Sierra Club “Cool Cities” Program

by Dave Eckert

The National Sierra Club has been promoting its “Cool Cities” program to chapters and groups around the country, and the Marys Peak Group is stepping up to support this worthwhile initiative.

MPG provided $400 in seed money and group members donated an additional $600 to plant street trees in Corvallis last Fall. The City of Corvallis Community Beautification and Urban Forestry Council (CBUF) also provided $360 in grant funds.

Additional funds came from the Corvallis International Order of Oddfellows, the Downtown Corvallis Association, and two more CBUF grants. These funds helped the initial seed grant from MPG to grow, providing funding for a large project with great environmental and social benefits.

On top of all this, college students from California to Alaska who were in town attending a conference at OSU last November descended to downtown Corvallis for two hours to help plant some of the trees.

These trees will remove carbon from our choked atmosphere and add oxygen to it. The trees will also help moderate our delicate water cycle and moderate temperatures while providing new wildlife habitat where it had been previously destroyed.

The MPG was highlighted for this work in a Corvallis Gazette-Times article published November 8.
Spaceship Beagle Needs Our Help

Our Spaceship Beagle is in trouble. As we begin our journey in the Energy-Climate Era, the ecological regulatory systems that have sustained us for centuries are now being challenged to a degree that feedback processes will soon kick in and force collapses in our support systems.

You may ask what I’m talking about. So, let me put it simply. The pumping of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, principally carbon dioxide and methane, primarily from our current energy sources (i.e. coal, oil, natural gas, and even wood from deforestation) for vehicles and industries is forcing an elevation of atmospheric temperatures.

Temperature increase, in turn, is bringing about the melting of glaciers, loss of the Arctic and Antarctic ice sheets, and heating and acidification of the oceans, among other things. Even our freshwater temperatures are rising. This is now causing all sorts of weather related disasters, forcing human migrations because of desertification, destruction of highly productive coral reef communities, shifting disease patterns, and the like.

It’s easy to say, “So what? I now drive a Prius and I’ve changed all my light bulbs to the new energy efficient bulbs. I’ve done my part, what else do you want?”

A major paradigm shift of human behavior is in order. If we don’t reverse global warming, our very existence as a species will be challenged. We cannot continue to generate energy the way we have in the years that got us here. Clean coal is not clean coal. We’ve passed peak oil. There are few rivers left to be dammed, and those that are flowing are drying up.

The world needs to make a dramatic shift in how it generates electrons to drive the heating of our houses, firing up the ole computer, and moving the “bat mobile” to the store.

Going carbon neutral to reduce our footprint will not solve the problem. The problem is too great because the earth is getting crowded and the demand for the limited resources is causing the environment to spin ever faster out of control. We must go carbon negative.

Those who crunch the numbers and then conclude it is better to not shift are discounting the future. That’s right. They are ignoring costs and the future itself. They are saying that we should let our children suffer the consequences for our excesses.

They assure us that the global life support systems will balance and keep us on an even keel. Baloney! God may be “in nature,” but nature bats last, and it doesn’t give a hoot how humans feel. It simply responds to the global climate change.

There is hope with a new administration. Yes, hope. We need to change who and what gets taxed and who and what gets incentives. You can help to decide which ones.

~Barry Wulff, Chair
Leader Profile: Ray Drapek

Ray Drapek lists many reasons why he loves heading outdoors. The beauty; the fresh air; the exercise; and the people he meets are just a few. And they are things he likes to share with those who go on MPG outings.

Born in Pontiac, Michigan, Ray earned a bachelor’s degree in natural resources from the University of Michigan and a double master’s degree in forestry and systems science from Michigan State University. He moved to Corvallis in 1985, taking a job with the Oregon State University Extension Service, and he went on to earn a PhD in Entomology at OSU. Good degrees for the Pacific Northwest’s great biodiversity.

