Glacier

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park

Mountain Climbing at Logan Pass

Logan Pass is unique in Glacier in that it gives visitors easy access to the subalpine and alpine environment. These areas contain special plants and plant communities that can easily be damaged by trampling. The boardwalk from the visitor center to the moraine at the foot of Clements Mountain was constructed to confine impacts and halt the process of plant loss and soil erosion that can occur from trampling. Visitors are asked to remain on the boardwalk.

However, special consideration has been given to climbers so they may cross portions of the meadows for climbs in the vicinity. Park managers have prepared these route maps and descriptions to direct climbers to more resilient approaches that avoid areas with rare or sensitive plants or easily damaged plant communities. The relative sensitivity of plant communities in the area is also listed for your information. Be considerate and careful while traveling off-trail so the current use of the area will not have to be further restricted.

While snow makes a protective travel surface early in the year, emerging islands of vegetation are saturated with moisture and particularly vulnerable to trampling. A temporary area closure is implemented each summer to protect this vegetation. When in effect, this closure effects the Oberlin and Moraine Routes noted below. Signs are posted at Logan Pass to indicate closed areas.

Plant Community Sensitivity List

This list was designed to provide guidance to off-trail recreational users concerning the sensitivity of higher elevation plant communities to trampling. It was prepared particularly for the Logan Pass Area in Glacier to assist in finding preferred approach routes to Mt. Oberlin and Mt. Reynolds. It can also be applied parkwide to similar elevations. It should be noted that all communities respond differently to the frequency of trampling, but that damage to plants can begin with only a few tramplings. Remember also that rare or particularly sensitive plants can occur in all communities.

The best way to travel off-trail is over rock or snow, in small groups. Where possible avoid moist areas with plants growing. In dry areas it is advisable to spread out so as not to create a trail and spread out trampling. Where paths or goat trails exist, these would be preferable to starting a new route.

Plant communities listed in order of decreasing sensitivity to trampling:

1. **Saturated Soil (most sensitive) -** mossy streambanks, boggy sites, very wet meadows; characterized by monkey flowers, sedges, saxifrage and moss.
2. **Wet Ledges -** seeping water running over rock; mosses, saxifrage and plants in crevasses.
3. **Unstable Talus -** scree slopes with sparse vegetation - very susceptible to damage or uprooting.
4. **Tundra -** turf (dense plant cover) less than 6" high, moist until late into the year; dominated by grasses, sedges and dwarf willow.
5. **Heath -** low shrubs of heath and heather.
6. **Cushion Plant -** low growing mat-like plants, often on windswept ridges or steep slopes; moss campion, draba and phlox.
7. **Meadow -** moist to dry meadows, dominated by relatively robust herbaceous species; asters, fleabane, paintbrush, glacier lily, and grasses and sedges.
8. **Krummholz -** dwarf or windswept conifer islands (elfin wood).
9. **Dry ledges -** areas with thin soil, either bedrock outcrops or relatively level alpine cobble (flat stable rocks with soil between).
10. **Stable talus -** level or stable talus and boulder fields with high lichen cover and few plants.

Climbing Route Descriptions

Refer to map on back page

Reynolds Route - access to Reynolds Mountain and beyond.

