

# Chairlift

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Meadows is focusing summer efforts on hiking, with a chairlift assist should you want it. Officials are looking to make use of the area's natural scenery — and close proximity to already-popular trails — to lure the throngs of hikers that make their way out from Portland each weekend. They've built 8.5 miles of new trail that connects to existing hikes such as Sahalie and Umbrella falls, along with the Timberline Trail — the pathway that circles Mount Hood.

The chairlift ticket, good for the entire day, costs \$19 in person or \$16 when purchased in advance for adults, \$15 for ages 7 to 14 and younger and free for those 6 and under. The scenic chairlift is the most popular attraction so far, Meadows spokesman Dave Tragethon said, but you're also allowed to park in the resort's massive parking area and access the trails for free when the chairlift is open (Thursday to Monday).

"The thing that sets us apart and I'd say makes us the best lift-serviced hiking destination on Mount Hood is that we're not entirely above timberline — we've got forest, wildflowers and waterfalls along with big views of Mount Hood. Our goal is to provide a quieter, more natural experience," Tragethon said.

## The lift and route down

It turns out that I'm pretty close to the key demographic that Mount Hood Meadows is looking to hit. On a recent camping trip to the east side of Mount Hood, I had my 70-year-old parents and 4- and 6-year old children in tow. We're looking for adventure, but with those ages, you have to pick them carefully.

The idea of a chairlift and easy downhill hike with views of Oregon's tallest mountain sounded pretty appealing and something everyone could do.

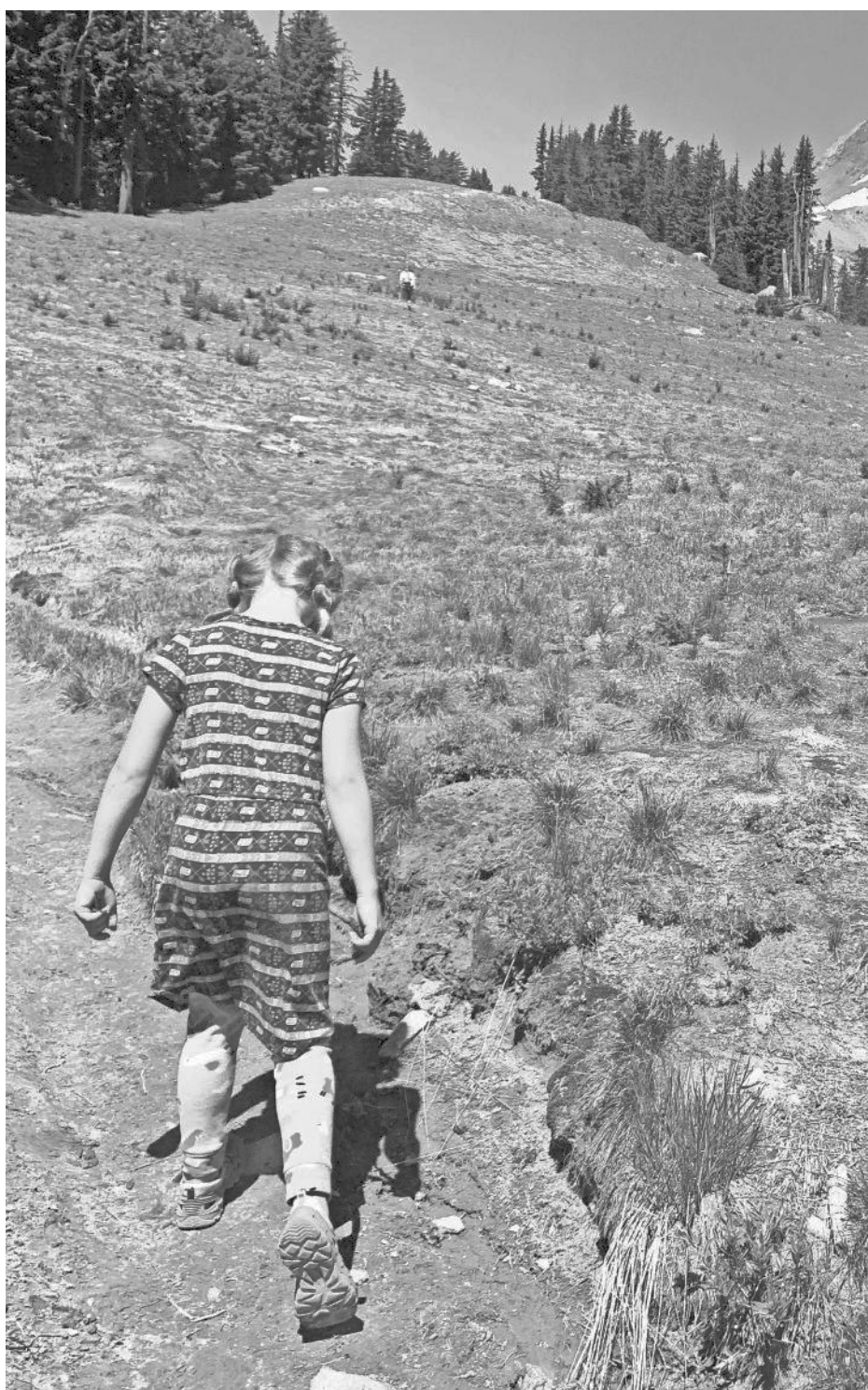
We stopped in at Meadows on a Thursday, visited the ticket window and headed out to the chairlift. Both of my kids have only done the bunny hill at Hoodoo Ski Area — never the chairlift — so it was a novel thing getting swooped up and into the air, the ground well below your feet.

