

Mild winter opens up more spring break options

By **TERRY RICHARD**
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — With Oregon's spring break on hand, there are more things to do outdoors than ever this time around.

How much more? Well, instead of having to cross-country ski or snowshoe to Trillium Lake on the Mount Hood National Forest, you can drive to it. Same thing with Lemolo Falls trailhead at 4,500 feet on the North Umpqua River, down in southern Oregon, and other scenic settings in the state's mountains.

And Mt. Hood Skibowl is opening its Summer Adventure Park — in the middle of March!

The mild winter, when snow was in short supply in the Pacific Northwest, has made terrain accessible like in few other years for Oregon spring break, March 21-29.

But do remember that should you get an early jump on camping, hiking, backpacking, fishing or the lake season, there is no guarantee mild weather will continue.

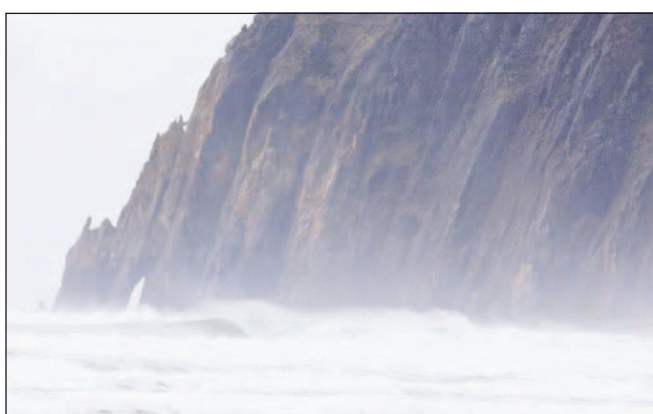
Camping traditionally opens around Memorial Day Weekend in Oregon, but many a bedraggled camper has returned home with a soaked tent from the late May outing, vowing to wait for the Fourth of July next time.

This year, many Oregon State Park campgrounds are reserved for spring break, though fewer spots are available via reservations early in the season compared to summer.

As campground loops fill, state park managers open more loops, so campers can find first-come spots in many state park campgrounds for spring break.

Whale watching often draws crowds of visitors to the Oregon coast during spring break, many of whom camp if the weather is good.

The U.S. Forest Service operates a little differently, since many of its campgrounds are in snow zones and have predetermined opening dates. Many Forest



AP Photo/The Oregonian, Randy L. Rasmussen
This March 2012 photo shows waves rolling in past the headland north of Manzanita.



AP Photo/The Oregonian, Randy L. Rasmussen
This March 2012 photo shows a woman and her dog running on the beach near Manzanita.



AP Photo/The Oregonian, Randy L. Rasmussen
This March 2012 photo shows people walking on a beach in Manzanita.

Service campgrounds will remain closed this year by a gate until May, according to the Mount Hood National Forest staff, but it's OK to walk in and claim a site.

Park outside the campground without blocking the gate, bring all you need including water, and carry everything out when you're finished.

The road to Trillium Lake, the popular spot just south of Mount Hood, is already open from U.S. 26. You can drive to the lake, but the campground is still gated closed.

And do know that the weather can change quickly. April is often snowy in Oregon's mountains, though this year that would be a surprise.

Additional caution about



AP Photo/The Oregonian, Randy L. Rasmussen
This March 2012 photo shows Kati Lierman dumping sand from the boot of her son, Aidan, 3, as they play on the beach by Manzanita. Manzanita is a contrast to other arcade/taffy-driven Spring Break locations with its driftwood-decorated beach and a charming downtown.

using unmaintained national forest campgrounds before the season opens comes from Kathleen Walker, recreation program manager at the Mt. Hood Zigzag District, via email:

"There are no services and no fees; no toilet paper, no toilet cleaning (and they can be nasty!); no water; pack it in, pack it out! Hazards may

exist, including trees that may fall in high wind conditions. Campgrounds are inspected prior to opening officially and hazards are mitigated and managed.

"If there is a gate on the campground entrance, the campground is closed to vehicles. You may not park in front of the gate. You may walk in and camp if a crew is

not cleaning or falling hazard trees in preparation for opening."

Mount Hood National Forest campgrounds have a prescribed way of opening, beginning March 1 at Bagby Hot Springs. They follow in waves this year on April 17, May 8, 15 and 22 and June 5. Check with a ranger station for specifics.

State faces timeline on limiting McKenzie hatchery salmon

EUGENE (AP)—Oregon wildlife officials can release hatchery salmon in the upper reaches of the McKenzie River for now but have three months to set a deadline for scaling down the number of fish competing and breeding with threatened wild salmon, a federal judge has ruled.