Ray currently works at the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Lab. “The lab has an ecosystem simulation computer model which is used to project possible ecosystem responses to climate change,” says Ray. “It’s an interesting job, but it is 40 hours a week in front of a computer, so I am happy for opportunities to experience real ecosystems first hand with a pack on my back.”

Ray has been exploring ecosystems from an early age. As a youngster, he and his family would take extended summer vacations usually to places “out west” with their camp trailer in tow. “We visited most of the major national parks,” says Ray. “And my parents felt it was important to get out of the car and hike some of the trails.”

Today, Ray enjoys hiking, backpacking, and skiing—and he leads all of the above and then some for MPG. “I have not gotten into snowshoeing—yet,” he says. “I mostly slog down trails for skiing. No fancy Telemark skiing, though that does look cool. I have done some downhill skiing and found it to be great fun, but the expensive lift prices—and maybe the fear of painful and debilitating injuries—is probably what keeps me away.”

Ray’s first trek as an outings leader for MPG was probably a bit more than most people would take on. “I wanted to backpack the Pacific Crest Trail in sections and I wanted someone to go with me,” explains Ray. “In the MPG, if you want a trip to happen and it’s not already on the agenda, you lead it yourself. So, I got myself trained-up on first aid and took the Sierra Club trip leader class, and then led my first backpack on the PCT.”

This year was Ray’s fifth for leading PCT backpacks. He started the first hike from the Columbia River Gorge and has been heading south ever since. Ray recently finished leading a group on a nine-day, 94-mile PCT hike from the Santiam Pass to the Willamette Pass; a trip that he ranks up there on his list of great adventures.

“The incredible scenery and a really great group of people to hang out with are what made it for me,” says Ray. “I think backpacking in particular gives you a valuable perspective on how really cushy our lives generally are and with how little you really can get by on. After spending a week where getting a cup of hot water for my oatmeal was a five minute task, it seemed amazing to get home, turn a knob, and have a stream of hot water for my shower that—if I was wasteful enough—could have lasted a half-hour.”

And Ray’s not done with the PCT yet. After completing the 486-mile Oregon section, he has his eye on the Washington stretch of the PCT. “We figure we’ll head down to Crater Lake next year,” explains Ray. “The following year we’ll probably be approaching Mt. Ashland—but not quite to the California border. We may leave it at that and head up to hike the PCT in Washington, or we may add another year and head a little way down into Northern California. I haven’t had a chance to look and see how desirable the California stretch is yet.”

And since he had done all that training to prepare to be a leader, Ray says, he thought he might as well lead a few other hikes and other activities for MPG as well. He recently led a tour of the Oregon Garden, and for the past two years has organized a McKenzie River rafting trip.

“I really admire all the ‘older’ people who still put the packs on and hit the trail,” he adds. “I won’t mention any names because I don’t know if they would want to be identified as ‘old.’ But then, my concept of what is ‘old’ has changed a lot in the last few years.”

Although Ray is not one to list favorites, he does have a few places he really enjoys visiting. “I love the Columbia Gorge; I only wish I could have seen it before it was dammed up. Silver Falls State Park is an incredible and easily accessible place. I love the area around Cascade Head, the beach at Camp Westwind across the Salmon River, and there are some headlands directly to the south with wonderful ocean views,” he adds.

Ray’s family in Corvallis consists of two cats: Julio-a.k.a. “Mr. Puke”- and Charlie. According to Ray, they are supposed to be strictly in-door animals. But Julio loves to slip through the door when Ray is not looking.

When he’s not outside exploring or chasing after Mr. Puke, Ray plays piano for local community theater productions. And much of the last ten years of his life has been devoted to creating a small nature center for the Audubon Society of Corvallis, called Hesthavn Nature Center.

“Last year I resigned from being the chair of Hesthavn, but I still try to get down there once a month and harass the blackberries,” says Ray. (read more about Ray’s latest PCT hike on pg. 20)
NEW to MPG OUTINGS?