The chairlift view included the top of Mount Hood coming in-and-out through the trees and the profusion of beargrass below.

At the top of the chairlift, we strolled off at around 6,000 feet — the Stadium chairlift gives you a 600 foot boost up the mountain. Then we decided what came next. Meadows provides a hiking map and markers that work once you're oriented. When we were there, they were still waiting on a master trail sign at the top of the lift, leading to some confusion. But after looking around a bit, and walking down the road to the first marked trail, we finally figured out where to start our trip.

(The future map will apparently have a "you are here" feature, more trail markers and interpretive notes on wild-fire ecology, glaciers, volcanology and Native American history).

With young kids and older adults, I wasn't looking to climb up to Timberline Trail or gain any elevation — we wanted to let gravity help us hike. So we started on the Stadium Loop — a 0.3-mile loop right below the chairlift — and then con-



Chairlift-aided hiking and new trails at Mount Hood Meadows are new ways to experience the largest ski area on Mount Hood.

PHOTOS BY ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

nected to the Beargrass Trail, which at 3.5 miles was our target for the day.

As advertised, there was plenty of beargrass. The trail weaved through forest and out into open meadows filled with the puffy white wildflower, along with touches of purple lupine. The trail occasionally broke out to big views looking south toward Mount Jefferson and across the northern Cascade Range.

You never quite forgot that you were at a ski area — I couldn't describe it as a wilderness area — but the Beargrass Trail was pretty, and the sensation of hiking entirely downhill was pleasant for our group. It was as though you'd already done the hard part and were on the return leg of a hike.

We stopped for lunch in an alpine meadow and the kids found a few patches of snow they were thrilled to play in. After 3.5 miles, and far quicker than expected, we found ourselves back near the bottom, crossing below the chairlift that had previously taken us skyward.

The end of the hike was punctuated on the large wooden deck at Meadows, where we bought ice cream in celebration. The kids still had plenty of energy and as the adults sat in the shade, the

kids found some friends and played on a mini playground just below the deck.

There are a number of other trails hikers can connect to for a longer adventure, from Sahalie Falls to Umbrella Falls to the higher terrain along Timberline Trail or an area called Jack's Woods. For us, though, a short downhill hike and ice cream was about all we needed for a pretty good day.

## Future of more hiking

Tragethon said that if this model of hiking proves popular, Meadows is planning to expand, possibly opening additional chairlifts to other parts of the mountain or establishing venues along the trail where hikers could stop for a bite to eat or even have a wedding.

"Eventually we're looking to operate seven days per week," he said. "The next step is just determining if we have enough traffic for a second chairlift."

## Days & Hours of Operations

**Chairlift operating: June 25 - September 6**

Thursday & Friday\* - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday - 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.



