

Crater Lake – Rhino Rock Loop

(Updated 8/27/15)

- **Distance:** 2 miles roundtrip
- **Max elevation:** 6969ft
- **Elevation gain:** 749 ft
- **Difficulty:** Short but strenuous going up, scrambling over rocky terrain
- **Start:** Parking area for [Hutchinson Lodge](#)
- **Activities:** Hike

Crater Lake (39°19'29.07"N, 120°21'22.76"W), is a geologically interesting tarn lake located on Boreal Ridge in the summit area. The lake sits at the end of the volcanic ridge and the rock around the lake is crystalline basalt. The lake itself was scooped out of the rock by glacial action. About 100 yards southwest of the lake is the historic Rhino Rock which bears a fleeting resemblance to the large horned mammal. The top of the ridge affords great views of the Summit Valley and the surrounding mountain peaks.

Just a little warning here. Although this is a pretty short hike, it is basically all fairly steep uphill. The trailhead is located on the Old Donner Pass at the parking area for [Hutchinson Lodge](#) (owned by the Sierra Club) For those of you that don't know where the lodge is, it is just to the west of the parking area for the other better known Sierra Club lodge, Clair Tappaan.

Follow the road up and to the left to Hutchinson Lodge. Continue to follow the road north past the lodge. The road quickly turns into a trail and then into a footpath within about 200 yards past the lodge. At this point bear west heading up to the ridge line. You will have to pick your way up through the trees. The definition of the "trail" will vary depending on the time of the year you go. Early in the season the snow melt pretty much washes away the footprints that accumulate later in the summer.

Try to follow the rocky open areas up to the top of the ridge. In mid summer the Mule's Ear dominate the rocky slopes and the ridge is awash in green and yellow. As you approach the top of the ridge bear to the north along the ridge line. You will approach an rock escarpment with steep sides. At this point you can work your way up to the lake by going either to the east side or west side of steep cliff. As long as you stay on the ridge line you should not miss the lake (it is really more of a pond than a lake).

After you explore the lake and have a snack you can try your luck at finding the elusive Rhino Rock (39°19'28.00"N, 120°21'42.56"W) since it is a shy creature. If you have a GPS unit it would probably be a good idea to plug in the coordinates and let it take you there. If not then you can try finding it by heading southwest down through the trees. The rock is nestled in among some trees about 1/4 mile to the south west of Crater Lake (that's more west than south). I've included a picture in the gallery below that may help you find it.



Assuming you found the horned creature you can head back down by striking directly east. You will have to pick your way back down the hill. Resist trying to head directly south east toward the lodge because there is some pretty dense forest and steep rocky drop offs that way. If you head directly down due east through the open areas you should cut the trail you came up on.

[\(Go to web page\)](#)

Crater Lake-Rhino Rock trail

All changes saved in Drive

Add layer Share

☒ Crater Lake and Rhino Rock trail

Individual styles

Rhino Rock

Crater Lake

Crater Lake trailhead

Crater Lake trail 1.35 miles o...

Hutchinson Lodge

Base map



Rhino Rock

Crater Lake

Crater Lake trail 1.35...

Donner Pass Rd

Donner Pass Rd

Donner Pass Rd

Donner Pass Rd

Donner Pass Rd

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Lake Van Norden Rd

Lake Van Norden Rd

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Hutchinson Lodge

Clair Tappaan Lodge

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Crater Lake trailhead



