

SPORTS

Shotgun Creek offers variety of outdoor fun



INTO THE OUTDOORS
BY JAYSON JACOBY

It was late in the afternoon, and I was walking along the Shotgun Creek trail near Marcola wearing shorts and a T-shirt, enjoying the sunny, 65-degree day.

Nothing unusual about that, except that I suddenly remembered it was only February. You're not supposed to be out hiking in the Willamette Valley — or anywhere in the state for that matter — in late February wearing shorts or a T-shirt, and certainly not both.

But because we obviously can't control the weather, we might as well enjoy its recent unseasonable permutations. The Bureau of Land Management's Shotgun Creek recreation site, located in the Coburg Hills north of Eugene, is a logical choice for late-winter sun worshippers because it offers a wide array of hiking choices

and is just a half-hour's drive away.

There are actually two ways to get to the Shotgun Creek trails. The first, by way of Springfield and Marcola Road, is the shortest and easiest. Drive on Highway 126 (which follows the McKenzie River) through Springfield to the Marcola exit. Cross the McKenzie on Hayden Bridge and drive three miles past the small town of Marcola to the Shotgun Creek road, which is well-marked. Two more miles of pavement lead to the park.

The slightly longer and slower route offers a lot more scenery. Follow Coburg Road north of Eugene and take McKenzie View Drive, which leads east (right) from the Armitage Bridge over the McKenzie. This winding road passes rock cliffs, a waterfall, views of the river and pastoral rural farms before ending at a junction with Hill Road. Turn

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