

Hikers plan 2,000 miles over sand, rocks

Former rancher, school teacher endorse foot travel via Death Valley to promote the value of Oregon deserts

By JACK DESMOND
Of the Emerald

Hardy backpackers may soon have the chance to hike 2,000 miles through desert country from Mexico to Canada on a proposed desert trail.

Unlike the Pacific Crest Trail, an actual trail may never be built. Rather, a corridor would be marked out with rock cairns to guide the hiker through the wide, open expanses of the desert.

A point-to-point trail, says Jack Remington, desert trail coordinator for the state of Oregon, would reduce trail-building costs and probably lessen environmental impacts.

As tentatively proposed by the National Parks Service (NPS), the trail would begin near Yuma, Arizona; proceed north through Death Valley and across Nevada. The trail would enter the Pueblo Mountains in southeastern Oregon.

From the Pueblos, a winter and summer route are being proposed. The summer route would pass through the Steens Mountains while the winter route would skirt the eastern edge of the Alvord Desert. Both trails would meet in the Sheephead Mountains; head east to Owyhee River; enter Idaho and follow the Snake River til the trail finally joined the Continental Divide Trail.

Remington is optimistic that the trail will eventually be built.

"Most people have been receptive towards the trail. However, at a public meeting in Burns, one rancher showed up and objected to the trail because it would run through his backyard."

Remington adds that even the rancher was in general favor of the trail.

Water remains a problem in the hot, dry desert according to Ken White of the Bureau of Land Management.

"Water has to be provided. However, if the fed-

eral government provides the water, the water has to be checked because of water quality standards. There is also a problem that people will drink the water from stock or wildlife sources."

Remington feels that water may not be a problem in Oregon.

"Our desert is higher and wetter than the deserts farther south. As far as I know, there isn't really a drastic problem. Most of the thinking I've heard is that people should expect to bring along their own water."

Other problems will be offroad vehicles intruding on the desert trail. Remington feels the offroad vehicles could destroy the "experience" of hiking the trail. He also notes that some easements through private land will have to be acquired.

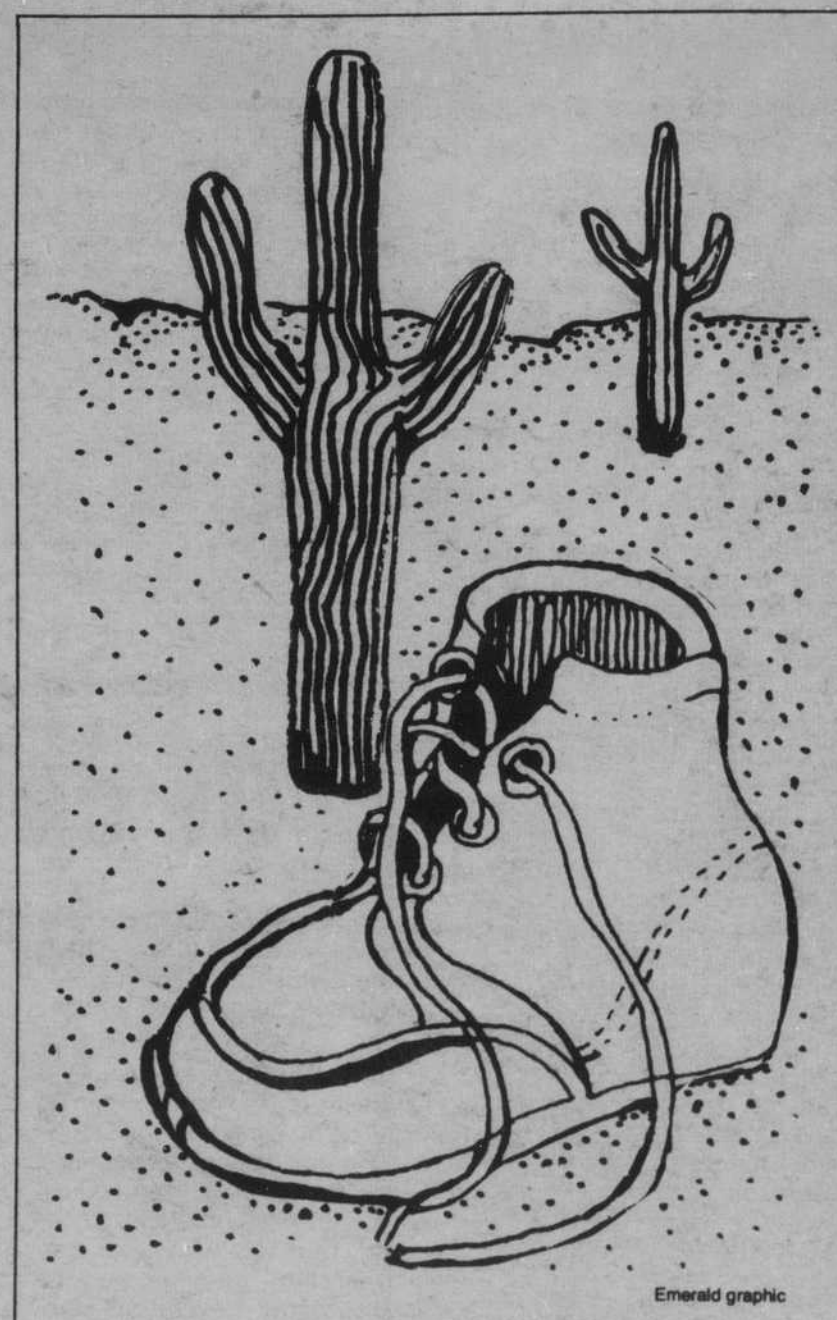
The concept of a national desert trail was originated by Russel Pengally, a Burns High School teacher, who wanted to interest and educate people to the values of the desert.

