

# Grasshopper Meadows

## Location & Map

T19S.R5E.S22-23, Grasshopper Mountain

## Difficulty

Easy to Moderate

## Distance

2.8 miles RT to Grasshopper Pt. or 2.8 mile loop around meadow

## Elevation gain

900 feet (4560'–5400')

## Bloom period

early June to August, peak in July

## Highlights

Large meadow, butterflies, view

## Directions

Take Hwy 58 east past Lookout Point Reservoir and milepost 31. Turn left across from Ranger Station. After you cross the river take another left. From the stop sign by the covered bridge in Westfir continue straight on Rd 19 for about 13 miles until you get to road 1926 (one mile past the junction of 1925). Turn left onto 1926 and drive almost 3 miles till you reach 1927. Turn right onto 1927 and drive 2.1 miles to 1929. Follow this gravel road for 5.5 miles (stay left at the intersection of 1940 and stay right at another intersection after 5 miles) until you see the trailhead on the right side of the road.



A multitude of Western blue flax (*Linum lewisii*) is one of the treats of a trip to Grasshopper Meadows in July.



Merriam's alumroot (*Heuchera merriamii*) blooms profusely in early July on the cliff below the south edge of the meadow. It is found on scattered cliffs on nearby mountains, disjunct from its normal range much farther south. It can be told from the common small-flowered alumroot by its very small, dull, truncate leaves and more compact inflorescence.

There are no crowds at Grasshopper Meadows, no pinnacles to scale, just lots of peace and quiet, open air, flowers, butterflies... and grasshoppers of course! The trail begins in a dry incense cedar and grand fir forest with many herbaceous plants like anemones and vanilla leaf. Small openings soon appear that are filled with mountain cat's ears in late June. The route continues steadily but not steeply uphill, gradually opening up to reveal the entire expansive meadow. Several small creeks cross the trail and provide habitat for wetland species such as mitellas and twisted stalk. Look for a short path to the left that leads to a small spring with a watering trough, a reminder of the days when cows were grazed in this meadow. Monkeyflowers and willow-herbs bloom here, and butterflies are often seen puddling on the wet soil. The trail heads east across the meadow and eventually disappears where the meadows gives way to the top of a cliff edged with trees. Follow the cliff up the meadow through lupines and small-flowered penstemon. The trees part several times allowing opportunities to see small communities of rock plants like buckwheat, phlox and paintbrush. At the top of the meadow you will see cairns indicating a trail once again. To the left it continues to nearby Grasshopper Point and eventually to Chucksney Mtn. To the right it traverses the meadow below the top of the ridge to Grasshopper Mtn, a somewhat overgrown former lookout site. In June, this is the best place to look for remnant snowbeds where steer's head, glacier lilies and western spring-beauty can be found. Head west along the top through masses of blue flax, skyrockets and tiger lilies in July. If you don't want to retrace your steps, cut across the meadow looking for several posts that guide you down toward the spring where you can pick up the trail again.