MPG welcomes newcomers! Come alone or bring a friend. Non-members are always welcome! To receive weekly e-mails on upcoming events and outings, contact Barry Wulff at wulffb@peak.org.

Thursday, January 1 – New Year’s Day Walk, Dimple Hill. Once again, for our traditional New Year walk, we’ll go up a tree-lined gravel road from Oak Creek to Dimple Hill, with views over the valley — perhaps the Cascades — should the weather happen to cooperate. Moderate, 7 miles, 1,100 feet elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, ddeles@proaxis.com

Saturday, January 3 – Vineyard Mt. Loop. A loop walk on Vineyard Mountain roads from the Lewisburg Saddle in McDonald Forest. Good well-drained gravel roads; pleasant forests; occasional vistas over Soap Creek Valley and the Coast Range. Moderate, 7 miles, 650 feet elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Christy Stevens, 753-4353, christy.stevens@linnbenton.edu

Sunday, January 4 – Beginner Cross-country Ski. Check weekly e-mail for details. If the snow is ready for us, we’ll go to Ray Benson Cross Country ski area in the Santiam Pass. Well-equipped beginners in good condition welcome. Equipment can be rented. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. If snow isn’t ready, we’ll do a snowshoe or a hike. Contact Leader: Tasha Wulff, 619-5118, twulff@peak.org

Saturday, January 10 – Peavy Arboretum Loop. We will hike the Section 36 loop and Powder House Trails in the McDonald Forest in Peavy Arboretum north of Corvallis. If the group desires, we may add the Calloway Creek Trail. This will be a joint hike with the Chemeketans. Please preregister. Contact leader: Ralph Nafziger, 926-4245, nafziger@peak.org

Sunday, January 11 – Intermediate Cross-country Ski to Rosary Lake. We’ll ski up the Pacific Crest Trail in the Willamette Pass area to a view of lower Rosary Lake, then return with a downhill glide. Moderate/Difficult, 6 miles with 600 feet of elevation gain. Contact leader for departure time, locations, and other information: Ray Drapek, 754-7364, drapek@fsl.orst.edu

Saturday-Sunday January 17-18 – Overnight Cross-Country Ski. Ski 4 miles with packs up a moderate grade to the Mt. View shelter near the Santiam Pass. Preregister; limited to 12. Intermediate or capable beginner skiers. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: David Anderson, 758-7602, DAAMP1@MSN.com; Lelia Barlow.

Note: For General Outing Rules see page 7
Sunday, January 18  —  McCulloch Peak and Martin Luther King.  We’ll climb from the Oak Creek entry to the highest point in McDonald Forest where we’ll have a few readings in memory of Martin Luther King, whose birthday is celebrated Monday. We’ll see beautiful woods, ferns and mosses, even in the rain. Moderate/difficult, 7-9 miles, 1,700 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leaders: Irene and Armand Schoppy, 758-8591, iameyers@yahoo.com

Saturday, January 24  —  Cross-country Ski.  If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Moderate, not for first-time skiers. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure, or contact leader for Salem departure time/place. Contact leader: Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com

Saturday, January 31  —  Cascade Head.  We’ll take a long loop through rainforest and down this spectacular beachhead in a Nature Conservancy preserve; short distance on a gravel road closed to traffic. Short car shuttle. Might see an elk herd. Moderate, 9 miles, 1,500 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure, or ask leader about Salem departure time/place. Contact leader: Allan King, 503/399-9990, kingalla@gmail.com

Saturday-Sunday, February 7-8  —  Sun River Ski Trip Weekend (sorry, full).

