

Columbia Gorge offers hikers many opportunities

A stunning natural attraction lies on Oregon's front doorstep. It is the 80-mile-long Columbia River Gorge. Try to imagine a whisper as this article reveals one of Oregon's greatest secrets.

Variety is the perfect word for the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area, through which runs the Columbia River, the largest river on the Pacific coast of North America. The 253,000 acres of rugged land contain beautiful mountains, groves, glens, beaches, lakes, streams, and waterfalls (including the Multnomah Falls, one of the highest falls in the country).

Over this terrain roam Roosevelt Elk, Black-tailed Deer, fox, weasel, rabbits, squirrels, and even the occasional Black Bear or cougar. To round out the diversity are thousands of varieties of trees, flowers, ferns, moss, herbs, and grasses, some of which are extremely rare.

"The only thing that the gorge does not have is sand dunes and camels," joked Jack Johnson, a hiking enthusiast from Eugene.

The activities that this area has to offer almost match the diverse geography. Hundreds of hiking trails crisscross the gorge. Many of these trails follow sheer cliffs,

mountain streams, and the most amazing waterfalls in Oregon. Some reach the top of mountains (Dog Mountain being one of the most spectacular) or viewpoints that offer a lofty look at the gorge. The coming spring months will be especially good times to visit the gorge's trails.

"I hiked Dog Mountain in late April last year and it was incredible," said Johnson. "There were flowers blooming everywhere."

Trail guides can be picked up for around \$10 at most bookstores or outdoor stores. Trails can also be found by just pulling off the highway at trailhead exits.

If there is one group of people that know the Columbia River Gorge well, it is windsurfers. Hood River, located some 60 miles east of Portland, is the windsurfing mecca of the Northwest. From May to November thousands of devotees ride the river with its 40 mph winds and eight-foot swells. A beginner can try his hand at the sport for around \$50 for equipment and lessons. Since Hood River has around 40 windsurf-related businesses, it will not be hard to find a place to rent equipment.

The natural beauty, and affordability of the Columbia River Gorge are secrets worth knowing. So, if you have never been there, it might be time to pack up the car for a trip.

If you would rather not risk your neck on the water, Mount Hood offers skiing only a half-hour's drive from Hood River.

Other popular activities include: riding mountain bikes on old logging roads or trails; rafting down the rapids of Columbia's tributaries; or fishing for trout, smelt, pike, chub, char, or one of the Columbia's five native salmon species. The Fish and Wildlife Department has information on which fish are running and if a license is needed.

Camping accommodations can be found in the Columbia Gorge area for next to nothing. The Ainsworth Campground, located 37 miles east of Portland at Exit 35 off of Interstate 84, has campsites for \$14. There are many other campgrounds in the gorge. Motels are considerably more expensive. Rates at the Phoenix Inn in Troutdale start at \$50 for a single. The price at the Hood River Hotel in Hood River is \$49 plus tax for a single. Prices do fluctuate according to the season.

One of the best things about the Columbia River Gorge is that it does not cost a fortune to get there. Eugene residents have front row seats with the hour-and-a-half drive.

The gorge can be reached by taking Interstate 5 north to the Interstate 205 exit, then following I-205 to Gresham and taking I-84 east. There are two highways that follow the gorge. I-84 is the new highway. It offers easy access to the towns and tourist sites of the gorge. There is also the Old Scenic Highway that can be caught outside of Gresham.

The scenic highway, built in 1915, is a treat all its own. Narrow and windy at times, the views will make travel down this road all worth while. The Horsetail, Multnomah, Bridal Veil, and Wah-keena Falls, as well as some great views of the gorge can be found right off the scenic highway.

