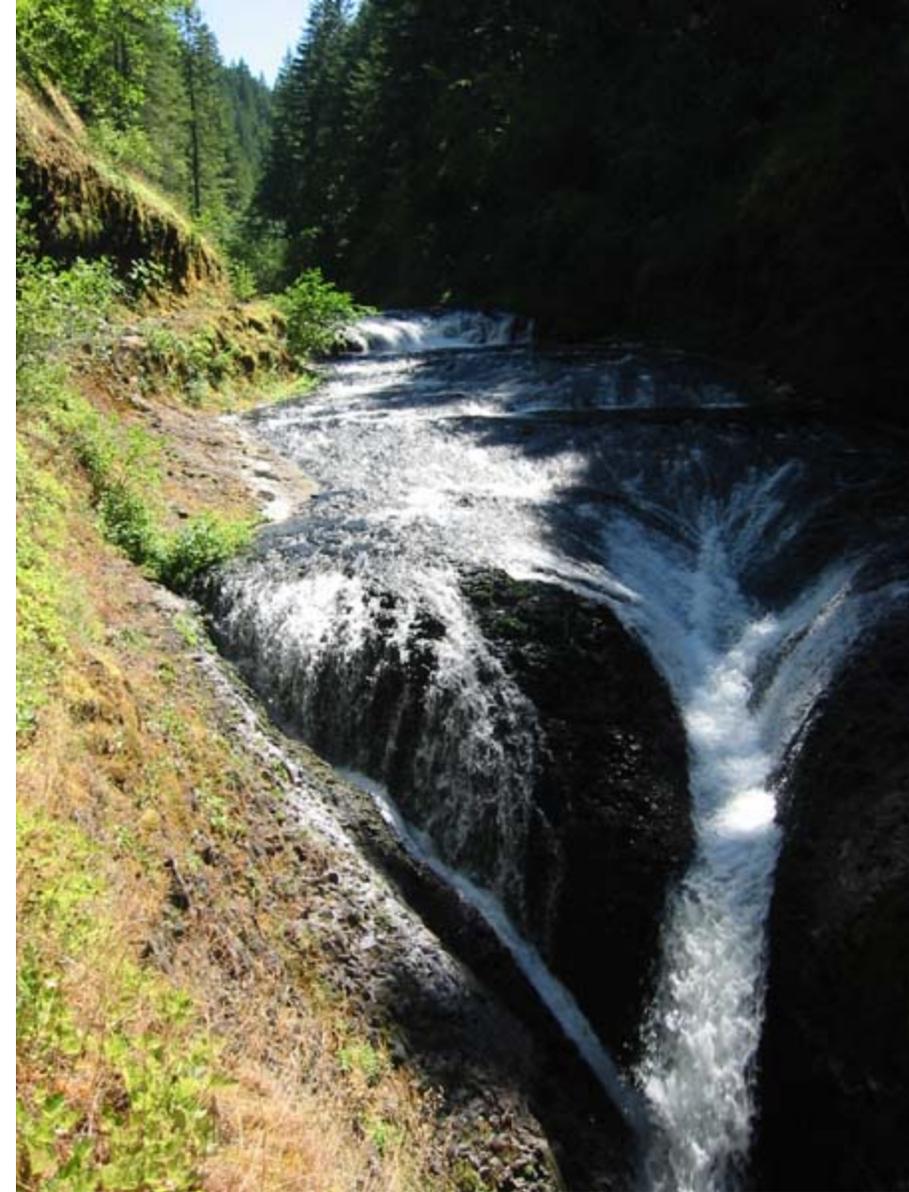
This shows Tunnel Falls from the other side.

These two fellows are about to duck into the tunnel.



Looking outward from inside the tunnel.

After leaving Tunnel Falls, one hikes another half a mile and rounds a corner to encounter another water fall.



These falls are doubly dramatic. The gentle picturesque cataracts are in a portion of the stream that is about 20 feet wide. But the water is then funneled into a narrow 2 feet wide chute. It drops for about 50 feet to hit a ledge, and then continues down for another 100 feet or so. There is a trail that drops down to the river at the bottom of Tunnel Falls. I wonder if that trail provides a view of the main fork of the stream. Someday.....

I continued on the trail until it went past camp spots at the 7.5 mile point. I finally turned around at a place where the trail was becoming quite muddy.

This hike is always a good one. This is the first time I hiked it with a digital camera, and the first time I was there this late in the season. Generally, Eagle Creek is best done in the spring owing to the numerous wildflowers available then. I can't imagine not going back for at least one more look at Eagle Creek.