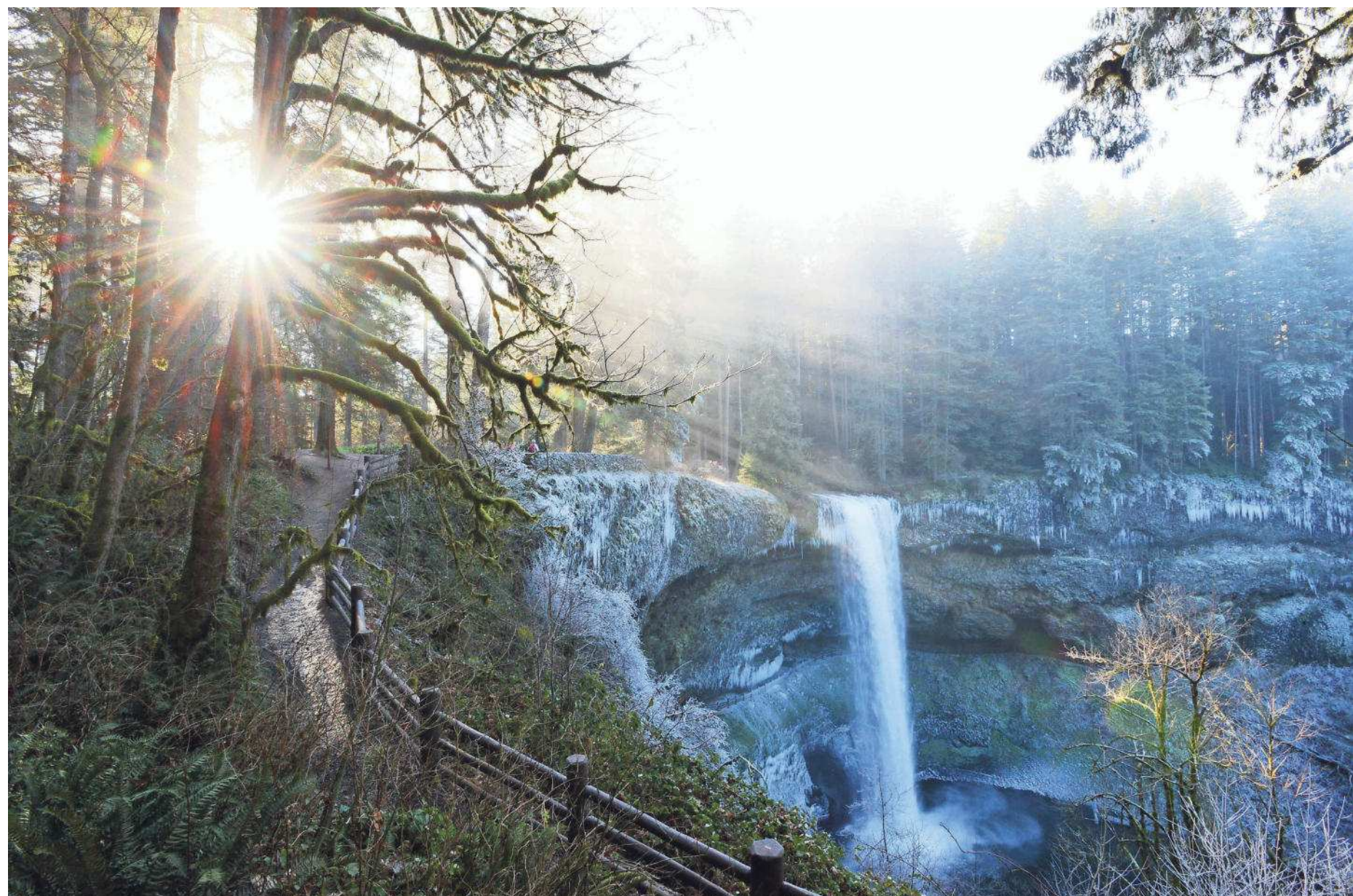




DANIELLE PETERSON/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Sunlight shines through the trees as seen from a viewpoint at Silver Falls State Park on a cold, icy morning.

BEST OF SILVER FALLS WITH 5 EASY HIKES

ZACH URNESS
STATESMAN JOURNAL

The showcase trail at Silver Falls State Park is the Trail of Ten Falls. But not everyone has the time or endurance to hike the 8.7 miles or the 1,100 feet of elevation gain.

Plenty of visitors, especially those with children, won't be able to hike the entire canyon.

But that shouldn't stop you from seeing every waterfall.

By starting at different trailheads, you can see the Trail of Ten Falls in short increments, rather than all at once.

All of the waterfall hikes are shorter than 3 miles, which is a good cutoff for younger children. (One hike is longer, but you'll understand the reason). Stop at the park office for a detailed map.

STROLLER, BIKE AND DOG ROUTE

This first hike doesn't have waterfall views, but it does provide one very important option for families.

The Trail of Ten Falls doesn't allow pets (even if leashed), and it's not great for strollers.