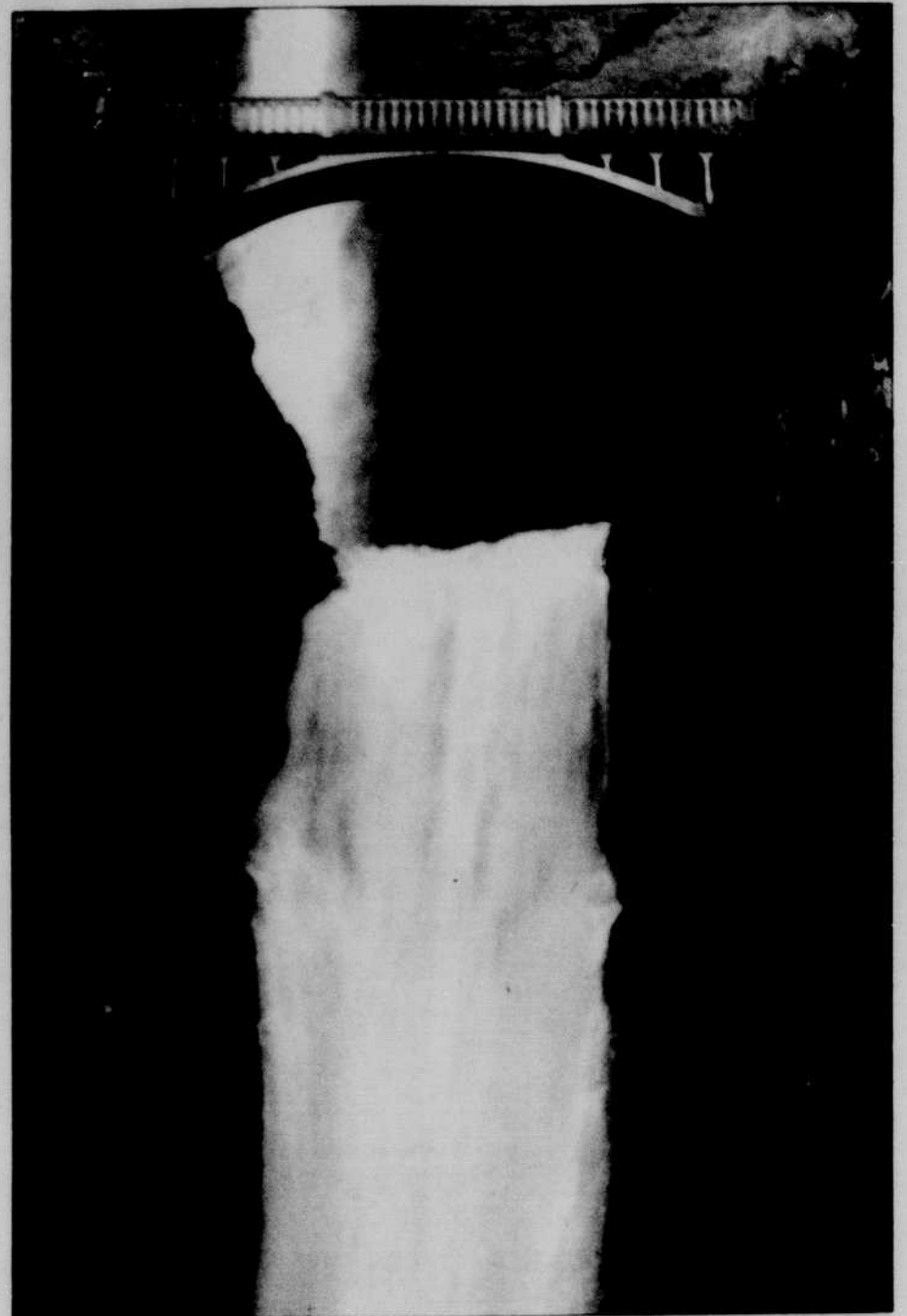
"The Columbia Gorge is one of the greatest things about Oregon," said Jean King, who is now a travel agent for Kingston Travel in Seattle. "I used to drive down the scenic highway about once a month. I just couldn't get enough of it."

The natural beauty, and affordability of the Columbia River Gorge are secrets worth knowing. So, if you have never been there, it might be time to pack up the car for a trip.

— Ben Moebius



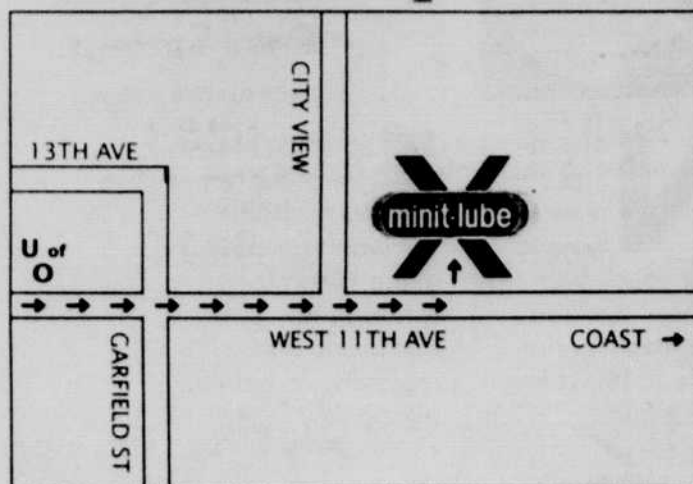
WILSON CHAN/for the Emerald
A curious hiker feels her place in the universe at Multnomah Falls.



WILSON CHAN/for the Emerald
Multnomah Falls (above) is a very popular destination for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. The Columbia Gorge (left) encompasses 253,000 acres of opportunities for getting close to nature. The Columbia River is the largest river on the Pacific Coast of North America.



This Map Will Lead You To Oil.



2300 W. 11th (corner of City View and West 11th)
687-8837 • M-S 8 a.m.-6 p.m. • Sun 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

\$5 OFF REGULAR FULL SERVICE.

- Comprehensive oil change
- Lube chassis
- Check vital fluids
- Even inflate tires

ALL IN JUST 10 MINUTES!

Expires 2/25/94. This offer good only at West 11th store.
Not valid with any other offer.

minit-lube



STAFF BOX

Kaly Soto
SUPPLEMENTS EDITOR

Jeff Paslay
GRAPHICS EDITOR

Anthony Forney
PHOTO EDITOR

Meg Dedolph
David Thorn
Ben Boebius
Rachel Beyda
Ed Klopfenstein
REPORTERS

Michael Shindler
Wilson Chan
PHOTOGRAPHER

Jake Berg
EDITOR