

# Appeal Tribune

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019 ■ SILVERTONAPPEAL.COM

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## Traeger Grills hit with class action lawsuit

**Bill Poehler** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Like a lot of barbecue enthusiasts, Michael Yates was curious how his food would taste if he cooked it on a Traeger Pellet Grill.

He got a grill, bought three bags of Traeger brand Mesquite BBQ Pellets and two bags of the company's Texas Beef Wood Pellets and started grilling at home in Livermore, Calif.

When he tasted it, however, something tasted strange.

Yates is now at the center of a class-action lawsuit against Utah-based Traeger Grills, which was founded in Mt. Angel, alleging it is deceiving customers by selling wood pellets that are not entirely made up of the

types of wood on their packaging.

The lawsuit, filed in Utah District Court Oct. 1, alleges Traeger Grills uses less-expensive types of wood in producing the pellets it sells under the Traeger brand, but flavors the wood by using oils.

Attorneys for Yates did not return calls seeking comment. A public relations firm for Traeger Grills said the company would not comment on pending litigation.

The suit does not specify the amount of damages it seeks, but alleges the value is over \$5 million.

Traeger is currently involved in separate lawsuits in Arizona and Florida against a rival barbecue company involving trademark infringement.

The Utah class action suit alleges Traeger sells 14

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A class action lawsuit filed against Traeger Grills says they don't use the same wood in their pellets as they advertise. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL



A hemp plant in a field at L & J Valley Farms near Gervais on Oct. 23, 2019. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Half of Oregon hemp crop may go to waste

**Jonathan Bach** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Luke Lafayette stared across his acres of hemp on a cold, muddy morning as the plants gave off a potent, marijuana-like odor.

Born into farming families, he and his wife, Jessica, this year planted about 1,000 acres of hemp on farmland near Gervais, up from 5 acres when they first got into the industrial crop three years ago. Next year they plan to expand to 3,500 acres.

Oregon tripled the number of hemp farmers in a year, from about 600 to nearly 2,000 as of this month, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Only 13 registered in 2015 after the state started allowing hemp cultivation.

But industry watchers predict as much as half of

Oregon's booming hemp crop may go to waste this season.

As more legal hemp sprouted from the ground this year, many farmers didn't line up services to dry and sell their crops. Some industry experts say it's because there's a shortage of those services. Others say it's because farmers didn't appear to think that far ahead. Early, frigid weather and mold-inducing rains also may hurt Oregon's hemp.

The Lafayettes say they have buyers squared away. "As the price goes down, I think the acres will cut back," Luke Lafayette said. But for now, they're riding what they see as high demand after U.S. lawmakers last year made hemp a legal crop.

For others, the way forward isn't so clear.

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## Team cuts through 560-year-old tree

Douglas fir was blocking the Jefferson Lake Trail

**Zach Urness** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

It lived through the arrival of Columbus, welcomed Lewis and Clark to the West and survived the rise of Portland hipsters. But last winter a particularly strong gust of wind brought a titanic Douglas fir crashing down in the Mount Jefferson Wilderness.

Normally, even a tree the size of a Saturn rocket would barely be noticeable when it fell. But in this

case, it blocked the Jefferson Lake Trail, an increasingly popular path into a beautiful section of wilderness backcountry.

At first, forest officials considered rerouting the trail around it, since nobody short of Sasquatch would have a chance of climbing over it.

But then came an audacious idea: a team of volunteers and Forest Service employees would cut a pathway through it.

"It was a really cool opportunity for people to basically walk through the tree and see all its rings up close," said Jessie Larson, the volunteers trail coordi-

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Vol. 138, No. 45

Serving the Silverton Area Since 1880  
A Unique Edition of the Statesman Journal



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## Hiker rescued in snowstorm

Lost Pacific Crest Trail backpacker says 'I wouldn't have survived another night'

**Bill Poehler** Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

DETROIT — Robb Campbell wasn't sure his 911 call worked.

Lost in a fierce snowstorm and wandering seven miles from where he was supposed to be hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail, he made a desperate call for help.

But the call dropped part-way through, and he was knee-deep in fresh snow with no idea whether anyone was coming.

Without food, his gear soaked and fighting blizzard-like conditions, the veteran backpacker knew that if he didn't find someone, he wasn't going to last long.

"You just know, if anything happens, I'm dead," Campbell told the Statesman Journal on Oct. 19. "No one's going to find me until Spring."

Lost since Thursday, his best break came Friday when he found temporary shelter inside a pit toilet at Breitenbush Lake.

Not long after that, Marion County Sheriff's Search and Rescue deputies Mark Knospe and Mark Ferran found Campbell about 2:30 p.m. after spotting and tracking his fresh foot prints.

The All-Seasons Motel in Detroit gave the 50-year-old a complimentary room Friday night and he will pay to stay there the next two nights while he recovers from his ordeal, including frostbite to his feet.

"You count your blessings," Campbell said. "You thank your lucky stars. Not to be overly dramatic, because people have been through much worse, I'm sure. But I wouldn't have survived another night. I'm convinced of that."

A later-life hiker

Campbell was born outside Philadelphia, went to school in Georgia and worked in Atlanta as a teacher and for a hedge fund for about 30 years.

He said he was fired from a job three years ago, and in 2018 put all of his possessions into storage and hiked the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine over a 10 month period.

What he found on that trek was greater than he expected.

People he met "would have given me the shirt off their back, and that's the community," he said.

After an unsuccessful job search, he decided in May to hike the entire Pacific Crest Trail, starting at the Mexico border and heading north.

He was in Ridgecrest, Calif., when a 6.4 earthquake hit, and experienced the best of people as he received generosity from strangers while thousands of miles from home.

The trail, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, was designated a National Trail in 1968, but not officially completed until 1993. It runs from Mexico to Canada over 2,650 miles, including the length of Oregon.

Thousands of hikers cover at least a stretch of the trail each year.

Perhaps the most notable person to hike the trail was Cheryl Strayed, who wrote a book, "Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail," about her experience. Later it was turned into the a Reese Witherspoon movie, "Wild."

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