

Vanquish those winter blues with a springtime hike through Silver Falls

MIKE POLLOCK

Photo Editor

Now that winter is gone it's time to get back outdoors to rediscover Oregon's beautiful scenery. Spring is one of the best times to go in search of waterfalls. With all of the water runoff from the mountains the falls will be in full force, creating a powerful yet tranquil roar and a spectacular sight.

After a long winter of sitting indoors nothing is better to release all that built-up energy and tension than a nice hike through the wilderness, breathing in that fresh air, clearing your mind of all worries and just enjoying the sights. One of the best places to do this is in the 8,700-acre Silver Falls State Park. With 11 falls and 21 miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails, Silver Falls has something for everybody. The most popular hike is the seven mile Canyon Trail that loops through all 11 waterfalls.

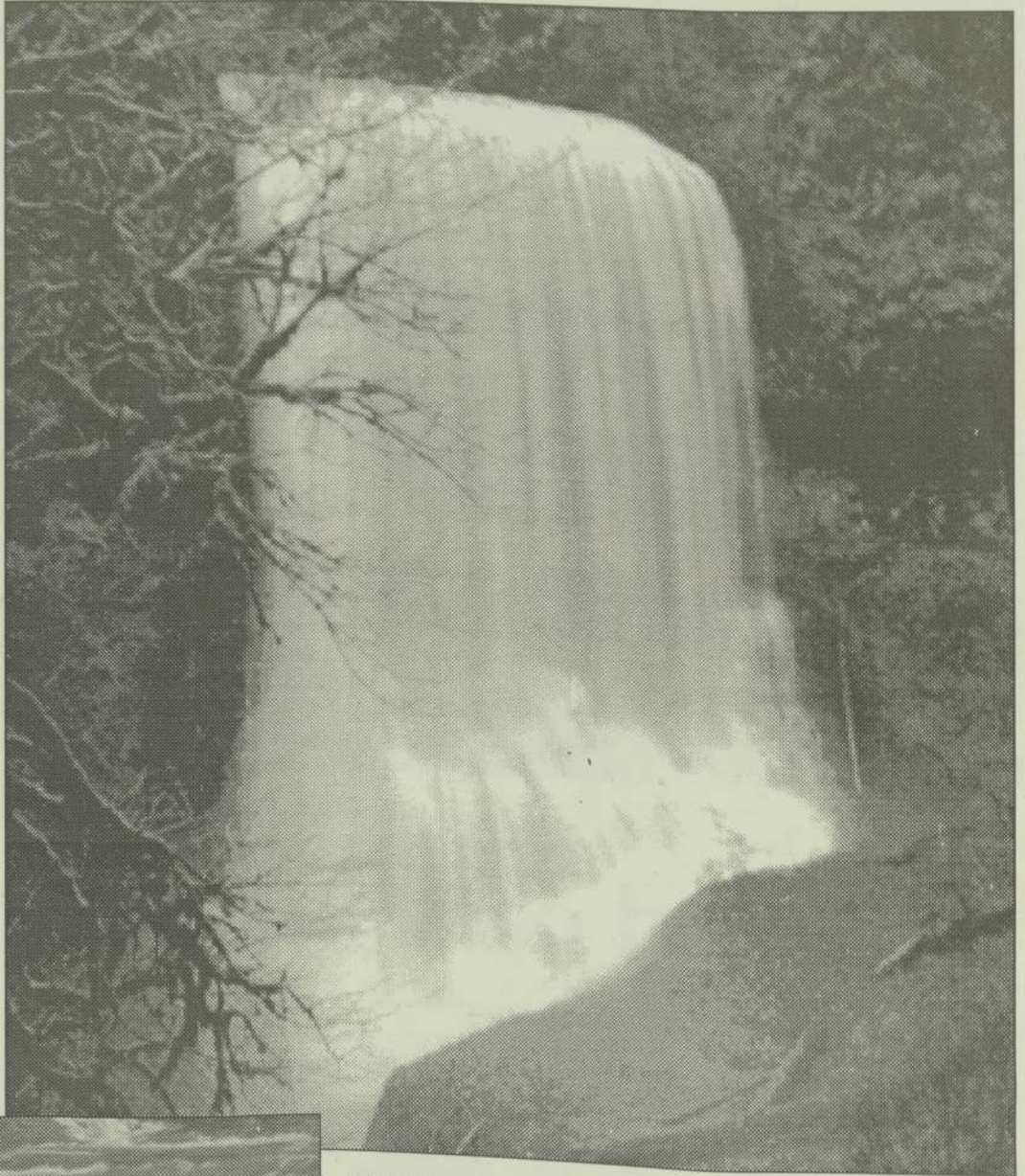
If you don't feel up to walking all seven miles, which can take more than three hours at a leisurely pace, there are also shorter loops you can take. Another suggestion is to take two cars, leaving one at the trail head at Winter Falls and starting your

hike at the South Falls Day Use Lodge; this will avoid the long return hike that runs along the highway.

The trails are for every hiking ability, but be prepared to do a lot of climbing. Also it might be a good idea to wear boots or an old pair of shoes because the trails can get a little muddy. There are also some steps that can get rather slippery so whatever you wear make sure you have good traction. Plan on going early because it does take about one hour to get to the day use area from Oregon City. I would also recommend packing a lunch. One reason is there are many beautiful places to have a picnic at the park, but also because there are not many stores near Silver Falls.

Many of the falls have trails that take you behind the falling water where you can experience the awesome thunder-like roar in a natural amphitheater. The cool spray from the falls also makes Silver Falls a great oasis from a hot day.

Silver Falls, located 15 miles East of Silverton on Hwy. 214, is not your only option for hiking, but it is one of my favorites. The important thing is that you get out and shake those winter time blues.



PHOTOS BY MIKE POLLOCK / Clackamas Print

Top right: Lower South Falls is only a short hike from the lodge. Above: Lower North Falls is the lowest falls on the North Fork of Silver Creek. Middle right: A fallen tree creates an obstacle across the path. Right: Canyon Trail winds beside Silver Creek.



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