

Summer Hiking — Mt. Hood Recreation Area

by Myrna Oakley

Within the Mount Hood Recreation Area, which lies on the eastern fringe of Clackamas County, sweeps a vast panorama of geology, geography and history . . . snowcapped volcanic peaks on whose flanks lie numerous glaciers and snowfields . . . fragrant evergreen forests containing miles of trails, dozens of campgrounds and several winter sports areas . . . wildlife, wild rhododendron, bear grass, shiny green chinquapin . . . cascading waterfalls, rivers, lakes and streams . . . and faint remnants of the Barlow Trail, forged through the thick forest floor in 1845-46 by the first wave of emigrants heading west on the Oregon Trail from Independence, Missouri.

Mt. Hood, an imposing snow-laden andesite volcano rising some 11,245 feet from the forested Cascades, easily dominates the skyline and is seen on clear days from Portland and Oregon City, some 50 miles away. Those who've lived in the area for even a short while tend to claim the mountain as their personal property. Mt. Hood is an old and treasured friend who has offered many seasons of recreation and enjoyment . . . a friend that Portlanders are more than willing to share with visitors.

Legend has it that Mt. Hood was at one time a mighty volcano known to the Indians as Wy'east, a great chief turned into a mountain peak . . . spouting flame and hurling boulders skyward in anger. It is said that the first recorded white men, of the British Royal Navy, saw the mountain in 1792 from their vessel sailing on the Columbia River. A British naval officer named it Hood, after his admiral (who was a friend of Captain George Vancouver).

The earliest white men who tramped over Mt. Hood's slopes were most likely two French fur trappers in about 1818; the botanist David Douglas in 1833; and a few other hardy souls who fol-

lowed the main Indian trails connecting the east and west sides of the mountain.

For an historical account and map of the first emigrant road built by Samuel K. Barlow across the Cascades along ancient Indian trails near the mountain, pick up a copy of *The Barlow Road* which is available from the Mt. Hood National Forest office, 2955 N.W. Division St., Gresham, OR 97030, (503) 666-0700.

While the Barlow Road may be traced east nearly to The Dalles, history buffs who want to experience a portion of it can take a brief tour beginning a few miles west of Little Laurel Hill where the Barlow Road crossed Forest Service road 48. Take Highway 35, a few miles east of Government Camp, to White River (about 4 miles). Turn onto Forest Service road 48 and travel about 8 miles along portions of the Barlow Road into Barlow Crossing Campground. Perhaps the F.S. road, though typically unpaved, won't seem too rough with the benefit of rubber tires and shock absorbers which early pioneers lacked on their covered wagons!

As winter snows in the Mt. Hood Recreation Area melt into spring and summer, white avalanche lilies push through white softness at higher elevations. While the avalanche lilies seem to prefer the western side of the mountain, golden glacier lilies prefer the eastern slopes. Look for them in late June and July.

Red currant and mock orange usually appear in June, followed by the wild rhododendrons with their pinkish blooms filling the forest with color. Wild bleeding heart, yellow skunk cabbage, swamp violets, trilliums, tiger lily and many berries (salmon, thimble, bunch and service) can also be found in moist meadows, swampy areas, and along mountain roads and hiking trails. Salal, with shiny oval leaves and pink bell-flowers, can be seen along banks in tangled



Your feet will begin to talk back to you if you don't take good care of them on hikes!

masses. There are more than 15 varieties of fern to identify along hiking trails.

In the Salmon Huckleberry Wilderness is the easily accessible Salmon River National Recreation Trail. The Salmon River gorge, with its many waterfalls, is a picturesque area of volcanic plugs, pinnacles and cliffs—major geologic features to look for and identify along the way.

The trail lies several hundred feet above the Salmon River, except for the lower 2.5 mile section. Other trails include Eagle Creek, Wildcat Mountain and Huckleberry Mountain. Hunchback trail is along the northeastern boundary of the wilderness.

