



### GORGE EXPLORER

## Chinidere Mountain offers unmatched views

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*Sports editor's note: This is a summer adventure series that will run periodically in the News, detailing a variety of ways to get outside and enjoy what the Columbia River Gorge has to offer. This is a revival of a previous summer column started by former sports editor Ben McCarty in 2006.*

Like many people who live here, or visit here, I love hiking in the Gorge. As a native of the Finger Lakes region in Upstate New York — another area of the country renowned for its natural beauty — I was exposed to similar natural elements growing up: Ithaca, N.Y., less than an hour away from my hometown of Skaneateles, N.Y., has its gorges. About two hours in the other direction are the Adirondack Mountains. Both, however, pale in comparison to the gorges and mountains out here in both breadth and beauty.

But unlike many other Gorge denizens, I'm not hardcore about my hiking. I'll probably never put on cramp-ons in my life and if I can't do the hike in a day, then I probably won't do that either. I want to see a great view, but I don't want to spend a night in a tent to do it. Call me crazy, but I'm a big fan of using toilets.

Anyway, I recently crossed off one of those accessible kinds of day-hikes I've been wanting to do for a majority of the five years I've lived out here: Chinidere Mountain, which I would argue has one of the best, if not THE best effort-to-reward ratios when it comes to a view hike in the Gorge.

Chinidere Mountain is located in the Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness of the Mt. Hood National Forest, about 45-50 minutes southwest of Hood River (depending on how you drive and what you get stuck behind on your way up to the mountain). In addition to having an incredible, 360-degree-view at the mountain's totally exposed, rocky summit, the trail for Chinidere starts at Wahtum Lake, providing an opportunity to cool off after your hike if you so choose. Bring a NW Forest Pass so you can park at the trailhead.

The hike is an easy to moderate 1.8-mile climb (for a 28-year-old male who's in questionable physical condition), according to the Mt. Hood National Forest's website, or about 3.5 miles roundtrip. It took me about two to two-and-a-half hours to do the hike, including plenty of time for water breaks, gawking, taking photos, and hanging out on the summit. There are a couple ways to reach the peak, all of which seem to wrap around Wahtum Lake, so consult the Forest Service's website for both hiking and driving directions (<http://1.usa.gov/1NzrSBO>), or other websites like oregonhikers.org, or go analog with a guidebook. (I took the trail that heads right as soon as you walk down the steps from the trailhead/campground to the lake.)

Personally, I felt the drive was more strenuous than the climb, as the U.S. Forest Service wisely cautions visitors that the final road taking you to the trailhead (FS Road 13) is paved but narrow, with a decent amount of traffic in the summer months. I'd add that rock fall, blind corners, overgrown trees and bushes, and the occasional pitting of the roadway can make it fairly sketchy at times for white-knuckle drivers. Parking at the trailhead can be a bit tight on the weekends as well.



Photo by Ben Mitchell

**MT. HOOD** looms large at the summit of Chinidere Mountain, which offers great unobstructed views of other peaks as well.

Starting at the shores of Wahtum Lake, the trail gradually ascends through the hills that ring the body of water, with glimpses of the lake visible through the trees. The trail is mostly hard-packed earth that's not quite big enough for two people to walk side-by-side. The trail is broken up by tiny little brooks that quietly trickle on their way down to the lake. Thick, almost jungle-like vegetation (sorry, I'm no botanist) lines both sides of the path to Chinidere.

Eventually, the trail flattens out, passing through a forest of tall Douglas firs, the forest floor of which is filled with the white flowers of bear grass in late spring/early summer. In the last several hundred feet of the hike, the trail's incline starts to kick it up a few notches, but a well-traveled talus slope soon signifies that the end of the trail is near. On the final leg of the switchback, the trail turns you around onto a wide ridge that serves as the mountain's summit, and wham, an unobstructed view of Mt. Hood is lined up perfectly with the end of the trail.

