

# Hiker laments loss of non-wilderness trails

By CAROLYN RAMSAY  
Of the Emerald

Hikers had better show concern for non-wilderness trails or the paths will disappear, says hiker Helen Smith.

The 70-year-old conservationist encourages fellow hikers to acquaint themselves with their rangers' planned timber sales and how the sales affect hiking trails.

Smith has devoted her retirement years to the Lowell Ranger District, working to preserve the trails she loves to tread. She has hiked the trails for 35 or 40 years with the Obsidians, a local hiking and climbing club, she says.

"I have realized for years that we were gradually losing our trails outside the wilderness to timber operations," Smith says.

She says she became aware of the conflict between hikers and loggers when former Forest Service Supervisor Zane Smith initiated "sales and trails breakfasts." These meetings were designed to inform the public of forest timber sales each year.

Smith's breakfasts were replaced by public review meetings every five years. But the

turnout at these public sessions is slim, she says.

People must realize trail preservation is in the hands of the forest administration, Smith says. Unless hikers let the administration know how they feel about their trails, the trails could disappear.

"We don't have anything else we can do," she says.

Three-fourths of the Lowell district trails were damaged by the forest industry during the past 15 years, Smith says.

Smith encourages hikers and nature-lovers to attend the public review meetings, where maps show the forest's planned timber sales for the next five years. Meetings will be held at local ranger stations soon.

Smith says the logging companies are not always aware of the effect their clear-cutting and road-building has on hikers' trails because "they want the timber so bad."

Clear-cutting an area of trees leaves stretches of trail exposed to the sun, which promotes undergrowth. The trails get lost in the underbrush, she says.

Building roads through non-wilderness areas can break a



Helen Smith

Photo by Steve Dykes

trail's continuity if the road follows the trail for a distance and then leaves it. In addition, hikers easily get confused when their

trail meets a paved road if a continuing path isn't visible.

One of Smith's successes has been to encourage foresters to

build their roads perpendicular to the trails. Cutters have been very cooperative in this area, she says.

## Wilderness debate continues

By LESLIE FARRIS  
Of the Emerald

Oregon's proposed wilderness bill again will be open to public debate during April when Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., holds hearings in Salem, Bend and Medford.

Weaver proposed the bill in

January, titled "RARE II Resolution Act of 1981," as a compromise between conservationist and timber industry interests. The bill names no specific wilderness areas but limits future wilderness expansion to 3 percent of Oregon's yearly timber harvest or 5 percent of Oregon's federal timber

base, approximately 240 million board feet.

Weaver held hearings in February to hear testimony on the 3 percent "cap." Jack Desmond, of the Oregon Wilds be added to the bill. Anyone wishing to testify should contact the OWC at 686-5014 or the Survival Center at 686-4356. Rides are available.

After the second round of hearings, Desmond says Weaver and perhaps Oregon's other congressmen will draw up a wilderness bill, which Weaver probably will introduce in May. The success of the hearings depends largely on the number of wilderness activists who show up at them, Desmond says.

"We've got to make sure the congressmen know there's broad support for wilderness in Oregon," he says.

"The atmosphere in regards to wilderness has been changing over the past few years. There's a new breed of forester coming up who recognizes to maintain a healthy forest base, you have to leave things alone."

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