

## Summit Creek

### Overview

Summit Creek is a great way to experience the character and spirit of the Pioneer Mountains without beating yourself up. Much of the nearly 8-mile hike is along a gentle grade alternating through meadows and light forests. The last .7 miles to the turnaround is a tough climb in direct sun, but the views from the destination are worth the effort.

As with any hike at the top of Trail Creek Road, there is a good chance to see wildlife, so be prepared with bear spray and a whistle.

### The Numbers

8 mile out and back

1600 feet elevation rise

Ascent Grade: 7.9% (Moderate)

### Water

Summit Creek runs alongside the trail for much of the hike, though the trail and creek separate just as the climb intensifies at about the 3-mile mark. Be sure to have plenty of water on hand for the final ascent.

### Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is a 12 mile drive up Sun Valley Road/Trail Creek Road with the last 2.7 miles on a somewhat windy and often bumpy dirt road. Still, most passenger cars will be able to handle the route. Trail Creek Road narrows to one lane at times and there are turnouts. Uphill traffic has the right of way.

[Click here](#) for directions to the trailhead. There is parking for about 15 vehicles. There are no bathrooms at the trailhead.



Parking lot and trailhead

### Season

Mid-June through early October

Within a few feet of the trailhead, use deadfall to pass over Summit Creek and begin a moderate climb along an open hillside. Enter a wide meadow at about .45 miles before re-entering a forest and using tree roots to cross the creek again.



First Crossing

Second Crossing

The trail wanders through a mixed forest as the creek runs to your left, often pooled into wetlands by a series of beaver dams. As the trail continues its easy rise, listen for a waterfall at about 1.3 miles. There is no clear path to the waterfall, but walk over an open area of small fallen trees for about 75 feet to find the tiered falls.



Waterfall

Enter a large meadow at about 1.75 miles with excellent views of the rising Pioneer Mountains before you. Re-enter the forest at 2.2 miles and then another small meadow before entering the forest again at 2.5 miles.

At 3 miles, the climb markedly intensifies in the shade of the forest. At this point you lose access to Summit Creek. At 3.25 miles enter another meadow and note the beautiful views of cragged peaks to your right.

Just before the 3.3 mile mark, cross a small stream and begin a rigorous, sun-soaked 450 foot climb to the turnaround point at 4 miles. The destination is mid-trail on the side of a tallus hill, a spot which offers excellent views of Devils Bedstead West and the tip of Devils Bedstead East.



Destination

Those looking for a challenge can continue for an additional mile and about 1200 feet of elevation gain, but for our money, the juice isn't worth the squeeze.