

Oregon legislators propose desert trail

By E.G. WHITE-SWIFT
Of the Emerald

Sagebrush Hiking: Two Oregon legislators have introduced a bill in Congress to study the possibility of creating a desert trail through the western United States.

The study would include parts of southeastern Oregon, as well as arid sections of Arizona, California, Nevada and Idaho. It would focus on a route crossing almost entirely public lands administered by state agencies or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).



The proposed Desert Trail would provide hikers a choice of three border-to-border trail systems in Oregon. The Pacific Crest Trail along the timberline of the Cascades is already completed. The Oregon Coast Trail has one completed section from Astoria to Tillamook Bay and is the priority project of the Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council.

A desert trail would provide access to different terrain and ecosystems, while offering alternatives to hikers when the mountain trail is snowbound and the coast trail waterlogged. It would be relatively inexpensive to develop as it would utilize existing trails, primitive roads and follow a corridor of stone cairns across open stretches of eastern Oregon sagebrush.

The bill's sponsors include Sen.

Mark Hatfield and Rep. Al Ullman. It would authorize expansion of the National Trails Act which now designates the Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails as scenic routes.

The study for the Western Desert Trail would be added to 14 other potential new trails now under review. Hatfield states that none of the trails now being studied for addition to the act cross a predominantly desert environment.

In Oregon the suggested route would be from Homestead to the lower edge of the Malheur National Forest near Drewsey, down the Malheur River to Malheur cave, across Diamond Craters and into the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Page Springs. From there, the trail would climb across Steens Mountain, drop to the Alvord Desert, and proceed to Denio, Nevada.

Cuckoo Hunt: One of the projects of the Southern Willamette Ornithological Club (SWOC) is a hunt for yellow-billed cuckoos in the valley. Last week Larry McQueen, a Eugene ornithologist and bird illustrator, invited me to accompany him on one of the hunts.

The cuckoo has been found in Oregon before, but none have been reported in the Willamette Valley in five years. Its preferred habitat is the thick riparian deciduous forest adjacent to streams. As that type of dense habitat is forbidding to the average hiker and seldom inventoried by birdwatchers, it is hoped that a thorough search will turn up the elusive cuckoo. A similar effort in California last year produced several birds.

Armed with the weapons of any good bird hunt, binoculars, cameras, and a tape recorder, we spent four sunburned hours checking a 150-acre island near the confluence of the Willamette and McKenzie rivers. After wading a slough and the Willamette, fighting through Himalayan blackberry brambles that the Sasquatch would find unbearable, and muck-

ing across racoon-tracked mud flats, we called it quits empty-handed.

Although the taped yellow-billed cuckoo calls did not arouse any cuckoos, they were answered by great blue herons, a valley resident. The great blue herons are communal nesters, gathering in a colony commonly referred to as a rookery. We observed a large rookery, with numerous adult and immature birds sitting in the trees. This rookery, one of the largest in the valley, contains about 100 nests, each stick nest about three feet across.

The most disturbing observation of the wild cuckoo chase occurred while scanning the inhabited river bank across from the riparian island. One of the residents, who probably paid a fancy price for his house along the river, was carefully sorting through his garbage. A very careful polluter, he selected only certain objects

from his trash to throw into the river.

Briefs:

•Carroll Littlefield is the first recipient of the Alfred Cooper Shelton award offered by the Southern Willamette Ornithological Club. Shelton was a student at the University from 1916-19, wildlife collector for the University's Museum of Natural History, and published one of the first checklists of birds of the valley.

Littlefield was awarded for his study of the sandhill crane in Oregon. His current investigation involves determination of its status as a possible endangered or threatened species. His 1976 study will include population counts, nest searches, reproductive success studies, banding, and fall migration counts.

•Spoke Folk, an informal association of bicyclers, is sponsoring a bike and camping trip Friday and Saturday to Sharp's Creek;

for more information call Riley McClain at 342-4878.

•Swimmers and canoeists can begin posting "no motorboats" signs along the Willamette River from the Belt Line Bridge upstream to the Highway 126 bridge in Springfield. The state Marine Board voted to ban motorized water vehicles from that stretch of river each year from May 15 to Sept. 15.

•In 1950, the U.S. Army sprayed the bacteria *Serratia marcescens* along the Pacific Ocean near San Francisco to study wind and water currents. According to *Prevention Magazine*, this is now blamed for a sharp increase in a rare and usually fatal heart valve disease, acute bacterial endocarditis, among residents of the Bay area. The infection, which has been noticed especially among drug abuse patients, is occurring at about three times the rate for any other metropolitan area.

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Students, profs receive Fulbright study grants

Seven University students, along with a department head and two associate professors, will crown their studies with Fulbright grants for research abroad during the 1976-77 academic year.

The students are Charles Smythe, anthropology; Peter Picerno, music; Jilda Warner, comparative literature; Robert Johnston, romance languages; Mark Patterson, English; Kristine Kaufman, German, and Gail Andrews, dance.

Their awards cover transportation and cost of living allowances for the grant year abroad.

Each of the students will pursue individual research projects. Smythe will study anthropology at the University of Sydney, Australia; Picerno will study music at the University of Bologna in Italy; and Warner will study comparative literature in Portugal. Johnston will study literature in Spain; Kaufman and Patterson will go to Germany to study German literature and history, respectively.

Andrews will use her award to study folk dance at the University of Tampere in Finland. This is a familiar campus for her since her father, University Mathematics

department head, Fred Andrews, served as a visiting Fulbright lecturer there in 1969-70.

In addition to being mathematics department head, Andrews is currently the acting head of the University's computer science department and also received a Fulbright grant for the 1976-77 academic year. He will use the award to teach and conduct research at the University College of Cork in Ireland.

The two University associate professors who also received Fulbright honors are Roger Chickering and Alan Kimball, both in the history department.

Chickering will use his \$9,000 award to spend the year in Berlin, studying radical national organizations in Germany prior to World War I. He was in Germany in 1970-71, gathering material for a book on the pacifist movement in Germany between 1892 and the start of World War I.

Kimball, who has an \$11,000 award, will be in the Soviet Union studying social organizations and public opinion in the capital city of the Russian empire in the late 19th century.

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