So, if you have dogs and infants along, it might make sense for some members of the family to hike the paved bike path that begins at South Falls Day Use Area.

The pathway is a 4-mile loop — you don't have to do the entire thing — and passes some absolutely massive trees on a peaceful stroll.

ROUTE: Start at the far end of the South Falls parking area. It's easy to find by following little green bike pointers. **Total:** 4 miles

SOUTH FALLS LOOP

This 1-mile hike is the classic Silver Falls trek and the most popular hike at the state park.

Beginning from the South Falls Day Use Area, the route follows a paved walkway past historic South Falls Lodge (which serves lunch) to an overlook at the top of the 177-foot waterfall.

Follow the pavement downhill, go left at the junction and hike into the cave behind South Falls. After enjoying this magical spot, follow the pavement and cross a scenic bridge overlooking South Falls and hike back up the way you came.

The trek uphill is a bit steep but doable for most people.

ROUTE: Start at South Falls Day Use Area. Hike past South Falls Lodge on main paved trail. Follow Trail of Ten Falls down to and behind South Falls. Cross bridge, and hike back up route you came in on. **Total:** 1 mile, 280 feet climb

LOWER SOUTH FALLS LOOP

This trek is an extension of the above hike,



ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Noah Peters, left, and Rylan Peters explore the caves behind South Falls at Silver Falls State Park.

adding another spectacular waterfall and an extra 1.6 miles of hiking for a route that totals 2.6 miles.

This hike follows the same route past South Falls, but instead of crossing the bridge, continues to 93-foot Lower South Falls, yet another place where you can hike behind a sheet of falling water.

After soaking up the spray of Lower South Falls, turn right on Maple Ridge Trail, and follow it back to your car at the South Falls Day Use Area.

The full hike is 2.6 miles with a steep little hike to get out of the canyon that will be pushing it for younger kids. Get them up the final stretch with the promise of ice cream from South Falls Lodge.

ROUTE: Start at South Falls Day Use Area. Hike past South Falls Lodge on main paved trail. Follow Trail of Ten Falls down to and behind South Falls. Continue 1 mile to Lower South Falls, following signs. Turn right on Maple Ridge Trail and follow back to car. **Total:** 2.6 miles, 400 feet climb

NORTH FALLS/UPPER NORTH FALLS

I've always considered North Falls just a bit more interesting than South Falls.

Start at the North Falls Trailhead, and begin by hiking to Upper North Falls, a 65-foot plunge into a pool. Then hike back the way you came, and drop down to North Falls, a 136-foot frozen rope of a waterfall that thunders into rocks below.

Visiting both waterfalls requires an easy 1.6

miles without too much climb. The cave behind North Falls is my favorite in the park. It's a huge, sweeping cathedral with a view of the waterfall looking out into the forest.

This can be split into two very short hikes of 0.8 miles to Upper North Falls or 0.6 miles to North Falls cave.

ROUTE: Start at North Falls Trailhead. Hike 0.8 miles to Upper North Falls and to trailhead. Hike 0.8 miles into North Falls cave and back. **Total:** 1.6 miles, 205 feet of climb

FIVE FALLS TOUR

This hike is at its best during the rainy season, and when it's rolling, it features five waterfalls, three that are pretty stunning.

At 2.6 miles with 450 feet of climb, it's the toughest hike mentioned here. The good news is that with no dull moments, the miles fly by. I'd feel good about taking kids on this hike, as long as I plan some extra time.

The hike starts at Winter Falls Trailhead and passes a 134-foot waterfall of the same name, then connects with the Trail of Ten Falls and passes Middle North Falls (106 feet), Drake Falls (30 feet), Lower North Falls (30 feet) and ends at Double Falls (178 feet).

Middle North Falls is probably the highlight — since you can hike into a cave behind the sheet of water — but it has close competition from Double Falls, which drops into tiers and holds the title of the park's tallest falls.

You can even throw in a sixth waterfall by adding another 0.6 miles to Twin Falls.

Either way, if you want a short trek with lots

of bang for your buck, this route is my top pick.

ROUTE: Start at Winter Falls Trailhead. Follow the trail downhill to Winter Falls. Turn left on the Trail of Ten Falls. Hike to Middle North Falls, and follow a trail left to explore behind the waterfall. Continue to a bridge and turn right onto Double Falls. **Total:** 2.6 miles, 450 feet of climb

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ROUNDUP

Silverton, Kennedy, Molalla gain victories

Silverton 28, Central 25: The Foxes improve to 6-2 overall and 4-2 in the Mid-Willamette Conference with the victory, and the Panthers fall to 4-4 overall and 3-2 in the conference.

Silverton next will face Woodburn at 7 p.m. Oct. 28, and Central next will face Corvallis at 7 p.m. Oct. 28.

Kennedy 41, Corbett 7: Kennedy improves to 7-1 overall and remains 2-1 in the Tri-River with the win, and they next will face Santiam at 7 p.m. Oct. 28.

Molalla 20, Woodburn 13: Woodburn falls to 3-5 overall with the loss, and they next will face Silverton at 7 p.m. Oct. 28.