

## **DRIVING DIRECTIONS FOR HIKE 9B (MAPLE LEAVES AND MORE!)**

**PHOTOS AND WEBSITES:** See bottom of page 2 for photo info (in case you need persuasion).

**NAVIGATION:** After hike 9A, go back to Walker Rd and start the drive to hike 9B. NOTE: The drive is more interesting than hike 9B – don't rush it! Mileposts signs (green) will help. MP 7.2 means 0.2 miles past MP 7. OR: reset your odometer at jct of Walker Rd/ Big Bug Mesa Rd – the map shows distances from here. SUGGESTION: Before leaving a point of interest, read the next point to know what to expect and how far. Map 9B also shows an interesting mix of white (private land) and green (Prescott National Forest, created 1898). The white identifies where miners were prospecting for gold over a century ago. For the GPS values of each location below, send an e-mail request to [HikeSpree@HighlandsCenter.org](mailto:HikeSpree@HighlandsCenter.org)

**AUTUMN LEAVES:** Yes, there are some bigtooth maples in Arizona. They change to pretty yellows & reds in the fall (example: West Fork of Oak Crk in Sedona). Oaks and aspens also add to the fall colors.

**DRIVE:** MP 6.9 is the jct of Walker Road and Big Bug Mesa Road. Turn left (south) and drive for 0.9 miles to the end of blacktop at a bridge over Lynx Creek. On the way, you'll pass the following places:

- Just south of this junction, pull over to your right and read the sign about Walker.
- MP 7.2: Walker fire station on your right. There was a tunnel from here that went through the mountain to Poland. It was used for ore cars and was 1.5 miles long, completed in 1904. Children walked through this tunnel each day to get to school! The Poland entrance is still open but a stream flows out of it. The Walker end was blown up for safety reasons in 1949.
- Do you know what a "Little Free Library" is? See one here, at the back of the fire station.
- MP 7.6: Pink Car Road on your left. The name for this road is obvious. Since 1939, this old sedan has sat here and become quite the landmark. In 2011, it was stolen by Prescott HS students, who placed it in the HS parking lot as a prank. The pranksters were caught and the landmark car returned to its location at their expense. Now it is chained to the ground!
- MP 7.8: At the bridge, look to the right where you will see a forest of mailboxes, over 100! Park near these boxes so you can get out to see a close up of the number on each box. There is absolutely no pattern for these numbers – they have just grown as more houses were built. This is the end of the mail delivery on Walker Road. On one visit here, I met the mail lady. She told me she just had to learn where each numbered box was.
- In the middle of the open area by the mailboxes, there is an "island" with some ruined walls.
- Continue driving SW on Walker Rd (now a dirt road) for 2.7 miles to a T junction by Potato Patch.
  - As you leave the mailboxes, Walker Road is the dirt road across the bridge, with Lynx Creek on the left of the road. A blacktop road continues uphill to the right – that is NOT Walker Rd.
  - *After recent rainstorms, or if the road is muddy, turn around and come back when it is dry.*
- On the way to Potato Patch, you will pass the following places:
  - The road initially stays close to the creek but has some ups and downs.
  - After a mile the road climbs up fairly steeply, leaving the creek, with a hairpin and bends.
  - MP 10.5: At the bottom of the steep hill, you will cross a riverbed just before the T junction (aspens start as you descend). This creek is the "head-water" of the Hassayampa River, but it is likely to be dry. The old community of Potato Patch is off to the left at the T junction.
  - Vegetables used to be grown here for the miners, using the water from the river. You may be aware of another place named Potato Patch – on Hwy 89A, near the top of Mingus Mountain.
- Go right at the T junction and continue driving SW on Walker Road for 0.8 miles until you reach the dam at the far end of Hassayampa Lake. This stretch of the road is next to the Hassayampa River, often with some water in puddles. On the way to the dam, you'll pass the following places:
  - MP 10.7: On the left is a huge tailings pile. Just imagine how much rock and dirt was tunneled out, and how much manpower this took! Do NOT try to explore these tailings.
  - MP 11.0: A covered bridge on the right. This was built a few years ago, and leads to some expensive homes overlooking the lake.