Saturday, February 7  —  Peavy Arboretum: Calloway Creek and More.  In this area at the north end of McDonald Forest, we’ll start with the Forest Discovery trail and connections to Cronemiller Lake, then take the attractive Calloway Creek trail back to the parking area. Easy/moderate, 5 miles, small amounts of uphill. Mud is possible, though trails are generally in good condition. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 745-5185, rvrboogen@mac.com

Sunday, February 15  —  Willamette Park Loop.  Join us for a walk through this lovely park bordering the Willamette River. We will pass through a shady woodland corridor with a brief stop to watch the river flow past, then circle around through the restoration area on the western side. Enjoy refreshments at the leader’s house next to the park after the hike. Easy, 2.6 miles, with no elevation gain. Meet at the 1st Street Parking lot behind the Super-8 Motel in Corvallis at 1:00 p.m. Contact Leader: Jane Luther at 758-8279, janeluth@gmail.com

Saturday, February 21  —  Cross-country Ski.  If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Moderate, not for first-time skiers. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure, or call leader for Salem departure time/place. Contact leader: Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com

Sunday, February 22  —  Double Loop.  We will do two loop hikes, one at Fitton Green and one on Tom’s forestland trails. Short hike between the two loops. If bad weather we’ll do just one loop. Optional warm-up at Tom’s house after the hike, hot drinks provided. Preregistration required; number is limited. Moderate, up to 5 miles total, 500 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Tom Bucht, 738-1333, tombucht@gmail.com

Saturday, February 28  —  Cross-country Ski Near Santiam Pass.  If there’s snow, we’ll ski trails in one of the Cascade snow parks. Moderate, for intermediate skiers. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:30 a.m. departure. Contact leader: David Anderson, 758-7602, DAAMP1@MSN.com

Sunday, March 1  —  A Different Dimple Hill Loop.  We’ll go to a favorite McDonald Forest destination via an unusual loop including parts of several trails and some gravel roads. Mixed forests of lush evergreens, plus budding big-leaf maples and oaks. Views into the Willamette Valley and possibly to the Cascades. Moderate, 8.5 miles, 1,600 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 9 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, ddeles@proaxis.com

Saturday, March 7  —  McCulloch Peak from Soap Creek.  We’ll hike to the highest point in McDonald Forest by a less typical route, making a loop from the end of Soap Creek Road near Sulphur Springs. Pass through forests lush with mosses and ferns to weather-dependent views of the valley and perhaps the Cascades. Moderate/Difficult, 9 miles and 1,800 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Randy Selig, 738-0753, rselig@mindspring.com

continued on next page . . .
Saturday, March 14 – Gwyn Creek Trail, Cape Perpetua. We’ll hike in some of the most beautiful Oregon coastal rainforest, including old growth sitka spruce, cedar, hemlock, and Douglas fir. Great ocean views from the visitor center starting point. Exploring coastal headland areas and/or stopping at a Yachats deli may follow. Moderate, at least 5.8 miles, 1,100 feet elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

Saturday, March 21 – Silver Falls. This tree-lined trail to 10 waterfalls is one of Oregon’s premier sights. We’ll walk the Canyon and Ridge trails, with a stop by the fire in the classic lodge. Good rain gear and water-resistant boots or sturdy walking shoes are essential. Moderate, 7.1 miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 8:30 a.m. departure. Preregistration required; number limited. Contact leaders: Armand & Irene Schoppy, 758-8591, iameyers@yahoo.com

Saturday, March 28 – SOLV Beach Cleanup. For the eighth consecutive year, we’ll join other Oregonians for the annual SOLV spring beach cleanup. Dress in warm layers; bring rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots. Lunch at a Newport restaurant. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 8:00 a.m. departure. Denise Nervik, 752-8241, nervikd@peak.org; Loretta Rivard; Bruce Encke.

