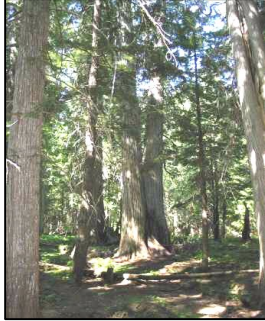


# Ross Creek Cedars



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

Forest Service  
Troy Ranger District  
Kootenai National Forest

Ross Creek has been known many years for the Western Red Cedars which grow along its banks. The beauty and serenity of the cedars were preserved for all to enjoy when the 100-acre Scenic Area was established in Sept. 16, 1959. The Forest Service manages and protects Scenic Areas for their scientific and recreational value.

You can enjoy the cedar grove by taking the .9 mile self-guided nature trail which lies under a canopy of hanging moss and western red cedar trees. The wide path leads you past informative signs telling you the history and ecology of the many plant and animal species native to the grove. In addition to the giant cedars (8 feet in diameter by 175 feet tall), you will see large specimens of other western trees and the many lush ferns and flowers of the shady forest floor. Some of the trees are 500 to 1,000 years old. Along your walk, some of the information stops include the "Rock Slide", the "Cedar Chimney", the "Wrestlers", the "Fairy Den", and the "Twins". The nature trail also leads you to the banks of Ross Creek, at a point where the creek often runs hidden beneath its colorful rocky bottom. There are pools of water along Ross Creek. There's also a footbridge over the only stream crossing along the nature trail. The waters of Ross Creek come from the rugged alpine basins and peaks of the upper Ross Creek valley, from which centuries of erosion and glaciation have deposited the soils of the cedar grove. The cathedral atmosphere of the grove is magnified by the knowledge that many of these trees were growing before Columbus set sail for the new world.



The handicapped accessible loop is enough reason to visit Ross Creek. But those with enough energy have two additional options. Trail 142 continues up the valley. An offshoot, Trail 321, goes up the south fork past a waterfall and provides trail-less access to Sawtooth Mountain.

While you are visiting the Cedar Grove you may want to picnic at the scenic streamside picnic grounds near the parking area. If you are lucky, you might even catch your lunch, as Ross Creek is home to native cutthroat trout.

There are no camping facilities at the Cedar Grove, but there are two National Forest campgrounds on Bull Lake and one of these, Bad Medicine Campground, is along the road to the Scenic Area.

Take State Highway 56 south. Look for a sign just before the Lincoln County-Sanders County line, just south of Bull Lake. Turn right on this road (Ross Creek Road 398) and follow for 4 miles to Ross Creek Cedars.

