

■ Outdoor recreation

A BLOOMIN' good time

Mount Pisgah Arboretum, home to many species of plants, will hold its Wildflower Festival on Sunday

BY ASHLEY GRIFFIN
OUTDOOR RECREATION REPORTER

Eugene is one of the only cities around that has a place where visitors can find 67 different families gathered in 209 acres. The catch: These aren't human families but families of plants, and they can be found at Mount Pisgah Arboretum, one of Eugene's greatest hiking and outdoor recreation spots.

Mount Pisgah Arboretum is a stunning natural park that lies between the Coast Fork of the Willamette River and the slopes of Mount Pisgah. Less than a 15 minute drive from Eugene, the park provides hiking trails in a diverse setting everyday from sunrise to sunset. Admission is free and paths, picnic tables and homemade benches are strewn throughout the park, providing visitors ample opportunities to appreciate nature.

At a park this large and this diverse, nature has a lot to offer.

"It's close to town, a good workout, has a variety of ecosystems and views, a good variety of trails and my dog loves it too," said Outdoor Program Coordinator Dan Geiger. "The variety of habitat — river, meadow, wooded etc. — make Pisgah an excellent place to see a large variety of native species in a single walk."

At Mount Pisgah Arboretum, nature emerges as something real, tangible and continuously interesting. Visitors can expect to see various forms of plant and animal life. The arboretum is home to deer, foxes, coyote, bats and a large population of bird species.

Bird watching is a main attraction at the park, especially during the early morning hours. Resident and migratory song birds and fowl fill the arboretum's four distinct habitats. In the spring, Red-eyed Vireo rest in the Riparian habitat while Chestnut-backed Chickadee chirp their way through the seasons in the Coniferous area.

The arboretum is also well-known for hosting nature walks that showcase the park's abundance of wildflowers. Located in the River Meadow area, the two-acre Patricia M. Baker Memorial Wildflower Garden is an especially large draw.

On Sunday, the arboretum will celebrate these blooming beauties at the park's Wildflower Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival will feature a wildflower display, music, arts and crafts, a children's activity area, a plant sale and guided hikes every half hour.

The hikes will take place on the park's elaborate maze of trails — eight miles in all — that wind through its ecological habitats. On any given day, visitors can walk on broad dirt trails alongside a river, a small trickling creek, a riparian meadow and a wildflower garden. Near the top of the park, paths become rocky trails that guide hikers through a white oak savanna.

Hikers looking for a challenge can attempt Mount Pisgah's steep summit climb. This path winds up the mountain and spits hikers out on an airy grass hill with great views of the surrounding areas. While this route averages about one to two hours round-trip, the view at the top is well worth the exertion.

The Outdoor Program hosts a Mount Pisgah hiking group every Wednesday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Geiger said dogs are also welcome.

The natural beauty of Mount Pisgah is obvious the moment visitors arrive. But the real beauty of this location is in its ability to offer something new with each visit.

"I go about once a week," Geiger said. "I love to watch it change over the seasons and there's a lot a variety, so I don't get bored with the same old road to the top."

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TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

The trails at Oregon's Mount Pisgah Arboretum, about 15 minutes from Eugene, wind through a variety of ecological habitats.

■ Club Sports

Women's water polo finishes 8th at Nationals

Amanda Fay, Becky Bland and Courtney Ashford finished the weekend with a combined 16 goals, but the Ducks came away with only one win

BY LUKE ANDREWS
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The Oregon Club women's water polo team finished its season at the Collegiate National Championships last weekend with an eighth-place finish.

Despite an opening-game victory over Penn State, the seventh-seeded Ducks lost their last three matches to finish the tournament with a 1-3 record.

Amanda Fay, Becky Bland and Courtney Ashford paced the Oregon attack. Fay and Bland finished the weekend with five goals, and

Ashford finished with six.

"We felt that we played really well, just not as strong as we needed to," team coordinator Kristen Laird said. "But Nationals is an awesome place to get to, and we are pleased with the outcome of the season."

Oregon advanced to the tournament after finishing with a 13-3 record in the Northwest Intercollegiate League. The Ducks then secured first place at the regional qualifier, earning a trip as the seventh seed to the Nationals at Texas A&M.

The Ducks met 10th-seeded Penn State in the first game and jumped out quickly to a

three-point lead after the first quarter, which proved to be the game's final margin of victory. The Nittany Lions kept the game close, but Oregon prevailed with a 9-6 win and advanced to take on Dartmouth in the second round. Ashford finished with five of Oregon's nine goals.

"We played phenomenal defense," Laird said. "We pretty much shut down any offense they had."

In the second game against second-seeded Dartmouth, the Ducks battled to a 2-2 tie at halftime but could not overcome four unanswered goals in the third quarter by the Big Green and fell 8-4.

The loss matched Oregon with the MIT Engineers. Again, the Ducks were able to keep the score close until MIT halted the Oregon attack and added six goals of its own in the last three

quarters to overwhelm the Ducks 9-3. Ashford and Bland accounted for all Oregon goals.

The final game of the weekend pitted Oregon against the Air Force Academy. Despite a 5-3 advantage at halftime, the Ducks could not fend off a furious second half by the Falcons in which the team scored four goals. Still, Oregon entered the final quarter clinging to a one-point lead, but the Falcons managed to tie the game and send it into overtime.

In the first of two extra quarters, Air Force took a three-goal advantage and hung on after the second overtime to escape with an 11-10 victory.

"We had a high number of shots taken, but we were not executing," Laird said. "It was definitely bittersweet because we knew we played well and had a great season."