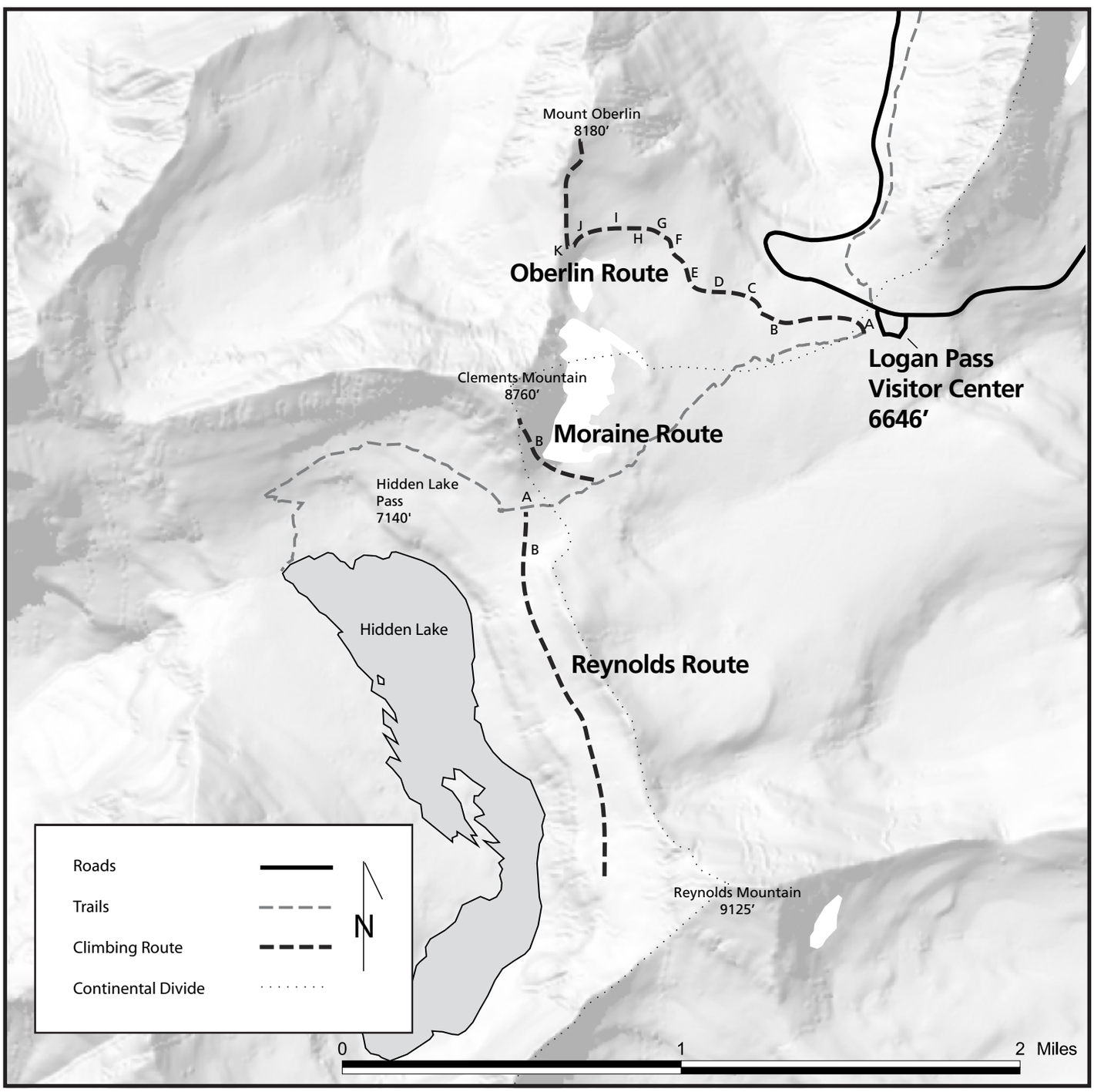
A - After following the Hidden Lake Trail almost to Hidden Lake Pass you will reach a tarn at the bottom of a small hill. Cross the wooden bridge and climb the trail gradually to where you are abreast of a second higher tarn (which may be dry late in the year). From this spot (Point A), head south, off trail, across the dry ledges at the foot of the upper tarn.

B - Look for the opening in the krummholz here, with a large rock that makes a good step. This is the beginning of the access route that leads to the approach to Reynolds Mountain.

Climbing Route Descriptions - Continued

Moraine Route - access to the southeast face of Clements Mountain
A - Follow the Hidden Lake Trail past the continuous walkway, across two small separate walkway sections. Look for the first ridge of moraine to approach the trail from the right (at Point A).
B - Follow the ridge of this moraine to the easy access to the face of Clements.

Oberlin Route - access to Mount Oberlin, north and east face of Clements Mountain.
A - Leave the northern paved switchback at the Logan Pass Visitor Center at the farthest point from the building, crossing the metal railing onto a distinct trail.
B - After continuing along this trail to the water tank at this point, follow the fainter trail northward (to the right).
C - The trail fades near at the water intake . You will cross the creek and continue up through a rocky open area. The trail/route then goes away from the creek to the right into the trees. Stay away from the trail (which is being rehabilitated) that goes along the creek through the upper basin.
D - Once you leave the creek drainage, you follow rock cairns through the meadows to the ramp that leads to the ridge between Oberlin and Clements.
E - After reaching the bench, walk through the krummholz forest to the meadow and head NW toward the near ridge of Oberlin through the dry meadows.
F - Angle upward above the lowest major, red cliff band.
G - Cut westward up a ramp through the cliff band, just before the krummholz forest ends on the east side of Oberlin.
H - Continue along the grassy bench at a gradual incline upward.
I - After passing through a small krummholz forest, you will reach a moist open area, in front of the south scree face of Oberlin. The main goat trail to the ridge is clearly visible beyond. Avoid this moist area; a sensitive plant is found here. Detour to the right above the krummholz for 30 yards and join the goat trail just beyond a small creek coming from the right. Stay off of the scree slope on the face of Mount Oberlin. To prevent resource damage and impacts the route intentially avoids the scree slope.
J - Follow the goat trail to the ridge.
K - From this point on the ridge the best route up Oberlin is to the north and good access to Clements is evident to the south.



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