

# OUTDOORS



Moon Falls in Umpqua National Forest. ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Spirit, Moon and Pinard: Trinity of stunning waterfalls

Zach Urness | Salem Statesman Journal

There's a trio of waterfalls just outside Cottage Grove that are the definition of short and sweet. ● Tucked away beyond Dorena Lake — and just over an hour's drive from Eugene — the three cascades roar in mossy forest and make a great adventure with younger children. ● Spirit, Moon and Pinard falls are all stunners and unique in their own way, ranging from a powerful 40-foot blast-hose to a majestic 100-footer that fans out down a cliff face. ● While the waterfalls are different, the hikes are almost all the same. They begin a handful of miles apart off rough Forest Service roads, drop through young and old-growth forest, and return in about 1 mile round-trip.

The experience of visiting them feels a little bit like a mini-road trip. You drive to one trailhead, hike to the waterfall, hop back in the car, and continue to the next one, and the next one. Before you know it, the day disappears in the mist, mud and moss.

I'm not kidding about the mud. These are some of the muddiest trails I've ever hiked, which is saying something, and both a good and bad thing if you're hiking with kiddos. Luckily, you can wash them off with a swim at Dorena Lake on the way home.

Here's a breakdown of each hike and cascade. For exact directions, see the bottom of the story.

### Waterfall #1: Spirit Falls

Due to one of the roads being closed, the

drive between the waterfall hikes is a bit longer than it would be otherwise, but the detour route is well-marked and it makes for a small-scale adventure worth doing if you're an Oregon waterfall lover.

The shortest and most powerful of the group, Spirit Falls, is the first trailhead you reach from Cottage Grove and the obvious place to begin the adventure.

From the end of paved Laying Creek Road 17, you reach a sign pointing right onto a gravel pullout for the trailhead.

This trail was built by a Boy Scout troop in the 1980s. The troop actually named the falls "to honor the *spirit* of scouting," according to Oregon Geographic Names.

The pathway is straightforward, dropping slightly downhill through the mud to a nice little

picnic table with a view of the 40-foot falls that blasts into an amphitheater of stone. There's room to play around at the base if the water isn't too high (on our visit the water was roaring).

Head back up and you're done with waterfall number one.

### Waterfall #2: Moon Falls

Normally, you'd have a choice to make next. When all the roads are open, both Moon and Pinard falls are about a 3-mile drive from Spirit Falls Trailhead down different roads.

But currently, a stretch of Forest Road 1790 is closed (it's expected to reopen in a month or two). That means taking a detour that brings

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## A work vacation on the trail

Lisa Britton  
Baker City Herald

An opportunity to fix up trails in Eastern Oregon and be pampered back at camp is coming up later this month thanks to a partnership between Go Wild: American Adventures and the Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trail Association.

The "all-inclusive trail work vacation" is set for June 17-19 on the Western Rim Trail above Hells Canyon.

"It's one of the early season options — and a trail that needs work," said Dan Sizer, who owns Go Wild.

The trail is also part of the Blue Mountain Trail, a 530-mile route in Eastern Oregon.

Sizer said the idea for this trip came from a conversation about "regenerative tourism."

"It's a give-back mindset to tourism," Sizer said.

It is the first such trip Go Wild has offered.

"This is our pilot program," he said.

The cost is \$450, which includes gear, meals, transportation, live music, and pre- and post-parties.

"You'll show up with a tent set up, a cot, a pad on your cot, and a cocktail waiting for you," he said.

The only specific supplies to bring are boots, good work

gloves, and lunch snacks.

The camping experience, Sizer said, could be described as "glamping" — glamorous camping.

"The cooking will be a highlight — that's what Go Wild is known for," he said. "We're taking the modern culinary craft movement to the backcountry."

The group will leave Baker City at 8 a.m. Friday, June 17. This day includes trail work in the afternoon, then cocktail hour and a campfire dinner.

The main work day is Saturday, June 18. Sizer said maintenance will include cutting small trees out of the trail, trimming back bushes and clearing rocks.

"The point is to get folks out and have a good time," Sizer said. "We can find something for anyone to do."

And it's OK to enjoy the view.

"Take breaks, enjoy the scenery, have fun doing trail work," he said.

Sunday, June 19, includes breakfast, cleaning up camp, and an after-party.

For more information, or to register, go to [www.gowildusa.com/volunteervacations](http://www.gowildusa.com/volunteervacations).

Trail work

The trail work will be facilitated by members of the Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trail Association,

which started in 2017.

"Our mission is to help the Forest Service maintain the trails," said Mike Hansen, executive director.

The association works with the Forest Service to identify "deferred maintenance trails."

"Those are the ones they haven't gotten to in three years or more," Hansen said.

So far, he said the group has worked on about eight projects since March in the Hells Canyon area.

The Go Wild excursion will continue work they've already started.

"Any help his group can give us is really welcome," Hansen said.

He said the association has members from Wallowa, Union and Baker counties. Membership is \$20 per person, \$30 per family, or \$10 for students.

Some projects take just a day, and may include a yearly check on a familiar trail.

"Some members have a favorite trail they do every year," he said.

Multiple days are required to access the backcountry.

"It takes a day of hiking for some of them," Hansen said. To learn more about the association, visit the website at [www.wmhcta.org](http://www.wmhcta.org).