

UO Outdoor Program: Excellent Resource

by Tim Jordan

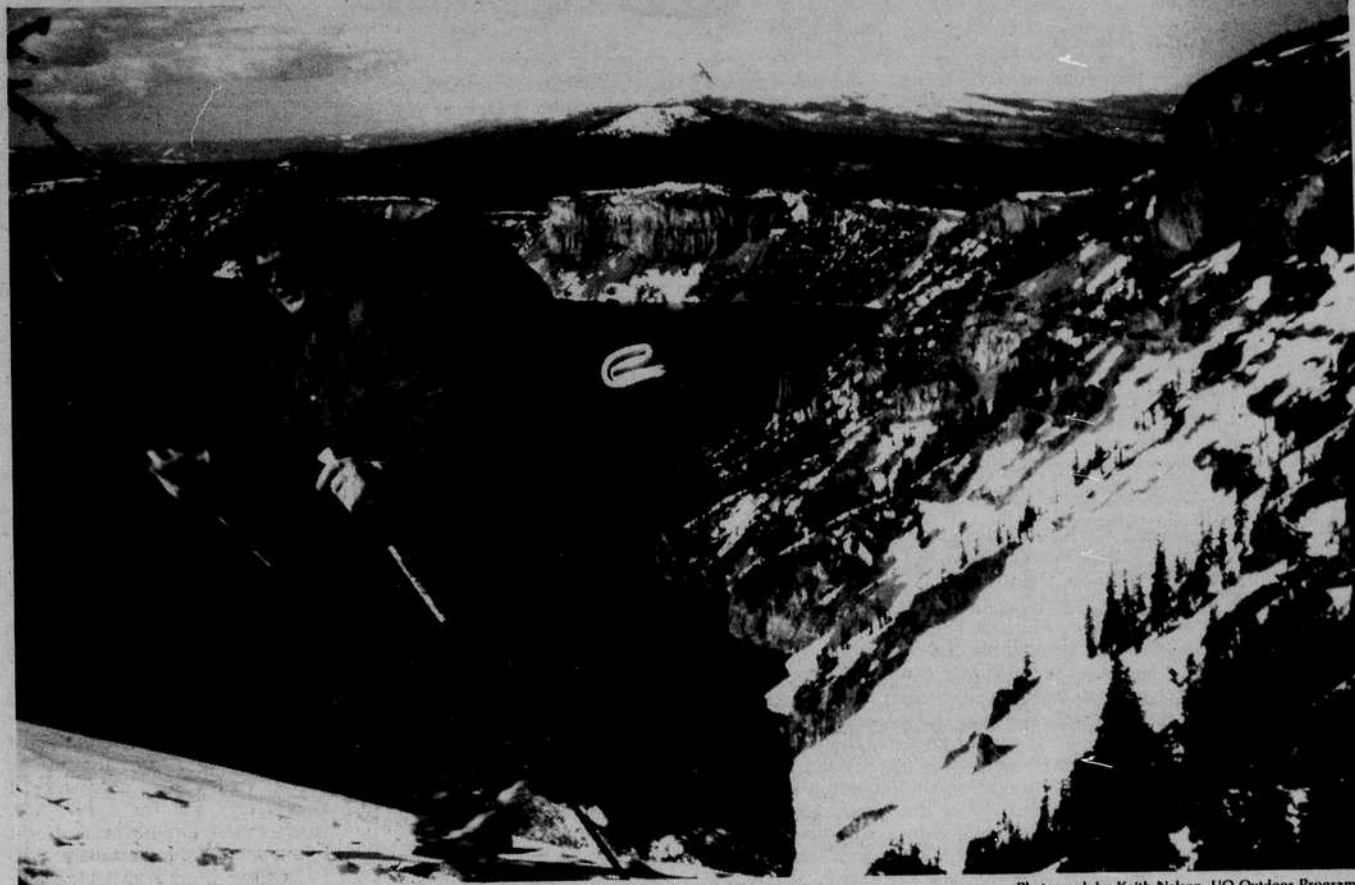
For many people in Eugene winter recreation is hindered by either inexperience or the prohibitive costs of gear and transportation. If you are one of these people, pay close attention. There's a program in town that challenges you to come up with a good reason not to be outward bound this winter season. That is the University of Oregon's Outdoor Program. All you need to supply is some initiative and the time; they will do their utmost to supply all the rest.

The Outdoor Program (O.P.), not to be confused with the Physical Education Department's Outdoor Pursuits Program, has served as a prototype for similar programs nationwide. It is still the largest cooperative of its kind and is available for students, staff, alumni and community members of all skill levels.

There are no user fees. Instead, where costs are incurred in planning a trip, they are split among the participants equally. The O.P. is not a guide service, so trips are not led, but initiated by a person or persons interested in a particular outdoor recreation experience. It is designed to help people cultivate new outdoor skills and/or hone those skills they already have in a cooperative atmosphere that stresses experiential learning.

The Outdoor Program typically appeals to enthusiasts who desire a voice in their wilderness experiences and who desire to learn life-long wilderness travel skills in a non-authoritarian, non-sexist atmosphere," states Director Bruce Mason in the O.P.'s annual newsletter, *The Free Country Times*. "Wilderness preservation and conservation are stressed, and a heightened environmental consciousness is the natural result."

"To exclude the community would be to exclude valuable resources," says work-study outdoor enthusiast Matt Smith.



Photograph by Keith Nelson, UO Outdoor Program.

"Community members are generally more familiar with the regional terrain than their student counterparts."

To get out to the "great beyond" you merely need to go to the O.P. Office located in the UO/EMU building's west side. The main entrance is by the loading dock off 13th St. If you bear left and head towards the facing wall, you will find the trip board. In your mind you know you'd like to do some cross-country skiing, so you scan

the board to see if someone else has a trip planned. No? O.K. Remain calm. Corner an O.P. volunteer to give you a hand posting a trip sheet on this board.

Not sure where cross-country ski trails are located in this neck of the woods? The resource library has a wide range of information to help you design your trip, whether it's to Willamette Pass or Nepal. All right, so you post your trip; now you can kick back and wait while other like-minded people

wander through the O.P. resource room and sign up. Details are discussed beforehand, if necessary; then it's time to have fun. To help facilitate and insure a good time, use those resources: the maps, outdoor equipment co-op, various libraries, and especially the volunteers.

The O.P. also presents a wide range of outdoor adventure motivational films and presentations throughout each season. The winter schedule will include a square

dance, fly fishing seminar, a ski conditioning seminar and a beginner's winter snow camping seminar followed by trips for snow camping. Call 686-4365 for more information. Or write the program, EMU, University of Oregon, Eugene 97403. Even better, just stop in and get acquainted. The folks there are eager to make the outdoors available to everyone, regardless of experience. You've got no excuse not to participate!



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