

“ Rain or shine, the climb still gets your heart going, and you can always get a decent view, no matter how cloudy or rainy it is. ”

Jeremy Van Buskirk
South Eugene resident

Where to go

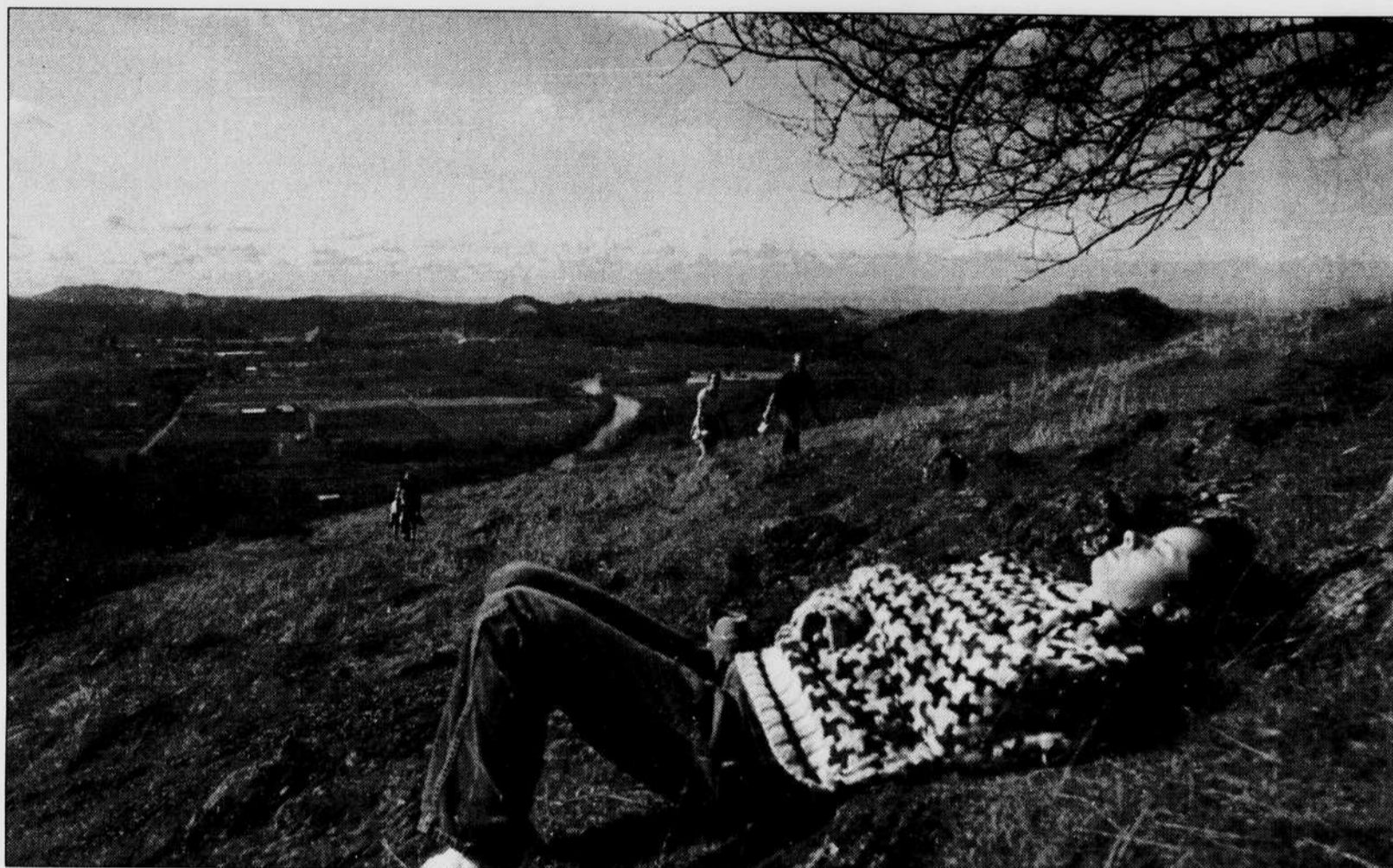
■ **Spencer Butte:** Take Willamette Street south one mile past 52nd Avenue.

■ **Mount Pisgah:** Take I-5 south for about five miles, then take the Highway 58 exit that goes to Oakridge. Half a mile off that exit, take a left on Seavy Loop Drive. Once on Seavy Loop, follow it for another four miles, and take a left at the stop sign.

■ **McKenzie Trail System (by bus):** The number 91 leaves the Eugene Station at 4:47 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. on weekdays and at 8:30 a.m. on weekends. It leaves the McKenzie Ranger Station at 4 p.m. and 7:16 p.m. on weekdays and at 6:03 p.m. on weekends.

■ **Kentucky Falls:** Take West 11th Avenue out of town, where it will become Highway 126. Travel 35 miles west on 126 and turn south at Clay Creek and the Whitaker Creek Recreation Site. After a mile and a half, turn right at the Kentucky Falls Trail sign, and continue to follow signs for fourteen miles.

■ **Eugene to Pacific Crest Trail:** Take I-5 south, as if you were going to Mount Pisgah. Go past the turnoff to Seavy Loop and travel approximately ten miles on Highway 58. You will see signs for Elijah Bristow Park, and that is where the trail begins. For information regarding sections of the trail that are open for use, contact the Middle Fork Ranger District, P.O. Box 1410, Oakridge, OR. 97463.