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Monday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
\*The chairlift will be open until 7 p.m. on Friday nights that we are offering Movies on the Deck

## Movies on the deck

Meadows is showing kid-friendly movies on the desk that beginning in the evening, that could make a nice capstone to a hike at the resort. Here's what they're showing.

**August 6:** Ghostbusters (1984)  
**August 13:** The Goonies  
**August 20:** Harry and the Hendersons

**August 27:** Dirty Dancing  
**September 3:** The Parent Trap (1961)

Zach Urness has been an outdoors reporter, photographer and videographer in Oregon for 13 years. Urness is the author of "Best Hikes with Kids: Oregon" and "Hiking Southern Oregon." He can be reached at [zurness@StatesmanJournal.com](mailto:zurness@StatesmanJournal.com) or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

# Miller

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the bathroom door open every time you failed to latch it just to see what you were doing, although the activities were limited, and repetitive.

Harry was quite a hunter. Along with about a half-dozen moles

that he dug up during the years, and several square yards of weed-barrier cloth, he ambushed a crow in the back yard, and he once jumped up to grab a gambling squirrel off the top of a four-foot fence without a running start.

The latter incident occurred while my brother, Steve, was house-sitting.

Inordinately proud of his trophy, Harry refused to surrender it.

After several vain attempts to get it,

Steve decided to offer the one thing in life that Harry loved more than a dead squirrel.

My brother opened his car door, and the dog hopped in, rodent still dangling from his mouth.

He finally dropped it on the seat after about three blocks, and Steve grabbed the carcass and hurled it out of the window.

Seemingly impervious to pain, Harry once ran unfazed through an electric livestock fence to get to a flock of sheep. The phrase "what's Harry got in his mouth now?" was not an uncommon rejoinder.

The most memorable hunting memory was the epic twilight assassination attempt on a skunk in the back yard, the fog of battle a malodorous, choking chemical cloud that reeked for weeks.

It ended in a draw when we separated the combatants with a blast from a garden hose, but not before both the protagonists and the referees were soaked in skunk spew.

Despite multiple baths, the vet made us wait outside before calling Harry in to check for war wounds, and Kay was sent home from work the next day because of the residual fumes.

I was similarly afflicted. The first couple of times that we walked Harry, Kay used to joke that "we're in the club" when we would chat up fellow dog-walkers during our daily rounds.

Our membership has expired.

## Highlights

**Item 1:** With more than 100,000 pounds remaining in the total allowed catch as of Monday, all-depth halibut fishing off the central coast will be open every Thursday through Saturday until the entire quota is exhausted or Oct. 31, whichever comes first.

Prior to the expanded opportunities, fishing had been allowed every other week on Thursdays through Saturdays

The open area is between Cape Falcon near Manzanita on the north coast and Humbug Mountain near Brookings on the south coast. High winds have reduced both effort and catch rates, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Reservations:  
Depoe Bay Docks Charters: (541) 765-2545. Website: [www.dockside-depobay.com](http://www.dockside-depobay.com)  
Tradewinds Charters: (800) 445-8730. Website: [www.tradewindscharters.com](http://www.tradewindscharters.com)

Newport Newport Marina Store & Charters: (541) 867-4470. Website: [www.nmscharters.com](http://www.nmscharters.com)  
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Yaquina Bay Charters: (541) 265-6800. Website: [www.yaquinabaycharters.com](http://www.yaquinabaycharters.com)

**Item 2:** Because of the release of cooler water from near the bases of Detroit and Foster dams, the prohibitions on fishing after 2 p.m. have been lifted on sections of the North and South Santiam rivers.

Fishing is allowed on the North Santiam in the open area below Big Cliff Dam and from the deadline below Foster Dam to the junction with the main Santiam River.

"Hoot-owl" fishing prohibitions after 2 p.m. remain in effect on all other rivers where the bans were imposed earlier this month because of low, warm water stressing salmon, steelhead and trout.

**Thought for the week:** Whenever you get discouraged about your lack of angling success, consider this parallel by the late, great Ted Williams: "Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of 10 and be considered a good performer."

[HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com](mailto:HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com)



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