

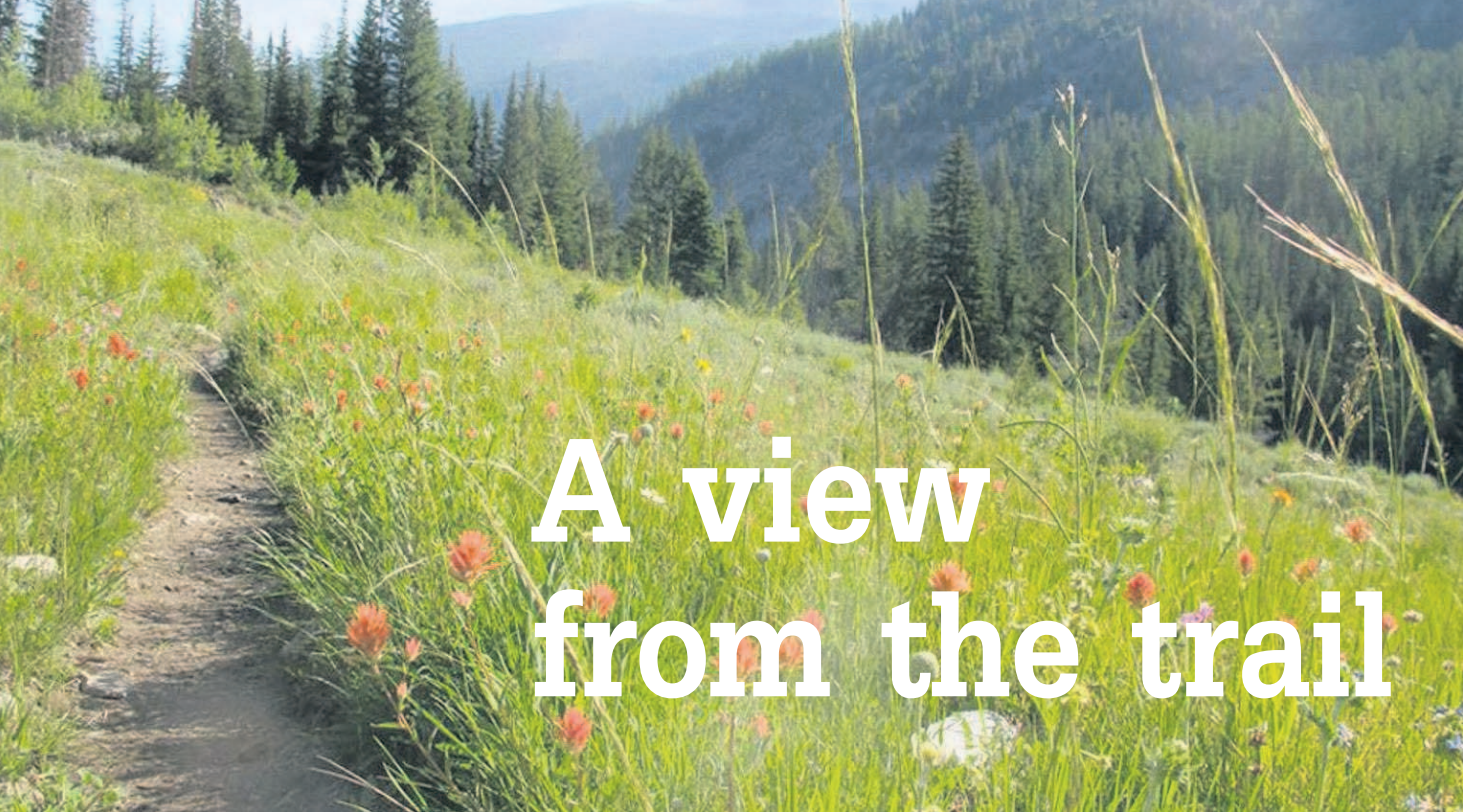


Photo by Tim Trainor

A view from the trail

The well-trod Hurricane Creek Trail rises from the valley floor into the Lakes Basin region of the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

Whether climbing up mountains or dropping into steep, rugged canyons, Eastern Oregon has a way of rewarding hikers with breathtaking scenery both high and low.

The area's newest state park, **Cottonwood Canyon**, offers a pair of 4.3-mile trails along the John Day River tucked beneath impressive basalt cliffs. These gentle, one-way paths are ideal for families looking to enjoy a little peace and isolation.

Established as a state park in 2013, Cottonwood Canyon cuts deep into the rocky grassland and is home to some of the state's largest herds of bighorn sheep. Visitors can also see elk, deer, pronghorn, coyotes, rattlesnakes and several species of lizards.

At 8,000 acres, Cottonwood Canyon is Oregon's second-largest state park. The park is located along Highway 206 between Wasco and Condon, and includes spaces for tent and RV camping.

From the canyon floor to the mountaintop, hikers can head to the Wallowa Mountains of far northeast Oregon for a vastly different experience. **Hurricane Creek** trailhead is a popular destination outside of Enterprise and Joseph, leading into the forested Eagle Cap Wilderness. Hurricane Creek Trail itself ranges in difficulty and elevation, running just a little over 10 miles before joining other trails.

The trailhead also offers access to the Lakes Basin, with climbs that lead to panoramic views of the Sacajawea, Matterhorn and Eagle Cap peaks. The trails are heavily used during summer, though deer, elk, bighorns and mountain goats can be spotted in the wilderness.

For an experience closer to Pendleton, try the **North Fork Umatilla Wilderness Trail** that begins at the Umatilla Forks Campground. The trail runs along the beautiful North Fork Umatilla River up to Coyote Ridge, just east of Tollgate.

The first four miles of the trail are easy, with just 450 feet of elevation gain. Experienced hikers can take on the last 5.8 miles that climb 2,000 feet at a more difficult pace.

Nine Mile Ridge is another intermediate climb in the same area, off the Buck Creek Trailhead in the Umatilla National Forest. The first two miles are the most challenging, with 1,800 feet of elevation gain, but then the trail evens out and dips into a few saddles. Herds of elk can be seen wandering the hillsides, making this a great area for antler shed hunting in spring.

For those wanting to get some fresh air without leaving town, the **Pendleton River Parkway** and **Oxbow Trail** in Hermiston make for quick getaways. Both follow their respective stretches of the Umatilla River, and offer restrooms and benches for taking a load off and taking in the view.

— George Plaven

"COME JOIN THE ADVENTURE"

Ride the historic Joseph Branch rail road by railrider.
Pedal through the lush Wallowa Valley, gaze upon the majestic Wallowa Mountains, follow the cascading Wallowa River, breathe the clear mountain air, refresh & unplug. Flora and fauna at its best!



- 2 hr., 12 mi. round trip.

Tickets at 304 N. Main, Joseph, OR

- All day, 26 mi. round trip reservations required

Open May 21 - Oct. 2; Th - M
Online Reservations
www.jbrailriders.com
541-910-0089
jbrailriders@gmail.com



Let me help you put all the pieces together and find your new home.



398 E Ridgeway, Hermiston, OR 97838
541-667-2000 • 541-571-2767 Cell
www.hermistonhomes.net



Linda Andreason
Principal Broker, GRI