Points of Interest - Self-Guided Hiking Map

1. North terminus of trail (Private land) – SUTA is proposing a new short connecting trail leaving the ditch and traveling up and around the adjacent ridge flowing into an existing BLM road. This will connect the SMD to the Jack-ash trail in the future. Please respect private property and do not go beyond the signs indicating private property/trail ends.
2. Calypso orchids on shady north slope.
3. Beautiful burly madrone just below trail.
4. Large Old Knobby Oak just below the trail.
5. From the Armstrong Gulch Trailhead, the trail enters an area of very large trees, dense cool shade providing the perfect environment for many shade-loving wildflowers and plants. You will see Calypso orchids on shady north slopes (keep hiking and find many other wildflowers as the trail changes aspect: wild iris, Mariposa Lilies (furry cat’s ears), Indian paintbrush, arrow-leaf balsam root, wild geranium, lupine, wild columbine and many more)
6. Views of Little Applegate and Yale Creek Valleys – note the significant change in vegetation from deep forest to oak/buck brush, Manzanita and other plants favoring dry south-facing slopes
7. Note vegetation recovery as you are hiking through an old burned area; burned approximately 15-20 years ago.
8. Views of Little Applegate and Yale Creek Valleys
9. Historic rock retaining wall remnant
10. Private land – the Sterling Mine Ditch crosses private land here, use the by-pass trail
11. Fabulous view point of surrounding valleys and ridges
12. Private land – use by-pass trail
13. Spectacular Giant Madrone – one of the largest along the entire ditch
14. Tunnel where the ditch went thru instead of along the ridge
15. Spring upslope from trail in draw, one of few on trail. Probably site of work camp for Chinese laborers.
16. Private land – use by-pass trail
17. 360 degree view; Grayback Mt. to the west; Red Buttes to the south; Quartz fire to the southeast; Wagner Butte to the east-southeast.
18. Oak cluster below trail; main oak burned in past fire, now 20+ closely-spaced mature oaks surround the base of the former single oak.
19. Giant oak and pine snags below trail; remnants of former ecosystem stand of very large conifers and hardwoods.
20. Old ditch-flume remnants in draw below trail.
21. South terminus, SMD crosses into private land! Turn downhill onto the access trail to the Little Applegate trailhead.

For information on the Siskiyou Upland Trails Association go to: www.SUTAOREGON.org

Sterling Mine Ditch Historic Trail
Grand Re-Opening Event
National Trails Day June 4, 2011

Trail is Open to Hikers, Equestrians, and Bicyclists
Closed to All Motorized Use

The History of the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail:
The Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (SMDT) is an historic trail that follows most of the original 26.5 mile ditch that was dug in the 1870’s to carry water to support mining activities at the Sterling gold mine. The berm along the ditch became a hiking trail under BLM jurisdiction after the ditch was decommissioned in the 1930’s. The SMDT is a nearly level trail, dropping in elevation only a few hundred feet over its length, except for two sections that bypass the ditch to avoid private lands. As it contours along the slopes from the Upper Applegate trailhead to its terminus near Griffin Lane, it changes character many times, passing through dry slopes dotted with oak, madrone, and manzanita, and cool, damp draws thick with pines and firs. Along its length there are some truly magnificent specimens of madrones and ponderosa pines. The trail traverses open meadows and chaparral-like terrain with expansive views of the Siskiyou Crest and Little Applegate Valley, and include the valleys and ridges of the Applegate. You can also view many well-known peaks, including Dutchman Peak, Grayback Mountain, and the Red Butte Wilderness. Spring is prime time on the SMDT. Beginning in early April, the wildflowers are on spectacular display, and trail users may hear and see many different species of birds. The winter’s snow and rain have provided ample water for several seasonal creeks and small waterfalls along the trail, most of which disappear by mid-summer.

Above: Fairy Slipper (Calypso bulbosa)

Questions? Please Contact the Medford BLM Office 541-518-2200