The upper McKenzie in the Cascade Range outside Springfield is one of Oregon's last strongholds for wild chinook salmon. Two sport fishing groups sued the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, arguing it is violating the Endangered Species Act by not doing enough to prevent hatchery fish from cross-breeding with threatened wild chinook, which diminishes their ability to survive.

McKenzie Flyfishers and the Steamboaters wanted a court order barring the department from releasing more than 360,000 young salmon into the McKenzie above Leaburg Dam until the department finds a way to limit the number of adult hatchery salmon that spawn with wild salmon to 10 percent.

"We didn't get everything we asked for," said Dave Thomas, a biologist and member of McKenzie Flyfishers told *The Register Guard* newspaper in Eugene. "But we now have all the parties agreeing the fisheries need to be managed for the conservation of these wild fish, which has not been the case in the past."

While the department has a policy favoring wild fish conservation, it is under strong pressure to produce

hatchery fish that people can catch and kill, rather than catch and release, as they must with protected wild fish.

Wild fish have diminished as they lose habitat to dams, logging, agriculture and urban development, and hatchery fish now make up the vast majority of salmon in Oregon rivers. Research has shown that wild fish survive in rivers better than hatchery fish, and when hatchery fish breed with them, the wild fish decline.

U.S. District Magistrate Judge Tom Coffin found that the department is complying with plans to reduce harm to wild salmon, releasing fewer young hatchery salmon than federal fisheries managers authorized last year.

But he told the department it cannot continue to kick the can down the road and gave it 90 days to set the deadline for reducing the effects of hatchery fish on wild fish.

"The court intends to oversee this process to ensure that the target is met in a realistic time frame," Coffin wrote in the opinion issued Friday.

Deputy fish chief Bruce McIntosh said the department could comply with the 90-day order but that the actual deadline is likely to be some years away.

"The context for that is we've been taking actions the last couple of years to reduce those impacts," he said. "It takes four or five years for those fish to come home. It takes four or five years to see the fruits of those actions."

Injured snow tuber files \$2.7M suit against Hoodoo Ski

EUGENE (AP)—A \$2.7 million lawsuit alleging negligence has been filed on behalf of a man injured two years ago at Hoodoo Ski Area.

The suit filed in Eugene this week says 47-year-old Michael Dearth of Antioch, California, suffered spinal fractures and other injuries when an inner tube hit a bump, veered off course and struck a metal storage container.

His attorney, Melinda Brown, says the ski area at Santiam Pass failed to properly groom the tubing hill, failed to maintain a safe barrier at the side of the hill and didn't make sure the container was taken away after its contents were removed.

Ski area general manager Matthew McFarland did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

The lawsuit seeks \$700,000 for Dearth's medical bills and \$2 million in noneconomic damages.

Trees fall at Bend Golf & Country Club

BEND (AP)—"Timber!" has replaced "Fore!" at the Bend Golf & Country Club.

The *Bend Bulletin* reports that about 200 trees are being

BRIEFLY

removed as part of a remodel at the Bend area's oldest golf course.

Eric Nielsen is the head professional at the club. He says several Ponderosa pines felled so far predate the construction of the course in 1925.

He says the growth of those trees has hurt the playability of the course, narrowing the fairways and making it harder for all but the best players to consistently keep their ball out of the trees.

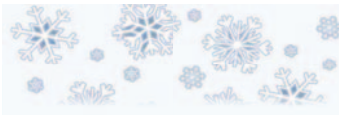
The abundance of tall trees also put large portions of the course in the shade, killing off the grass. The felled trees are being transported to Klamath Falls for milling.

Arizona senators push bill to manage Grand Canyon bison

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP)—Arizona Sen. John McCain is reviving a proposal to let authorized hunters keep the meat from bison they kill at the Grand Canyon.

He and fellow Republican Sen. Jeff Flake say their legislation will help manage a herd that has caused headaches for the national park staff. Republican Paul Gosar is sponsoring a House bill.

Hunting is prohibited at the Grand Canyon, but the National Park Service has the authority to



SKI REPORT

Spout Springs
Tollgate, Ore.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Anthony Lakes
North Powder, Ore.
New snow: 0"
Base depth: 50"
Conditions: Clear, calm

Ski Bluewood
Dayton, Wash.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Ski Fergi
Joseph, Ore.
CLOSED FOR SEASON

Mt. Hood Meadows
Government Camp, Ore.
New snow: 0"
Base depth: 48"
Lifts have been closed, but attempt to be open throughout the spring break week.

kill animals that harm resources using park staff or volunteer hunters. The meat is turned over to wildlife agencies, tribes or charities to distribute.

McCain had pushed an amendment in Congress last year with the same intent as the legislation introduced this week.

Grand Canyon officials say the bison are considered natural resources that cannot be consumed or taken by visitors.

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From left: Peter Wong, Hillary Borrund, Mateusz Perkowski

