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Park it — at one of 70 outdoor sanctuaries

Take a guided tour through some of Eugene's nicest parks. Expansive green lawns and thickly wooded hills abound both within the city and in outlying areas. And October usually has Eugene's nicest weather . . .

By **TOM VISOKY**
 Of the Emerald

When the school year starts to drag and study pressures become intolerable, it's nice to have a place to relax or blow off steam. The Eugene area has more than 70 such places.

To many, Eugene's city and county parks are quiet islands amid a sea of city craziness, where the frazzled can read, play, enjoy the scenery or nap.

The parks range in size from the tiny four-tenths-acre West

University Neighborhood Park tucked into the corner of 14th Avenue and Patterson Street to the sprawling 305-acre Spencer Butte Park located two miles south of the city limits on Willamette Street.

Some of the more popular large parks include Spencer Butte, Buford, Alton Baker, Amazon, Hendricks and Skinner Butte, with the latter two the most popular among students.

Skinner Butte Park, which borders the south side of the Willamette River two blocks west of the Ferry Street bridge, includes a number of playing fields and picnic areas within its 82 acres. The top of the butte is accessible by road and is a great place to view the city or watch the sunset.

On the south side of the butte lies a 40-foot columnar basalt cliff where rock climbers test their mettle. A number of paths flanked by poison oak criss-cross the butte, so beware when walking.

Hendricks Park is located on a wooded hill a half-mile southeast of campus and is perhaps best noted for its rhododendron and azalea garden that blooms in late spring.

However, many strollers and joggers also use the numerous hiking trails that wind through the park's 81 acres, and student groups often hold picnics or parties in the sheltered picnic areas.

Alton Baker Park, located across the river from Skinner Butte, is the most heavily used park in Lane County. In late spring and summer it is populated by scads of sunbathers, swimmers and frisbee throwers.

Throughout the year a seemingly unending stream of joggers bounce through the park on Pre's Trail, a 4.2-mile-long trail of bark chip named after one-time Olympic hopeful Steve Prefontaine.

Free rock and bluegrass concerts occasionally are held in the park. The park can be reached from campus by crossing the Autzen Stadium footbridge and following the bike path along the river.

Amazon Park, located along Hilyard Street between 20th

Avenue and 29th Avenue, has a number of recreational facilities including tennis courts, ballfields, picnic tables, a 1-mile jogging path and a swimming pool that is open only in the summer.

The Amazon Community Center, also located in the park, hosts numerous classes, events and workshops throughout the year.

Buford Park, which borders the Coast Fork of the Willamette River about six miles from campus, offers a number of attractions that lure students out to the end of Seavey Loop Road.

The park contains an arboretum and a popular — though controversial — swimming hole. Once a favorite of nude sunbathers, the swimming hole at Buford Park became the center of attention after complaints from arboretum owners caught the attention of the Lane County Sheriff.

Also, the 1,518-foot summit provides an excellent view of the Three Sisters, the Seavey Loop agricultural area and Weyerhaeuser's enormous Springfield lumber mill. An occasional hang glider can be seen floating down Mt. Pisgah's grassy slopes.

At an elevation of 2,065-feet, **Spencer Butte** offers the best 360-degree vista in the Eugene area. The five-mile drive or bike ride from campus to the parking lot at the base of the butte followed by a 15 or 20-minute hike to the top are efforts well worth making.

A sunrise in an icy-blue sky over the snow-capped Cascades or a fiery sunset over the rolling hills of the Coast Range are a few unforgettable sights possible from the rocky summit.

In addition to the larger, more popular parks, a number of smaller neighborhood parks lie scattered about the city. Five of these are within six blocks of campus.

Further information about local city or county parks can be obtained from the Eugene Parks and Recreation Department located on the fourth floor of City Hall II or from Lane County Open Spaces located in the County Courthouse.

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