University graduate Jean Stager, 24, takes a catnap during a hike at Mount Pisgah. Located 10 miles southeast of Eugene, Mount Pisgah offers both an easy, pleasant hike and a more vertical hike. *George Roue/Emerald*

HAPPY TRAILS

A web of hiking trails threads through the Eugene area, creating numerous options for hikers with or without a car

By **Bryan Petersen**
Oregon Daily Emerald

Hiking offers many benefits that are hard to beat: the majesty of towering trees, the taste and smell of fresh air, the sweeping vistas — and the fact that little, if any, training is needed to do it.

Also, even if you are somewhat vehicularly-challenged, you can still get out and stretch your legs in some traditional Oregon settings that are close to home.

Spencer Butte is the most popular local hiking destination, and for good reason. The view from the 2052-foot summit is nothing less than spectacular, with a 360-degree view of the greater Eugene area. The climb will get most hikers huffing and puffing without being too hard for beginners.

South Eugene resident Jeremy Van Buskirk hiked the butte last week, even though the weather was less than pleasant. He says even with bad weather, the hike is great.

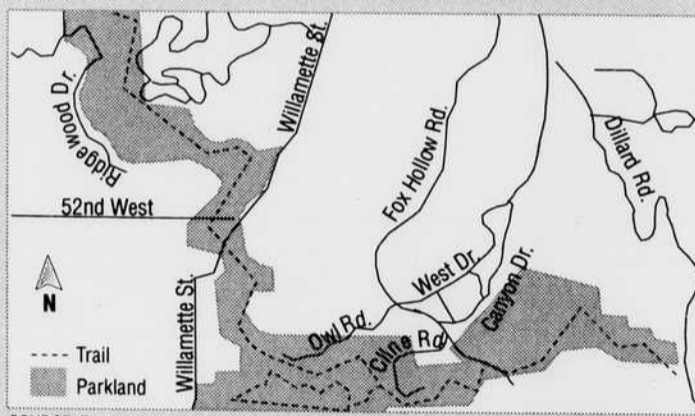
“I love the butte. Rain or shine, the climb still gets your heart going, and you can always get at least a decent view, no matter how cloudy or rainy it is,” Buskirk says. “When it rains, you just wear clothes that you don’t care about and plan on getting a little muddy. It’s a blast.”

But Spencer Butte is not the only hiking destination that is close to home.

The South Hills Ridgeline Trail is a series of connected trails that run along the ridges of the hills that can be seen circling the south end of town. There are several different trailheads with parking available — one at 52nd Street and Willamette, one at Fox Hollow and Christensen, two off of Dillard Road and one past the KVAL studios on Blanton

South Hills Ridgeline Trail

This trail system offers easy hikes and great scenery. Some of the trails may have changed, but the changes are marked by maps at the trailheads.



SOURCE: Eugene Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, April 1987

Leigh-Ann Cyboron/Emerald

ton Road. Most of these sites have maps posted at the beginning of the trails, so those who wish to access different sections of the trail can do so easily.

The Ridgeline Trail system offers easy hikes and great scenery, with views of south Eugene, downtown, the Cascades and the Coburn Hills, depending on where you are on the system. There is also a trail that connects with the trail that leads to the summit of Spencer Butte, so those looking for a full day of hiking can simply begin there.

Those who wish to get out of town but still keep it down to an easy day trip also have many options.

One of the closest and most popular is Mount Pisgah, 10 miles southeast of Eugene. The Mount Pisgah Arboretum is located at the base of the mountain and is itself a nice, pleasant hike, with easy trails that travel along the Willamette River through a beautiful park-like setting.

Mount Pisgah also offers a more verti-

cal hike that begins at the marked trailhead that goes from the parking lot to the summit of the mountain. From the top, there is a great view of the Cascades as well as the Eugene area.

Mount Pisgah is a popular destination among students looking for a pleasant day of hiking. Dan Geiger, associate coordinator of the University Outdoor Program says this is not surprising.

“It’s popular because it’s close, beautiful, there’s great bird watching and it’s hard to carve out a time niche for students to go further out of town out to hike,” he says. “Another attraction is that Mount Pisgah is one of the last remnants of the original Willamette Valley ecosystem. Most of the rest have been chopped up for farmland.”

Another easy and beautiful hike is the McKenzie Trail System, which travels from the McKenzie Bridge Ranger Station up the river for more than twenty miles. This trail is well-traveled and

marked, and it is accessible by bus.

If transportation is not an issue, the options become limitless. One great destination is Kentucky Falls, a bit of a drive, but well worth it.

From the trailhead, the hike in is mostly downhill, and the trail ends at a pair of side-by-side waterfalls at the merging of two creeks. Wintertime rains swell the creeks and add to the overall drama of the scene. Eugene resident Jay Aley, an avid hiker and outdoor lover who has sought and hiked many trails in Oregon, considers this one of his favorites.

“Kentucky Falls is awesome! The trees create a canopy, making the hike very green, and I almost always see a deer or two. You just get a feeling that you’ve left civilization and entered the forest primeval,” he says.

If you have the experience and the willpower, there are trails in the vicinity that are ready to put you to the test. One favorite is the Eugene to Pacific Crest Trail, which is a 74-mile trail that extends from Lowell, southwest of Springfield, to the Pacific Crest Trail in the Cascades, near the famous Waldo Lake. Parts of the trail are still under construction, but the majority is ready for use.

The trail is open to both horseback riders and hikers, and along the way there are numerous stops in parks and on the summits of various buttes and mountains. The last part of the trail winds along the edge of Waldo Lake.

For those who want more information on hiking, the University Outdoor Program is putting together a hiking bulletin board in the Erb Memorial Union that will explain in detail these and other nearby trails. So get out the hiking boots, grab a jacket and experience Oregon in one of the best ways possible: from a trail.