

Katalin Linder for the Emerald

Adam Dettler, Luke Laird and Brad Simpson (left to right) relax and enjoy the view after hiking to the top of Spencer Butte on March 4.

THE VIEW'S A BUTTE

A University student says a hike up Spencer Butte is 'really short, and the top is gorgeous'

By Katalin Linder
for the Emerald

A sunny day in Eugene is a dangerous situation. For many, it means a "what-if-this-is-the-last-time-I-see-the-sun-before-July?" panic sets in. Living in a climate where gray skies envelop the world for eight months of the year, I must make the most of each day the sun shines.

Luckily, Eugene has an abundance of hiking trails awaiting every enthusiastic, nature-loving person who wants to explore them. My favorite: Spencer Butte.

Spencer Butte is a popular spot to hike in Eugene because it offers perhaps the most rewarding view in the area. Being atop the highest point in the south hills, hikers can see for what seems like forever in every direction.

"On a clear day you can see Sisters," said Adam DeHeer, a senior at South Eugene High School. "It's not (a very strenuous hike) for the view at the top."

That seems to be the general consensus among hikers at Spencer Butte: It's a trip that's not too difficult with an amazing view.

The hike is "really short, and the top is gorgeous," University student Anna Byers said. "You can make it in a half hour."

Byers, accompanied by six of her friends, celebrated her birthday by climbing to the top of the butte to enjoy the fresh air.

The hike itself can be easy or difficult, depending on the trail you take and the speed at which you climb. The trails are between a half-mile and two miles long and differ in types of terrain.

Assuming you climb to the top, the majority of the hike is on a well-maintained trail through the woods.

Some areas are relatively flat while others are steeper. The most difficult (and most fun) part is toward the top when you choose your own path, climbing over huge rocks and undeveloped landscape for the rest of the way.

Emily Kegel, a Eugene resident for the past year, thought parts of the hike were difficult. However, "you're not really thinking about

how hard it is," she said.

Kegel's friend Aaron Kruziki of Michigan had never climbed anything as big as Spencer Butte.

"It's amazing to not have anything higher than you," he said.

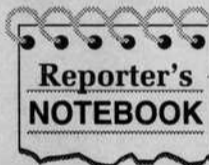
Spencer Butte is also a great place to go hiking with a dog and a good place for people like me who like seeing lots of cute puppies.

Shannon Wikoff, a Eugene resident, enjoys hiking with her two dogs, Yo-na and Riley. She said she appreciates that there are a variety of trails so close to her home and accessible for her dogs.

"I love to get out here," she said. "It's nice because you can hike different routes."

Spencer Butte attracts people of all ages and interests, but almost everyone who hikes it seems to do it for the incredible view. If you've never hiked Spencer Butte, I highly recommend it the next time you're frantically deciding what to do on that rare sunny day in Eugene.

Katalin Linder is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



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