"Russel Pengally has been very persistent and has been working on it for 15 years," notes Remington.

Pengally interested Congressman Al Ullman, D-Ore, to the concept of a desert trail. Ullman introduced a desert trail bill which later passed in 1976. The bill authorized the NPS to study the feasibility of the trail. The NPS recently published a booklet about the desert trail which is available from the agency by writing to Desert Trail Feasibility Study, P.O. Box 36036, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Remington feels people will hike short 20 to 40 mile segments of the trail, though he notes that there will be a few hardy backpackers that hike the entire length of the trail.

As to the popularity of the trail, Remington says, "I don't think it will be immediately as popular as the Pacific Crest Trail. There will be a slow recognition (of the trail), but the clientele will grow as other trails become overcrowded."



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Dorms, EMU lose musical equipment

The past week was a busy one for area burglars. In seemingly unrelated incidents, the EMU program office and the University Inn were burglarized during the Thanksgiving vacation.

The EMU burglary, which occurred between 1 a.m. and 5 p.m. Nov. 19, could hurt Beer Gardens and Fishbowl Follies, says Frank Geltner of the EMU Program Office.

The office lost a six channel sound mixer, an amplifier and a sound equalizer that were all used in program office events. The thefts also depleted the office's sound system, Geltner says, which was used for the Beer Gardens.

The equipment is valued at

nearly \$1,500, Geltner says.

A Eugene police investigation is underway, but Geltner thinks the equipment is not something that can be easily hidden.

"It's not the kind of equipment that people in this town can have without being noticed," he says.

The University Inn burglaries also netted burglars nearly \$3,300 in tape decks, phonograph needles and money that was discovered missing after the Thanksgiving holiday break, says Neal Werner, University Inn Director.

So far, only 11 reports of missing items have been made by students living in the Inn, Werner says. The thefts ranged from \$6 in change to nearly \$11,100 in other goods.

The rooms that were burglarized didn't show signs of forced entry, Werner says. Most of the goods were taken from different rooms on the same floor of the complex.

Although the police are also investigating the thefts, several University Inn residents are angry because of what they think could be lax security measures.

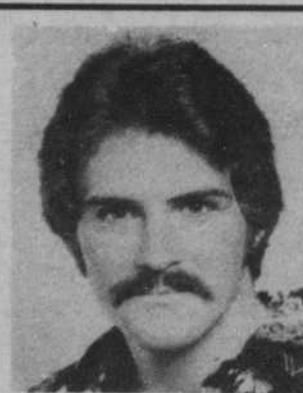
Sociologist plans speech

A Fulbright lecturer at the University of Oregon will give a free public talk Monday at 3:30 p.m. in Room 204 of Condon Hall.

Mikolaj Kozakiewicz, a professor of sociology from the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, will lecture on "Political Activity of Students: An East-West Comparison."

Kozakiewicz is in residence in the UO Department of Sociology through Jan. 15.

Wednesday, November 29, 1978



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