On a clear day, the summit offers views of Hood, Adams, St. Helens, Rainier, Jefferson, Defiance, and probably plenty of other peaks that sharper eyes than mine could identify. Looking north, you can clearly make out the canyon of Eagle Creek and see straight down into the Columbia River Gorge near where Bonneville Dam is (I highly recommend bringing a pair of binoculars). Depending on the time of year, a variety of wildflowers dot the summit as well. An eastern-facing rock outcropping that lines up with Mt. Hood also provides great photo ops or a place to sit for some existential musings.

Head back down the way you came, or hook up with another trail that skirts the other side of Wahtum Lake. Wade in and cool off or head back up the stairs to the trailhead for another adventure.



Photo by Ben Mitchell

**SUNLIGHT** pierces the canopy of a Douglas fir forest on the way up to the summit of Chinidere Mountain.

## Kiteboarding 4 Cancer returns next weekend

Part endurance race, part festival, part fundraiser, the 9th Annual Kiteboarding 4 Cancer (KB4C) presented by Patagonia is an action-packed, feel-good event with a goal that lifts everyone's spirits: help young cancer survivors find hope and healing through outdoor adventure.

Set for July 10-12, at the Hood River Waterfront, KB4C features something for everyone, including live music, a pop-up art studio, local food carts, a beer garden hosted by Full Sail Brewing Company, and of course, lots of eye-catching kiteboarders showing off their best moves. On Saturday, July 11, the mighty Columbia River becomes the stage for the KB4C Kite Derby, North America's largest amateur kiteboarding race, drawing 200 amateur and professional kiteboarders. During the six-hour race, participants collectively cover 200,000 miles and raise thousands of dollars for cancer survivors by completing as many 3-mile laps as possible.

While most kiteboarding races are sprints, KB4C is a test of endurance — not unlike the battle with cancer that an estimated 14.5 million Americans are facing, says race founder and director, Tonia Farman.

"It's a unique event that's intentionally designed to test people's limits," she says. "It's one of the most challenging kiteboarding

events in the country."

Farman was inspired to launch KB4C in 2007 after her only sibling, Scott Farman, died at age 19 from acute lymphocytic leukemia. In 2007, KB4C raised \$30,000. Last year, it raised \$112,000.

All proceeds from the event benefit Athletes 4 Cancer, a nonprofit that offers week-long adventure retreats for cancer survivors ages 18 to 40. Through the process of learning adventures such as surfing, standup paddle boarding, skiing and snowboarding, participants gain the confidence and healing they need to face life with, or after, cancer. Thanks to events like KB4C, the camps are free, other than airfare, for participants. Nearly 400 people have attended the camps — known as Camp Koru — since 2010. There are currently 100 people on the waiting list.

KB4C offers many must-see-and-do moments, starting with the official start of the Kite Derby on Saturday, July 11 at 10:15 a.m. From the vantage point of the Hood River waterfront, with traditional Japanese Taiko drums roaring in the background, spectators can watch as 200 kites launch into the sky and take off across the Columbia River. To sign up to volunteer, or make a donation, go to: [kiteboarding4cancer.org](http://kiteboarding4cancer.org).

### Event highlights:

Friday, July 10, 9 p.m.–midnight: Kickoff Party at the Oak Street Pub (corner of Fourth and Oak, Hood River, formerly known as the British Pub). An all-ages party featuring a DJ, fire dancers and more. Cost: \$5 for racers and volunteers, \$12 for the public.

Saturday, July 11, 10:15 a.m.–4:15 p.m.: Kite Derby staged at the Hood River waterfront. North America's largest amateur kiteboarding race, event features 200 kiteboarders completing 3-mile laps across the Columbia River over six hours.

Saturday, July 11, 10:15 a.m.–6 p.m.: Live Entertainment. Experience performances from One World Taiko (Japanese Taiko Drums) Mosley Wotta, LoveBomb Go-Go, Bonneville Power Trio and Smoke on the Water.

Saturday, July 11, 10:15 a.m.–6:30 p.m.: Boards of Hope Auction. Throughout the day, bid on works of art created on recycled surf, kite and other boards. Starting at 6:30 p.m., bid on live auction items, including adventure and vacation packages.

