

Deer Lodge to Gold Creek (21 km on Old Stage Road)

A good route to run near Deer Lodge during the dry months. Although it can be run out-and-back, it's nice for sightseeing to arrange a ride back from Gold Creek. Light traffic in the first half (except if you encounter a fleet of logging trucks), and almost zero traffic in the second half. The road stays open to foot travel for most of the year after the winter thaw.

Directions:

Exit I-90 at Deer Lodge and turn west on Milwaukee St. at the only stoplight in town. Milwaukee St. passes over the Clark Fork River then goes through a S-turn before leaving town. Continue along the paved road to the base of the foothills, where you will turn right (WNW) onto the gravel surface of Old Stage Road. Continue driving up the road ~2K to the top of the gargantuan hill, and park there (no established parking). Run on the main road and stay right at the "Y" at 6K where Rock Creek Lake Road branches off. There are other somewhat confusing "Ys" in the road thereafter, but stay on the more traveled road. From 6K to 16.5K the road is unimproved and is often muddy. At 16.5K you will merge onto an improved gravel road. Keep to the right there. End your run where you turn onto the paved road and cross Gold Creek at the tiny community known as Wall City. The paved road requires a car ride of about ~5K back to I-90 at the Gold Creek Exit.

Description:

All gravel or dirt surfaces. You will be in the open until you enter the wooded areas at about 7K. Rolling terrain with a few steep pitches.

Negatives:

Can be muddy with rain or snowmelt.

Headwinds common esp. in the afternoon.

Transportation needed from the finish.

Other Notes:

Much of the road skirts the border between the Montana State Prison Ranch land and the Rock Creek Cattle Company.