



## **Herman Creek, Columbia River Gorge (Oregon Side.)**

July 20-21, 2013, with Ron. 16 miles with 3000 ft elevation gain.

Posted July 25, 2013.

This walk was a repeat of a favorite hike. My notes show that this was the seventh time I've done the route, although the first where I've not hiked it alone. Ron and Libby were coming down to Oregon for the weekend. Libby planned to go to the coast with her sisters for a girl's gathering, so Ron and I decided it would be a good time for a hike. We had originally planned on another hike, but then discovered via on-line notes that the first planned route had been destroyed in floods in the winter of 1996. A quick regroup steered us in the direction of the Gorge and Herman Creek.

The hike starts at the Herman Creek Campground, a calm retreat for the car camping folks. The shot below shows Ron at the trail head.



The hike is well documented with a number of possible variations, all of them more intense than the in-and-out variation we did. We hiked past Herman Camp on what used to be a roadbed. This camp is now little more than a trail junction. The road character disappeared south of Herman camp, turning into a familiar Gorge trail.

There are some stream crossings along the trail, some of them with waterfalls. The most prominent one is shown below where Ron is gathering photos.



Looking up the waterfall produced the next view. The lacy fall was about 100 feet high.



Standing close to the base of this waterfall (below) was especially refreshing in the afternoon heat.



We eventually reached an intermediate camping spot (shown below) at the 4.5 mile point where we ate a late lunch.



The Casey Creek way trail is found close to this spot. Although I've yet to do it, I've always thought that the above spot would be a good place to come for a midwinter overnight. (I once visited the site on a January day trip.)

We left the intermediate camp and continued the hike south. The character of the trail now changed as we gained more elevation. Trees were taller and the undergrowth was greener than before, if that is possible. Stream crossings continued, as shown below.



After a warm afternoon walk we finally reached our camp destination at Cedar Swamp. There used to be a large lean-to shelter there, but it is long gone. Our camp is shown below. My sleeping bag is inside the blue Gore-Tex bivi bag.



(Ron's

photo--thanks Ron.)

We had a leisurely camp that evening, followed by a relatively early retirement.

However, things were not completely quiet. First, there were other campers, and one party had a dog. Normally that's not an issue, but this pup had an especially intense, shrieking bark. The dog was well controlled, most of the time.

The other disturbance came at about 10 PM, shortly after we had crawled into our sleeping bags. I was nearly asleep when I heard a well patterned, repeated call.

My thought was to curse at the little dog and to try to go back to sleep, which I was able to do in spite of the noise. In the morning Ron told me that we had actually been hearing the calls of owls. Ron even managed to record the call on his iPhone. We later found the call on the web in the site <http://learner.org/jnorth/tm/spring/OwlDictionary.html>. Once at the web site, click on the Barred Owl call "*Who cooks for you, who cooks for you.*" Ron not only heard the call, but he caught the swooping sound of the bird flying through the open trees in our camp area. It's no wonder the call sounded so loud. I was amazed to read upon our return that the Barred Owl is causing problems throughout the west. In a slow migration from the east half of the continent, it is taking over the habitat of the Spotted Owl of the west.

We were awakened at daylight by our dog friend. (This time it really was the



dog!) Shortly afterward, we saw the owners heading down the trail, but by then we were fully awakened, so we fixed breakfast. The hike out in the cool of the morning was much more comfortable than the hike in. It was a great trip and I hope that I get to return to Cedar Swamp.