



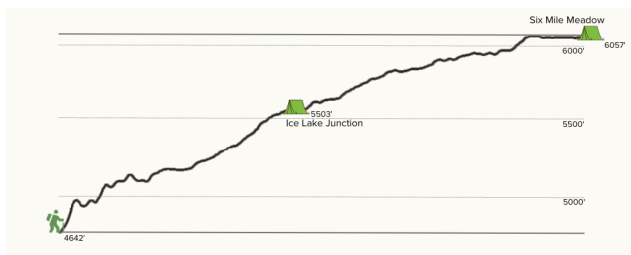
# Hike on the Blue Mountains Trail: West Fork Wallowa - Day hike or Overnight

Departing from **Wallowa Lake Trailhead**, near **Joseph and Enterprise, Oregon**, this hike leads 5.8 miles into the Eagle Cap Wilderness via the West Fork Wallowa River. You can go as a day hike or you can camp along the way to make it an overnight trip. There are options to extend your trip with a hike to Ice Lake, into the heart of the Wallowa Lakes Basin, or as a loop combined with the East Fork Wallowa.



## THE STATS:

**Recreation type:** day hike, trail run, overnight backpack  
**Route type:** Out-and-back with options to extend or loop via connecting trails  
**Mileage:** 5.8 miles one way to Six Mile Meadow, 11.6 miles round trip  
**Duration:** 1-2 days  
**Elevation gain (gross):** 1,657 feet  
**Active time hiking (estimated):** 6 hours round trip  
**Time of year:** July to September  
**Physical difficulty:** Moderate/Difficult  
**Logistical difficulty:** Easy access  
**Permits required:** Free, self-issued Wilderness permit at the trailhead. Group size limited to 12 people. All other wilderness restrictions apply.



## TRIP DESCRIPTION:

The East and West Fork Wallowa trails are the two of the most popular trails for visitors to the Eagle Cap Wilderness, offering fantastic views of craggy mountains, streams, and Wallowa Lake from well maintained paths. This hike is an out-and-back along the West Fork Wallowa to Six Mile Meadow, and it can be done as a day hike or an overnight trip, with many options to go further into the Wallows. Many hikers head to the Lakes Basin, often the first choice destination for new visitors, but overuse continues to negatively impact the area. Capable hikers can make a loop with the East Fork Wallowa by crossing the divide via the steep and rugged Polaris pass or continue on the Blue Mountains Trail to Hawkins Pass. Access the Wallowa Lake Trailhead (the Blue Mountain Trails' northern terminus) at the south end of Wallowa Lake. Parking can be congested in the summer season, so pile into one vehicle or grab a shuttle from town.

The Eagle Cap Wilderness is Oregon's largest designated wilderness area. Its 355,533 acres were protected by the U.S Congress in 1964. It has become increasingly popular as more Oregon residents and visitors from outside of the state travel to experience the Wallows. With increased visitation, the area is experiencing the impacts of overuse, especially in the Wallowa Lakes Basin. Therefore, it is imperative to follow Leave No Track principles, and you can join us in reporting recreation impacts using the Recreation Impacts Monitoring System (RIMS) app (contact us for details and to sign up). During the peak recreation season, we also recommend you skip the lakes basin and opt for this or many other great trails that leave from Wallowa Lake State Park.

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## BEFORE AND AFTER IN JOSEPH AND ENTERPRISE:

On the northern end of Wallowa Lake, 6 miles from the Wallowa Lake Trailhead, Joseph, Oregon is a small but vibrant community with a lot to offer visitors and residents alike. As the northern terminus for the Blue Mountains Trail, it is a full-service town with a small grocery, laundromat, restaurants, and lodging. It is compact and all hiker services are easily walkable. It also has a vibrant arts community.

While in Joseph, you can get outdoor gear and equipment at Quickhatch Provisions or The Sports Corral. Local attractions include the Old Chief Joseph Gravesite and the adjacent Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site at the north end of Wallowa Lake, the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture with its rotating exhibits that provide unique and in-depth perspectives of Wallowa County, the Wallowology Natural History Discovery Center that offers an exploration of the natural history of the region, and you can take a self-guided tour of Joseph's artistic endeavors along the Joseph Oregon Bronze Art Watch.

The still small but larger community of Enterprise is another 6 miles northwest of Joseph along Highway 82. Here you'll find more places to eat, sleep and get the gear and goods you need to make the most of your time in the mountains. Sugar Time Bakery has some of the best sweet and savory snacks and sandwiches in the area, and you can join the crowds for a great pint of beer with a bison burger and other good fare at Terminal Gravity Brew Pub. There are many places to stay for all budgets, along with camping a short distance from town.