Sunday, July 12, 10 a.m.: The Never-Ever Windsurf-Before Race. This race is open to people who have never windsurfed. After a quick 30-minute clinic, participants will take to the water for a beginner slalom course race.



### July Column:

## Salmon fishing hot at the Columbia Mouth

A flooding tide, calm ocean and lack of boat traffic made the sometimes rough water between the jetties seem mystically calm as our boat skimmed the salty surface heading west. As we turned northward from the Columbia River bar the mist-filled air began to illuminate from the sun, signaling the new day. We had left our port in the black of night heading where we knew thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of salmon would be schooling.

We didn't have to parallel the mainland long before the sea birds gave away the baits' location. We knew hungry salmon would be amongst them, feeding. We hooked up within seconds after our lines hit the water. These were big strong fighting fish that melted line from our reels and put excited grins on our faces. We were limited before the day really began, for most people.

This memorable fishing adventure may be realized again during the season that is now open off the mouth of the Columbia River. This summer's outlook for ocean salmon angling appears excellent again this year. The season from Cape Falcon (near Manzanita) north to Leadbetter Point, which encompasses the ocean where the Columbia River's returning salmon stage, opened June 13 and will remain open until September 30, or until a quota of 79,400 fin-clipped coho (over 16 inches) and 15,000 chinook (any chinook over 24 inches, fin-clipped or not) are caught. The daily sport limit is two salmon of which only one can be a chinook.

Most anglers reach the ocean between Cape Falcon and Leadbetter Point by launching at one of the ports (Ilwaco, Hammond, Warrenton, Astoria or Chinook) inside the Columbia River mouth. If you do this remember that you must pass through the "Columbia River Control Zone" (closed to angling) to reach open water. The Control Zone extends from the north-south line at Buoy 10 out to Buoy 4 (Red), north to Buoy 7 (Green), to the North Jetty.

During the first hour of light is when the catching of ocean salmon is best, with most of the fish located in the top 15 to 20 feet of water. After this time period has passed, the coho may linger near the surface while chinook descend into the water column. If you want to target the larger chinook, you will have to get your bait down to them.

Once they leave the surface, king salmon will normally be found from 60 to 90 feet down. You can deep mooch or troll your herring rigged six feet behind a Fish Flash attractor and trolling sinker or diver, like a Delta or Deep Six. Of course downriggers are the ultimate device for controlling the exact depth of your bait.

If this year is like recent ones, the bulk of the coho will be located just south of the Columbia mouth's red buoy line over water that is 90 to 180 feet deep. The red buoys mark the south side of the Columbia River channel and extend well out into the ocean. If you have GPS mapping or a chart (ocean map) this area will be found from Buoy 2 west.

All coho must have their adipose fin missing in order to qualify as a keeper. The adipose fin is the small fin located between the fish's dorsal and tail-fin. Even inexperienced anglers should be able to identify fish missing this fin before attempting to net it. Don't net a coho and then look to see if you can keep him. If you catch a wild coho, cut your leader near the hook or take the hook out without removing the fish from the water. More than anything else, this will increase the survival of fish which hold the seeds to recover our native runs.

Since the majority of chinook spend their lives foraging off British Columbia and in the Gulf of Alaska (many coho do also) they will stage north of the Columbia mouth before passing the bar. The chinook numbers will increase daily until they begin to leave saltwater and begin their migration up the Columbia in mid to late August.

As mentioned above, the daily limit in the ocean management zone extending from Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point is two salmon per day (no more than one can be a chinook.) You can identify chinook by the large oval spots on their backs, along with their heftier builds and all black inside their lower mouth. Remember, the best bite will be the first hour of daylight, so if you want a "big-boy" you should leave the dock before the day begins for most people.



File photo by Adam Lapierre

**KITEBOARDERS** cruise along the Columbia River during last year's Kiteboarding 4 Cancers event, which featured over 150 participants and raised over \$150,000. The annual event returns next weekend, running from July 10-12.