

# Hikes

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So combining the two into one walk is the best way to get the full experience while simultaneously being a courteous neighbor.

**Trailhead location:** From downtown Salem, take Commercial Street NE south for two miles and veer right onto Liberty Road S. Drive 1.2 miles and turn right onto Skyline Road S. Drive 0.7 mile and make a right onto Kuebler. Drive a final 0.5 mile and turn right onto Joseph Street S and into Sprague School/Skyline Park. The parking area and trailhead are immediately on the left. There are no restrooms. **Coordinates:** 44.8844352, -123.0810803.

## State Capitol State Park

It’s entirely possible that I’m a sap for grand buildings, cherry blossoms and the history of Oregon interpreted through statues and marble façades, but few places are better for a walk than the Capitol during springtime.

My favorite route starts at Willson Park at the corner of Court and Cottage streets and loops among the flags and trees, crosses the street to the lawn and winds back around the Capitol building on a route of 1.5 miles.

**Trailhead location:** Find parking in downtown Salem and start the walk to the corner of Court and Cottage streets. **Coordinates:** 44.9388318, -123.0322736.

## Bush’s Pasture Park

Historic buildings collide with forest and stream in the most distinguished park in Salem.

Located just outside downtown, the park offers a peaceful stroll among rose gardens, grand old homes and surprisingly lush forest.

The best way to explore the entire park is via the Outer Loop, which runs a total of 1.41 miles around the perimeter. Shorter trails branch off the main route, some interesting, some not as much. The park is packed with joggers on nice days.

There are numerous parking areas on all four sides of the park, although the Mission Street entrance is the most popular.

**Trailhead location:** The largest access point is the Mission Street entrance in central Salem. **Coordinates:** 44.929238, -123.036938.



The Salem Audubon Nature Reserve trails are quiet in the middle of an area that feels urban. ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL



A man jogs at Minto-Brown Island Park in Salem on Wednesday, Sep. 26, 2018. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL



The Rhododendron Hillside Garden in Bush's Pasture Park. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

## Keizer Rapids City Park

There are lush and great hiking options in the signature park of our neighbors to the north. Loops that travel past giant trees and offer views of the Willamette River can all be had at Keizer Rapids Park.

In hiking here I’ve never mapped out distances, but you can get 2 to 3 miles of hiking by creating loops in the forested parts of this park. So have your own adventure.

**Trailhead location:** Navigate to Keizer Rapids Park. There are multiple parking options for the hikes, including

trailheads along Chemawa Road. **Coordinates:** 44.9934236, -123.0604599.

## Audubon Nature Reserve

Tucked into a hill in West Salem and surrounded by an apartment complex, Safeway and houses, this odd little trail was preserved through the contributions of the Gehlar and Schneulle families in 1992 to the Salem Audubon Society.

This hike holds a unique spot in my heart since it’s next door to where I used to live in West Salem. I used to hike with my first daughter in a baby carrier onto this trail to get her to fall asleep just about every night. In spring, it has nice wildflowers and birds to be seen. While it’s a very short hike, it’s certainly pleasant and a worthy spot to visit if you’re in the area.

**Trailhead location:** There’s a small parking area along Eola Drive, just off Edgewater Street, in West Salem. **Coordinates:** 44.9389432, -123.0678741.

## Joryville County Park

There are surprisingly beautiful trails at this often-overlooked park just outside of South Salem that also has nice picnic areas. Pathways start at the bottom and then head uphill through the forest. I can’t find any map of the park’s trail — I’d just head out there and start wandering around.

**Trailhead location:** Navigate to the park located between Skyline and Lib-

erty Road in South Salem. **Coordinates:** 44.8579491, -123.0827719.

## West Salem greenways: Darrow and Spring Valley

There are two random but really nice little hikes just north of West Salem along Wallace Road / Highway 221. Both are greenways — forest along the Willamette River left over from Oregon Gov. Tom McCall’s attempt to create forested buffers along the river to improve its health.

The two hikes include “Darrow Access,” a parking lot on the side of the highway that leads to a really pretty loop through dense forest with a little access spot to the Willamette River where I used to swim on hot days. The loop isn’t any longer than a half mile at most.