For a full list of amenities, including grocery stores, where to do your laundry, post offices, public transit options, and more places to eat and stay, check out the Blue Mountains Trail Town Guides for Joseph and Enterprise online at [hellscanyon.org/blue-mountains-trail-towns](https://hellscanyon.org/blue-mountains-trail-towns).

## TRIP PLANNING INFORMATION AND LINKS:

### Trailhead access point: Wallowa Lake Trailhead

USFS webpage: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/wallowa-whitman/recarea/?recid=51603> -  
Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/2YuUB6Fm3wx3ZFH16>

### Nearby town guides for Joseph and Enterprise:

<https://www.hellscanyon.org/blue-mountains-trail-towns>

### Take a shuttle from town to the trailhead:

<https://ccno.org/publictransit/summer-shuttle-schedule/>

### Local US Forest Service Office:

Wallowa Whitman National Forest Wallowa Mountains Office, 541-426-5546

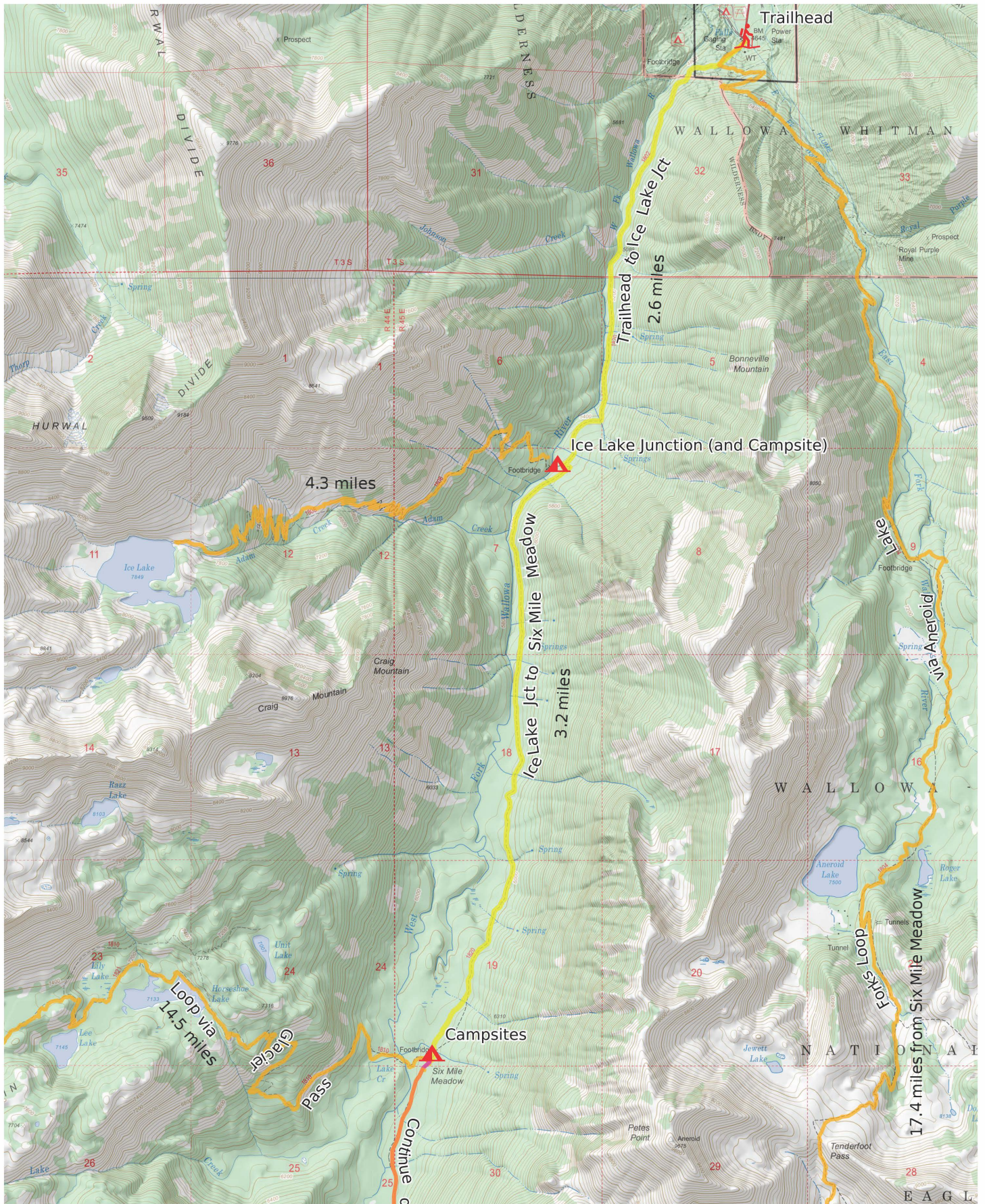
### Trail conditions: West Fork 1820, East Fork 1804, and Polaris 1831

