

**FRIDAY, 8/16**

Chainsaw Art Festival, 3-day carving event that represents the history of the McKenzie River, childrens track meet, music, vendor booths, food, beer, wine, daily carving auctions 5:30pm, heritage carvings auctioned 12:30pm Sunday, today through Sunday, [www.visitmckenzieRiver.com](http://www.visitmckenzieRiver.com)

Mountain Bike Oregon, 8am today through 5pm Sunday, Oakridge, [www.mtbikeoregon.com](http://www.mtbikeoregon.com) \$429 riders, \$125 non-riders.

Willamette Country Music Festival, Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley, Darius Rucker, 3pm today through noon Monday, 36866 Hwy 228, Brownsville, [willamettecountrymusicfestival.com](http://willamettecountrymusicfestival.com) SOLD OUT.

Campbell Fern Ridge Evening Sail, ages 50 & up, 4:30-9:30pm, Campbell Center, 155 High St., reg. [www.eugene-or.gov/recenroll](http://www.eugene-or.gov/recenroll) \$35.

Family Sailing, ages 8 & up, no experience required, bring dinner, 5-9:30pm, Richardson Park Marina, Fern Ridge Reservoir, 682-5329. \$30 per person.

The Brewketts, 6-8pm, Silvan Ridge Winery, 27012 Briggs Hill Rd., [www.silvanridge.com](http://www.silvanridge.com)

Rebelution w/Matisyahu, Collie Buddz & Zion I, 6pm, Cuthbert Amphitheater, [www.thecuthbert.com](http://www.thecuthbert.com) \$30/\$35.

This Year's Model, classic rock, 21 & up, 6pm, Saginaw Vineyard, 80247 Delight Valley Rd., Cottage Grove. FREE.

Eugene Astronomical Society Star Party, weather permitting, telescopes & astronomers on-hand, dusk, College Hill Reservoir, 24th & Lawrence. FREE.

*E.T. The Extra-terrestrial*, 8:30pm, Ruff Park, Spfd. FREE.

*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* 9pm, Churchill Youth Sports Park, W. 18th & Bailey Hill Rd. FREE.

Music Masters Country Western Week continues. See June 24.

Create! Eugene continues. See Aug. 1.

Bard in the Quad continues. See Aug. 8.

*Pump Boys & Dinettes* continues. See Aug. 9.

Create! Eugene Plein Air Paint Out continues. See Aug. 15.

*My Father's Dragon* continues. See Aug. 15.

**SATURDAY, 8/17**

Obsidians: climb Three Fingered Jack, 11 miles; bike Row River, 30 miles, sign up [obsidians.org](http://obsidians.org)

3rd Annual Twilight 5K race, followed by outdoor

concert, Silvan Ridge Winery, 27012 Briggs Hill Rd., [www.silvanridge.com](http://www.silvanridge.com)

Outdoor Oakridge Antique & Art Market, 10am-8pm, Junk Monkey Antiques lawn, 47581 Hwy 58, Oakridge, 782-5878. FREE.

Saturday Market, 10am-5pm; music includes: 1pm Hello Dollface; 2pm Barefoot Leroy; 8th & Oak, see [www.eugenesaturdaymarket.org](http://www.eugenesaturdaymarket.org) for more. FREE.

Campbell Fern Ridge Evening Sail, ages 50 & up, 4:30-9:30pm, meet at Campbell Community Center, 155 High St., [www.eugene-or.gov/recenroll](http://www.eugene-or.gov/recenroll)

Roving Park Players: *My Father's Dragon*, 6pm today & tomorrow, Island Park, Spfd. FREE.

*The Notebook*, 9pm, Maurie Jacobs Park. FREE.

Create! Eugene continues. See Aug. 1.

*Julius Caesar* continues. See Aug. 3.

Bard in the Quad continues. See Aug. 8.

*Pump Boys & Dinettes* continues. See Aug. 9.

Create! Eugene Plein Air Paint Out continues. See Aug. 15.

Chainsaw Art Festival continues. See Aug. 16.

Mountain Bike Oregon continues. See Aug. 16.

