

HIKING MADE EASY

Guides offer helpful tips for nearby exploring

For all of you who have dreams of getting out into nature more in 2022, here are two new books that will encourage you to do so!

“Lost Fire Lookout Hikes and Histories” offers over 60 hikes to fire lookout sites throughout the Willapa Hills and the Olympic Peninsula. In researching these destinations, Olympia, Washington, author Leslie Romer proves to be not just a doughty hiker but also a veritable scholar.

But before you get to the section of the book that details the hikes, please read the 11 pages of preface. These contain smart advice that Romer wants to convey to anyone following in her footsteps, things like: make sure you know who owns the land where you’ll be hiking, and get the proper permits ahead of time; know the etiquette you should practice when encountering wild animals; and, don’t skimp on the Ten Essentials.

Heeding this counsel will lead to a better experience once you actually hit the trails.

Following this introduction, Romer has prepared at-a-glance tables that summarize the hikes by distance, elevation gain, seasonal access and more.

Then you’ll get to the actual hike descriptions. Each entry methodically includes an overview, driving directions to the trailhead, a map and detailed directions for the hike.

Romer also combed through archival records and pored over old maps and written guides to provide mini-histories of each site and even information about some of the folks who once staffed and supplied these lookouts. These included a Disney illustrator, a famous female horse packer, and — during World War II — Aircraft Warning Service spotters.

“Lost Fire Lookout Hikes and Histories” provides destinations that are off the beaten path.

But for those of you who don’t enjoy soaring heights and thin air, there’s another new guide that

focuses on trekking at sea level.

“Hiking the Oregon Coast Trail” focuses on the 400-mile trail that stretches from the Columbia River to the California border.

In some areas the trail is still aspirational — there are some segments that involve walking along the shoulder of U.S. Highway 101. But Eugene-based adventurer and seasoned guidebook author Bonnie Henderson provides as many work-arounds as she can for these, with tips on water and land shuttles. She also supplies lodging and camping options and where you can restock your food supply.

And while Henderson writes this with the thru-hiker in mind, she has divided the hikes into sections, so folks who can’t invest a month in trekking the entire length still can explore the coast in smaller doses.

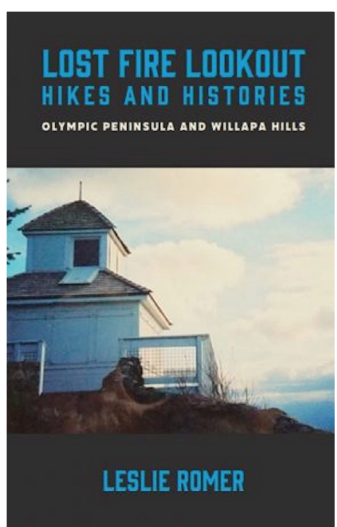
Those on the North Coast may also know Henderson through her communications work with the North Coast Land Conservancy.

It’s obvious that both authors assembled their books with boots on the ground, binoculars in hand, and utmost care. Even so, both of these books acknowledge that conditions in nature are prone to change. So, whether you’re skirting a headland or hiking a mountain switchback, keep aware of your surroundings.

Which is the whole point of getting outside anyway, right?

May these guides help you explore and enjoy nature more often in 2022!

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at barbaralmcm@gmail.com.



ABOVE: ‘Hiking the Oregon Coast Trail’ is by Bonnie Henderson. INSET: ‘Lost Fire Lookout Hikes and Histories’ is by Leslie Romer.

THIS WEEK’S BOOKS

‘Lost Fire Lookout Hikes and Histories’ by Leslie Romer

Sidekick Press – 348 pp – \$22.95

‘Hiking the Oregon Coast Trail’ by Bonnie Henderson

Mountaineers Books – 256 pp – \$24.95