

SWITMO

BLANCHARD MOUNTAIN to Oyster Dome from Chuckanut Drive and Back

This is a Skagit County hike.

The Pacific Northwest Trail, PNT, crosses Blanchard Mountain from the Summerland Road south of Lake Samish to near milepost 10 on Chuckanut Drive, WA State Route 11, a distance of 10 miles. This hike begins and ends near milepost 10 on Chuckanut Drive south of the Oyster Bar Restaurant. The description is for a clock-wise loop beginning and ending on Chuckanut Drive.

Data: This 9 mile loop with an elevation gain of about 2000 feet is on trail. The hiker is on WA Department of Natural Resources, DNR, land. Please respect the rights of the land owners/managers. The forest on Blanchard, except for those portions in the DNR Conservation Area, is a working forest and from time to time logging operations and road closures occur. To check out logging operations and road closures, call the DNR office in Sedro-Woolley at 360-856-3500. Because of the distance and elevation gain, SWITMO rates this as a moderate to strenuous hike. SWITMO helps maintain all of the trail sections of the PNT over Blanchard Mountain.

2013 note: The B-2000 road to the Overlook is scheduled to be closed for a time during the summer of 2013 for a logging operation. This logging operation will also affect the route of the PNT on the western part of the Larry Reed Trail. Once the logging operation is over, the PNTA and SWITMO will be able to go in and rebuild the trail.

The protected route of the PNT (that part that lies in the Conservation Area) that descends from the Oyster Dome area on the Samish Bay Connector is currently very steep at the outset—we call that area “The Wall”. The PNTA will work with the DNR to determine the best way to improve the trail in this area as well as other areas on the Samish Bay Connector.

Driving Instructions: From I-5 take Exit 231, State Route 11 also known as Chuckanut Drive. Drive northwesterly on State Route 11 to near milepost 10, just south of the Oyster Bar Restaurant. There is parking on the west shoulder of the road. The trailhead is on the east side of the road.

Hike Description:

- Immediately begin climbing. At the third switchback, mile 1.6 from the trailhead, take the LEFT trail, which is the Samish Bay Connector.
- The Samish Bay Connector and the steep part we call “The Wall” will be improved under the direction of the DNR and the PNTA. Hike the Samish Bay Connector, climbing “The Wall” and coming out onto a wide intersection with the Oyster Dome Trail, 3.0 miles from Chuckanut Drive.
- At this three-way intersection, go LEFT and climb steeply to the Oyster Dome.
- When ready to leave the Oyster Dome, return to the three-way intersection and continue straight ahead on the PNT which will take the hiker to Lily Lake. Do not descend “The Wall” unless that is your intent. If the Larry Reed Trail is closed due to logging, the hiker must return by “The Wall” route. The hiker can visit the Lily Lake area, but must return to this point to return to Chuckanut Drive if the Larry Reed Trail is closed.
- From this intersection it is one mile to the Lily Lake Trail junction on an old railroad bed; one crosses the stream that comes from Lily Lake along the way. If one wishes to go to Lily Lake, go LEFT at this junction. The hiker may also wish to take the trail to North Butte which continues on beyond Lily Lake.
- When ready to leave the Lily Lake area, continue a few feet on the PNT and find a wide intersection on the right which is the beginning of Max’s Shortcut. If the Larry Reed Trail is not blocked by logging, go RIGHT on Max’s Shortcut following the old railroad grade. The trail will then descend and intersect with the Larry Reed Trail. Along this section of trail the hiker will pass Ship Rock, a good spot for lunch if it is raining. At the Larry Reed intersection, go RIGHT on the Larry Reed Trail.

Follow the Larry Reed Trail. It will cross the B-2000 road and continue on the other side. After hiking a short distance, the hiker will come out at the Overlook. The Overlook has toilet facilities, an asphalt parking lot, hitching posts for horses, benches, and hang glider jumping off spots. Cross the parking area in a northwesterly direction and find the signed trailhead for the trail that descends 2 miles to Chuckanut Drive, 10 miles from the Summerland Road.