**SUNDAY, 8/18**

Obsidians: hike Black Crater, 7.4 miles; climb Mt. Washington, 10.5 miles, sign up [obsidians.org](http://obsidians.org)

Fundraising sale featuring new & used household & kitchen items, home décor, clothing, jewelry, books, movies, toys & more, 10am-5pm, S.A.R.A.'s Treasures, 871 River Rd., info at [sarastreasures.org](http://sarastreasures.org)

*Gen Silent: A Film About LGBT Seniors*, ages 50 & up, Campbell Community Center, 155 High St., pre-reg. at 682-5318. FREE.

Junction City Polka Band, 6:30pm, Washburne Park, 20th & Agate St. FREE.

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# SUMMER'S GHOST TOWNS

## Exploring forgotten Oregon

The first thing we noticed was the quiet. Even the wind seemed muted as it whipped through the tall grass. Five friends had traveled 340 miles east from Eugene to find the ghost town of Whitney, and now we stood at a dirt crossroad, reading a sign with a horse-drawn carriage painted next to a steam engine. "Rails of the Sumpter Valley R. R. reached Whitney Valley June 1, 1901," we read, squinting in the hot July sun. "At one time 150 people called Whitney their home. When the railway was abandoned in 1947, the town closed down."

Seeking out ghost towns in Oregon is the perfect summer activity because it has so many avenues for the imagination, whether it's for the history buff, the sociologist, the environmentalist, the artist, the explorer or even the seeker of the supernatural. These ruins of the Western Frontier are littered across the state — a quick internet search shows at least 80 identified abandoned villages — from as far flung as Whitney (and neighboring Sumpter) to as nearby as the former mining town of Bohemia outside Cottage Grove; visit during Bohemia Mining Days (7/18-7/21), a celebration of the town's history, for live music, a carnival, horse-drawn trolley rides, a beard-growing contest, a "Cherry Pit Spittin' for Distance" contest and more.

The most famous of Oregon's ghost towns is Shaniko in Wasco County; however, the city still has about two dozen residents and thus, technically, is not a ghost town. "Real" ghost towns prime for visiting are Susanville in the Blue Mountains (where George Armstrong dug up a 80.4-ounce gold nugget in 1913), Josephine County's Golden (the site of many paranormal investigations complete with a rustic chapel and small cemetery) or Central Oregon's Richmond (complete with barn, school and church). But before you set off on your own history-chasing adventure, here are some ghost town tips:

1) Bring a map. No, *really*, bring a paper map. Yes, smartphones are handy, but ghost towns tend to be remote places for a reason and phone service can be sparse or nonexistent.



PHOTO BY ALEX NOTMAN

2) Wear closed-toe shoes (see rusty mattress springs below).

3) Enter at your own risk; many of the structures you will encounter haven't been structurally sound for decades.

4) Leave things as you found them.

5) Do your research. Several ghost towns are protected by federal and state law and thus, tromping through the equivalent of an archeological site could get you into legal trouble. Same goes for sites on private land.

Many adventurers and photographers may scoff at number five. "It's better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission," they will tell you. And luckily for us, this turned out to be true. That day, a four-wheeler barreling down the dirt road toward us broke Whitney's silence. The driver was a hairdresser in Sisters and her family owned the property. We explained that we just wanted to take pictures; she gave us her blessing to explore and encouraged us to visit the town's nearby cemetery too.

What is left of Whitney is a cluster of small, wooden buildings that look one huff and puff away from being blown to the earth. No hints remained that the land was ever a "lumber

company town," just a few bunnies hopping in and out of an old outhouse and some rusted mattress springs woven to the caked ground by grasses that had sprung through the coils. The homes showed only the smallest signs of former human habitation: a desk chair, some cans of soup and empty glass bottles.

We piled back into our truck and barreled up the road to the town's cemetery. Nestled in a pine grove atop a hill, it was difficult to say how many plots there were because most were hidden under a layer of pine needles. One visible headstone read "Mina Marie Hale, Jan. 15, 1910, April 27, 1913." The little girl had passed nearly 100 years before. *From what?* we wondered. Influenza, small pox, hardship? Then the sky grew dark, lightning flashed through the pines and the low rumble of thunder rattled up the hill like an approaching bobcat. We humbly took that as a sign that our ghost town adventure was coming to a close and it was time to find a camping spot. — Alex Notman

*For more information about Oregon's ghost towns, see Philip Varney's Ghost Towns of the Pacific Northwest: Your Guide to the Hidden History of Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia or visit [ghosttowns.com](http://ghosttowns.com).*