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/wallowa-whitman/alerts-notice/?cid=stelprdb5317834>

### Weather forecast at trailhead via the National Weather Service:

<https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lat=45.280&lon=-117.204>

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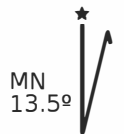
West Fork Wallowa Hike on the 1/2 1 2 3 4 5km

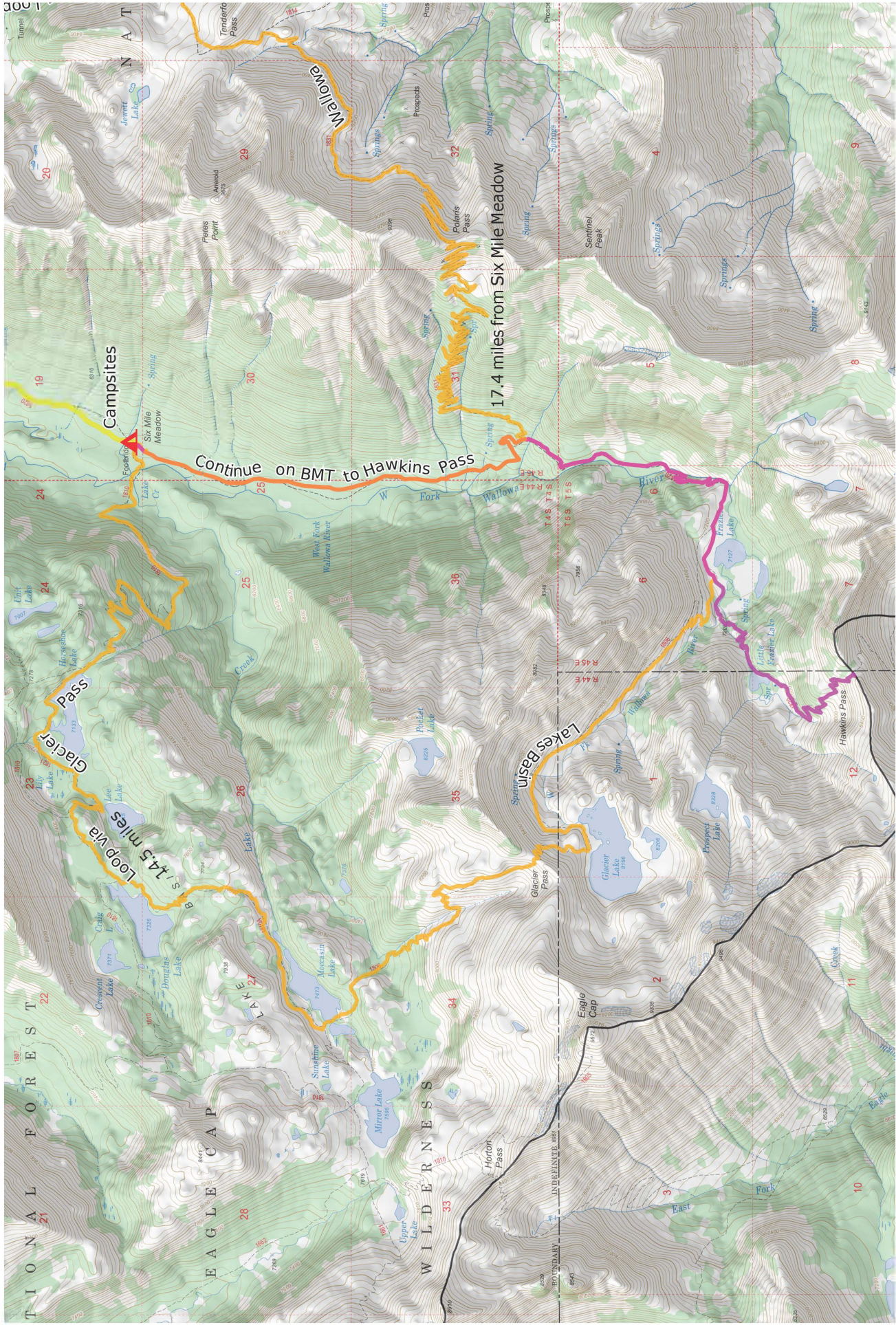
WGS84

UTM Zone 11T



Scale 1:40000 1 inch = 3333 feet





West Fork Wallowa Hike on the 2/2

WGS84

UTM Zone 11T

Scale 1:40000 1 inch = 3333 feet

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 km

1 2 3 4 mi

MN 13.5°