Here is a sampling of easy to moderately difficult day hikes within the Mt. Hood Recreation Area.

Mirror Lake—Family/4 miles/3 hours—Trail #664/June-Oct. On weekends, this is one of the most popular and crowded day hike destinations around Mt. Hood. The trailhead is located on Hwy. 26 one mile west of Government Camp on a curve where a large parking area is certain to have one or more cars in it. Cross the bridge over Camp Creek and climb gradually to Mirror Lake and views of Zigzag Valley and Mt. Hood.

Hidden Lake—Family/4 miles/3 hours—Trail #779/June-Oct.

Follow Hwy. 26 six miles east of the Zigzag Ranger Station and turn left on Road 2039, a paved road at the bottom of Laurel Hill. The trail begins just past the Kiwanis Camp entrance in a wide parking area on the left. Climb the trail to the wooded lake alongside Rhododendron bushes, which will have masses of pink blooms in June.

Bonanza Trail—Hiker/4 miles/4 hours—Trail #786/June-Nov. Follow Salmon River Road (2618) west of the Zigzag Ranger Station for two miles. Make a sharp right turn, then turn left in .5 mile on narrow paved road, crossing the Salmon River. Turn left on the second gravel road and go .5 mile to trailhead. Trail travels first through a cut-over area, then enters the forest and parallels Cheeney Creek—gradually climbing to the old Bonanza gold mine. Forest Service personnel caution that the old mine shaft should not be entered.

Salmon Butte—Trekker/10 miles/6 hours—Trail #791/June. Take Salmon River Road (2618) six miles to the trailhead near the end of the road. The trail begins in the middle of an old clearcut and climbs steadily through lush, green forest to the summit of Salmon Butte—4,900 feet. Great views of Salmon River and Roaring River Valleys below. Mt.

Hood, Mt. Saint Helens and Mt. Jefferson are in the distance. This one is for the experienced hiker who is savvy in the ways of the alpine wilderness (weather conditions can often change quickly in the higher elevations).

Lost Creek Trail—Family/.5 mile/1 hour—Trail #776/April. An enjoyable trek for the handicapped, drive Lolo Pass Road (18) to Road 1825. Continue past McNeil Campground to Road 1825-111, then short distance to Lost Creek picnic area. The paved trail and picnic area are designed for the disabled; it passes an old beaver pond with a view of Mt. Hood. Nice spot to picnic.

For helpful maps, weather conditions and information about trails, backpacking and horse trails, stop at the Zigzag Ranger Station just east of Welches—70220 E. Highway 26, Zigzag, OR 97049, (503) 622-3191.

P.S. "Summerski '86" on the Palmer icefield at Timberline opened around May 30 and operates until Sept. 1. To give summer skiers more opportunity to ski the hard morning snow, the chairlift will operate from 6:30 am to 1:30 pm daily. Lift tickets, \$16 per day; season pass, \$256. For information contact George Rossman, Hill Coordinator, Timberline Ski School, (503) 231-5402. Sno-Phone (503) 222-2211.



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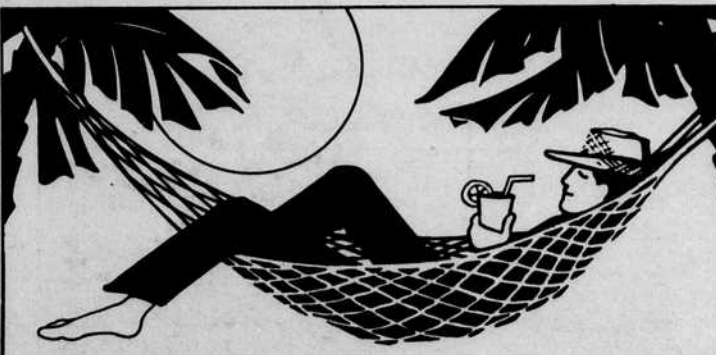
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