

BUTTE-iful EUGENE

■ With more than 150 years of history behind it, Skinner Butte still provides a setting for local outdoor recreation

By Will Wyer
for the Emerald

Students and families looking to get outdoors over the weekend can head up to historical Skinner Butte for a view of downtown Eugene and beyond.

Besides providing an overview of the landscape, the point also represents the birthplace of the city.

On the southwestern slope of the butte, city founder Eugene Franklin Skinner and his wife, Mary, settled down and built their log cabin back in 1846.

"This is the heart of the city; I mean, this is where it all began,"

said Ray Wiley, Rotary Club project manager for Skinner Butte Renovation. "This is our historical resource, and it's pretty important."

In 1997, the Eugene Rotary Club took steps to help repair the top of the butte that had been left polluted and rundown through the years. Through member donations, the organization was able to clean up the surrounding area and provide the community with a place for families and visitors to overlook the valley, Wiley said.

Whether driving up to the top or hiking the various trails to reach the peak from the base of the park that surrounds it, the view remains a place of activity and leisure for students and residents alike.

"It's a special place as far as getting a workout for me because I like the hills," Eugene resident Dorothy Shannon said. The trip up the butte doesn't have to be exercise-oriented, however.

"Most of the time I spend up here is just me looking out over all of Eugene," said University student Mike Meisel, a sociology major. "If the weather does hold up, this a good place to come and just be lazy in the sun."

In addition, other monuments can be found atop the butte.

A 90-foot flagpole commemorat-

ing fallen Eugene veterans of every American war stands at the center of the butte, and a plaque naming all soldiers remains at the base of the park.

Just below the flag, a huge letter O lies across the slope, a symbol University alumni donated in 1908. The big O helped initiate the University's growing rivalry with Oregon State University.

OSU students routinely burned the letter that was originally made of wood, park planner Robin Hostick said, until the letter was repaired with a metal foundation.

Hidden on a trail 50 feet up from the parking lot, visitors will find a big letter E, a monument donated in 1915 by a local high school.

At the base of the butte lies Skinner Park, dedicated in 1914, providing various activities for all. In addition to the hiking trails found throughout the park, a bike trail lies just along the Willamette River for people interested in a quicker means of transportation.

The most popular attraction is the view that looks out across the city atop the butte. Even on overcast days, cars can be seen parked facing downtown, enjoying the same view Eugene Skinner saw when he first arrived.

"It's a real inspirational site," said Wiley. "I've seen people stand there at that view and stay mesmerized for a half-hour at a time just standing there."



Catharine Kendall Emerald

(above) Matthew Ingilizian looks at the view from the Butte while Tracy Corwin stands to take a drink of water. (right) The picturesque peak of the Butte at sunset in winter.



Catharine Kendall Emerald

UNIVERSITY
• COMMONS •

APARTMENTS

Property address: 90 Commons Drive

UNIVERSITY
OF OREGON

90 Commons Drive

Furnished 1, 2 & 4 Bedroom
Apartments

- Washer/dryer in each apartment
- Close to campus
- On bus route
- Electronic alarm systems
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Private bedrooms/Individual leases
- Computer lab, copier and fax availability
- Ample parking
- Heated swimming pool
- Basketball and volleyball courts
- High speed Internet access available in each apartment this spring

www.capstone-dev.com

WELCOME

TO YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME!



NOW LEASING!

CALL 338.4000

or stop by our Leasing Office at 90 Commons Drive