The other spot is a bit more well-known, and that’s Spring Valley access. Located just across from the Western Mennonite Church, there’s a network of short trails here that were among the first projects of the Salem Area Trail Alliance. Both hiking and mountain biking is welcome here on four different short trails. There’s also a nice little boat ramp.

**Location - Darrow Access:** From West Salem, drive north on Wallace Road / Highway 221 for 4 or 5 miles. You’ll see a sign on the right side of the road. **Coordinates:** 45.0092567, -123.0802343.

**Location - Spring Valley:** From Darrow Parking lot, continue another 4 miles and again, keep an eye out for a sign on the right that leads to a long road down to a boat ramp and signs for the trails. **Coordinates:** 45.0627335, -123.0768905.

## Just outside Salem

These pathways require a slightly longer drive from Salem, but they’re still Willamette Valley hikes for the most part. These include wildlife refuges, floodplains and county parks. Again, they’re often overlooked and rarely crowded.

## Stayton North Santiam Trails

Although it’s popular in Stayton, I’m not sure many people outside the area know about the wonderful pathways created for an Eagle Scout project by Randy Smith and Isaac Jaeger.

The trail system travels through forest, past ponds and along the North Santiam River — circling the Geren Island Water Treatment Facility — while creating loops of different lengths that can run 3 to 4 miles, or much less.

The trail system has two main access points — one at Pioneer Park/Jordan Covered Bridge and the other at Riverfront Park / Florence St. Trailhead and Pedestrian Bridge. There are maps at each trailhead.

**Note:** The trail from the Pioneer Park side was closed, temporarily, following the ice storm. Double-check on its status before heading out. The access from Florence St. is open.

**Trailhead locations:** Navigate to Pioneer Park in Stayton. The trail starts just across the covered bridge. **Coordinates:** 44.797268, -122.7903397.

**Navigate to Stayton Riverfront Park.** **Coordinates:** 44.7962617, -122.7890337.

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# Miller

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As mentioned previously, the next minus-tide series is April 26 through May 1 (the latter falling on a Saturday), if you want to give it a shot.

Make that two shots ... several weeks

apart, at least until the J&J and AstraZeneca one-dose vaccinations are widely available.

## Speaking about clams

A previous column about minus tides sparked a missive from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Matt Hunter, the department’s Shell-

fish Project leader, sent a reminder that while bay clamming has been open from California to Washington, razor clamming on Oregon’s beaches has been, and remains, closed along the entire coast.

The closure has been in effect since November because of elevated levels of domoic acid, a naturally occurring shellfish toxin caused by marine algae.

The closures are the result of weather and wind, a “stall” in ocean currents and the feeding patterns of razor clams, factors that contributed to a rapid buildup of toxins.

Hunter outlines the causes, and the resulting unfortunate effects about the ongoing domoic acid problems in an interesting and informative March 4 news release available on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s website.

And not to sound like a broken record (ask your grandparents, or better yet think of it as a hiccup in the livestream feed), you always should check online with the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s shellfish information page at State of Oregon: Shellfish - Recreational Shellfish Biotoxin Closures

Or call the toll-free Shellfish Safety Hotline at (800) 448-2474.

## Food for thought

What does the cuisine at a frat house poker-night kegger and a last night in elk camp, clean-out-the-coolers menu have in common?

Both are similar to the trail diet of Emily Halnon of Eugene during her record-setting ultra-distance run.

Halnon completed the 455-mile section of the Pacific Crest Trail between the California and Washington borders in July in slightly less than eight days.

During which her on-the-go-go dietary regimen consisted in large part of gummy worms, Cheetos, quesadillas,



Kay with her first post-vaccination cockle limit of the pandemic. HENRY MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

hot dogs and instant mashed potatoes. Of course, the aforementioned frat party/elk camp farewell diet of chum-pions is minus a key ingredient.

That would be exercise.

In case you missed it, Halnon’s adventures were captured in a couple of excellent articles and a podcast by the Statesman’s Zach Urness.

## Words of wisdom

The weakest link on any fishing boat is the pull cord to start the outboard.

Contact Henry Miller via email at HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com



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