- As you drive above the lake (on your right), you should see many colorful autumn leaves – mainly maple, oak, and aspen. The lake is now private and fenced off, so not accessible.
- MP 11.3: Hassayampa Lake dam. One story is this lake was originally built to provide hydroelectric power for the Senator Mine. Later, the lake belonged to Prescott. It's a small lake, around 4.5 acres, with a tall dam that you can see from the road. The lake was sold in a hurry to a private developer around 1999, much to the chagrin of many Prescottonians.
- From the dam, continue for 1.1 miles to the parking place for the second hike. On the way:
  - After a long bend to the left, there are a few maples along Walker Road.
  - MP 11.7: junction with the Senator Highway (0.4 miles from dam).
  - At this junction, go left (straight), onto the Senator Highway. The “highway” soon starts to climb and goes past a tailings pile on the right – huge and steep – then reaches a hairpin.
  - Where the hairpin bends to the right, a rough track goes straight on, up a small valley.
  - Park just off of the Senator Highway at the beginning of this track, or on the Highway shoulder just past the bend. The inset on the map shows this short hike.
- After you have completed the hike, turn around and drive back down the Senator Highway all the way into town – this road is generally smoother, wider and flatter than Walker Road.
  - The Senator Highway become Mount Vernon shortly before reaching Gurley Street.
- Make sure you stay on the Senator Highway at its junction with Walker Road (don't go right) – reset your odometer here (MPs are very intermittent on the Senator Highway). From this junction to Gurley Street it is 10.9 miles, with the road becoming blacktop by the Sky Y camp (3.8 miles from the Walker Road junction). On the way from the Walker Road junction, look for:
  - 0.2 miles: Concrete foundations above on right – part of Maxton, maybe the general store.
  - 0.7 miles: Views of the Senator Mine, followed by a metal mine structure where a dirt road leads down to this old mine (hikeable but not driveable). These items are all on your left.

#### PHOTOS, WEBSITES AND MAPS:

- For GREAT PHOTOS of places along this drive, go to the following website (long address): [bradshawmountainhikes.blogspot.com/2013/05/senator-highway-walker-road-loop.html](http://bradshawmountainhikes.blogspot.com/2013/05/senator-highway-walker-road-loop.html) NOTE: their route is in the reverse direction (Senator Hwy then Walker Rd), so skip the photos of little interest.
- GHOST TOWNS: [ghosttowns.com](http://ghosttowns.com) has photos & more info. Howells on Map 9A at Walker Rd (MP 6.1), Senator/Maxton on map 9B (see mileages above). Venezia is farther south on Senator Hwy.
- MORE MAPS: go to: [Prescott-trailmaps.com](http://Prescott-trailmaps.com) and click first on the Walker rectangle (S2 E3).
- INFO ABOUT WALKER: go to the Prescott library: “Many Lives of the Lynx” by Alvina Potter. There isn't enough space in these two pages to go into much detail, so this book fills in a lot of history.
- PNF HISTORY: Google “Prescott National Forest, history” for an interesting website.

#### PLACE NAMES & MINING:

- WALKER: The Walker community was named after Joseph Reddeford Walker, a well-travelled explorer & the leader of the first party of prospectors to the area, in June 1863 (middle of Civil War). Prescott was founded a year later. Walker continued as a major mining operation for many decades.
- MINING CLAIMS: When you look at the map for 9B, notice all of the white patches surrounded by the green of the Prescott National Forest (PNF). Lynx Creek was one of the first places where gold was mined. These white patches are overlapping mining claims that have now become private land.
- MINING: There were two ways to collect gold. Initially this was done by “placer” mining (rhymes with “gasser”) – where gold particles and nuggets were found in the creek. This gold was retrieved by gold panning, and more sophisticated devices. Lode mining: veins of ore with gold (or silver) were followed into hard rock by digging or tunneling – much more laborious and dangerous.
- LYNX CREEK (and lake): Lynx maybe lived here 150 years ago, but could be misnamed bobcats.
- BIG BUG CREEK: (& Mesa & Road) were named by a miner who found a large bug in the creek where he was looking for gold. The mesa & creek are reached if you continue driving up FR 670 (Big Bug Mesa Rd) for ~5 miles to Five Points jct (views of the mesa near top), and then go left on YC 58 to drive down the creek to Poland (now Breezy Pines) and continue to Hwy 69 at Poland Jct.