



# Wahtum Lake

## Hood River County

### Hood River Basin

Location	
Area	62 acres (25.1 hect)
Elevation	3,732 ft (1,137.5 m)
Type	natural lake
Use	recreation
Location	16 miles south west of Hood River in Mt. Hood National Forest
Access	Hood River to Dee then 6 miles west on Forest Service roads
USGS Quad	Wahtum Lake (24K), Hood River (100K)
Coordinates	45° 34' 52" N, 121° 47' 50" W
USPLSS	tow nship 01N, range 08E, section 10

Wahtum Lake is a relatively remote, scenic lake located about seven miles north of the better known Lost Lake on the north slope of Mt. Hood. Wahtum is thought to be the Waucoma Indian name for the lake, but its meaning is not clear. The name was bestowed by H. D. Langille in 1901 while mapping the region for the U. S. Geological Survey. Because of the once abundant supply of berries in the area, Wahtum Lake was a popular gathering point for Indians during the annual harvest. In more recent times a Boy Scout Camp operated on the northwest end of the lake, but burned down in the 1940s.

Wahtum Lake is an excellent example of a cirque lake, its basin carved out by glacial erosion. Typical of this mode of formation is the amphitheatre shape of the basin and the steep surrounding walls. The lake itself is very deep, with a maximum depth of 184 feet. Slopes in the small drainage basin are covered with a dense, coniferous forest, while huckleberry and blueberry bushes form much of the understory vegetation near the shore. Several small, unnamed streams flow into the lake. The East Fork of Eagle Creek is the outlet stream, but flow is minimal much of the year.

Wahtum Lake is a popular recreation site, reached by a short, downhill trail from the Forest Service road. Fishing is good at times, the catch being small rainbow and brook trout. Native brown trout once prospered in the lake, but during the 1960s rainbow trout were introduced with the intent of providing stock for a downstream hatchery. Unfortunately, the fish became diseased and the program was discontinued. Rainbow trout are a hardier species than brown trout and still exist in the lake. However, Wahtum Lake is not a particularly good fishing site because of the depth and the history of diseased fish. The best fishing is in the shallow shoal areas. There are a number of primitive campsites around the lake maintained by the Forest Service.

Wahtum Lake is deep enough to develop a distinct thermal stratification. The concentrations of major ions are fairly low, similar to other nearby Cascade lakes (Lost Lake and Bull Run Lake), but the water is not as dilute as in other high Cascade lakes farther south. The concentrations of phosphorus and chlorophyll are low and the water is very transparent. All these characteristics are indicators of an oligotrophic lake.



Source: Portland State University, 1983. View looking southeast.

Drainage Basin Characteristics							
Area	0.7 sq mi (1.8 sq km)		Relief	very steep		Precip	80-90 in (203-229 cm)
Land Use %	Forest	Range	Water	Irrig	Non Irrig	Urban	Other
	86.1	-	13.9	-	-	-	-
Notes	-						
Lake Morphometry				Maximum		Average	
Area	62.0 acres (25.1 hect)		Depth	184 ft (56.1 m)		60ft (18.2 M)	
Ave/Max Depth Ratio	0.330		Volume	3,666 acre ft (4.53 cu hm)			
Shoal area	12%	Volume factor	1.05		Shape factor	1.20	
Length of Shoreline	1.3 mi (2.1 km)		Retention time	1.4 yr			
Notes	Area determined from current air photo.						
Water Quality							
Trophic status	oligotrophic						
Sample date	09/25/82		Temp	-		Diss. Oxygen (mg/l)	-
Transparency	35.1 ft (10.7 m)		Phosp (mg/l)	0.004		Cholorophyl a (mg/l)	0.7
Alkalinity	3		Conductivity (umhos/cm)	17		pH	6.9
Major Ions	Na	K	Ca	Mg	Cl	SO4	
	1.1	0.1	1.6	0.6	3.4	<0.1	
Notes	pH and secchi from USGS 10/18/74						