Sunday, April 5 – Ankeny Wildlife Refuge. Visit the wetlands and ponds at this refuge between Albany and Salem. The refuge provides winter habitat for dusky Canada geese, but also is frequented by waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Bring binoculars if you have them. Conditions permitting, we will do a loop hike on the dikes as well as the boardwalk. Easy, 2 miles, no elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Tom Bucht, 738-1333, tombucht@gmail.com

Saturday, April 11 – Eugene Ridgeline Trail and Spencer Butte. Hike through Douglas fir forests thick with sword ferns to the summit of the haystack-shaped knob that’s so prominent on the Eugene skyline. Option for lunch at a favorite Eugene eatery at conclusion of hike. Moderate with a strenuous section, up to 5 miles with 1,200 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Karl Hartzell, 758-2275, karlerun@yahoo.com

Saturday, April 18 – Santiam Little N. Fork trail. This much loved Cascade foothills hike is east of Salem, near Opal Creek, in mossy old growth forests with spring flowers. It passes emerald pools and a waterfall. Steep and rocky in places; probably muddy. Moderate, 9 miles with 900 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Bob Custer, 745-3994, laststand@exchangenet.net

Sunday, April 19 – Family Outing to Mt. Pisgah Arboretum. The Ecological Society of America has designated Earth Week as “No Child Left Indoors” week, so let’s take those kids for an afternoon at Eugene’s beautiful Mt. Pisgah Arboretum. Hike 2-3 miles. Arboretum highlights: a river meadow and riparian forest along the Willamette River, an Oregon white oak savanna, wet forests, a water garden with western pond turtles and red-legged frogs, and plenty of wildflowers. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a noon departure. Bring a hearty snack, water, and tennis shoes or hiking boots for the kids. Contact leader: Christi Raunig, 753-6240, ChristiRaunig@hotmail.com

Saturday, April 25 – Trail work. Assist with trail building or maintenance at a city or county park or other area near Corvallis. Bring work gloves, water, lunch. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 8:30 a.m. departure; return mid-afternoon. See weekly e-mail or ask leaders about details. Contact leaders: Margie Powell, Tom Bucht, Denise Nervik, 752-8241, nervikd@peak.org

Saturday, April 26 – Wildflower Walk. We’ll look for early wildflowers near Corvallis, perhaps with resource people from the Native Plant Society. Probably one or more trails in McDonald Forest. Moderate, not more than 6 miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, ddeles@proaxis.com

Tuesday, April 28 - Backpack Class. Guidance on current backpacking equipment and practices for beginners and experienced backpackers. Information on MPG and Chemeketan backpacks planned for 2009. Chemekeden, 360-1/2 State Street, Salem, 7-9 pm. Bob Custer, 745-3994, laststand@exchangenet.net for information on car pooling from Corvallis area.
Saturday, May 2 -  Salmon River Estuary Tour; Cascade Head.  In the morning we’ll tour the Salmon River Estuary area with an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife researcher, learning about past and ongoing research and restoration projects.  If time allows, we’ll walk out to Cascade Head in the afternoon, where we’ll get a wonderful view down on the estuary and out to sea.  Bring rain gear, rubber boots, and hiking boots or sturdy shoes.  Preregistration required; number is limited.  Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure.  Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, 753-4775, ddeles@proaxis.com

A sample of future events follows.  More details about these and additional summer/fall backpacks, camping trips, and other events will be announced in the weekly emails before they come out in the May Benchmark.  Please contact marypeakgroup@peak.org if you wish to be added to the MPG email list.  Other trips may be added at the Marys Peak Group website, http://oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/marys_peak/

Saturday, May 9 – Heceta Head.  A great walk at the coast; more details in the next Benchmark.  Robert Verhoogen, 745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

Friday-Monday, May 22-25 – Memorial Day Weekend Dorena Lake camping trip.  Camp at an attractive state park 2 hours drive from Corvallis; hike attractive trails in the area.  Tom Bucht, 738-1333, tombucht@gmail.com

Saturday, May 30 – Trail work.

Friday-Sunday, June 5-7 – Columbia Gorge Backpack.  A trip for experienced and energetic backpackers.  The route will include the Eagle Creek Trail and others.  Lelia Barlow, lelia.trips@gmail.com

Friday-Sunday, June 12-14 – Indian Heaven Backpack.  New backpackers welcome.  Allan King 503/399-9990, kingalla@gmail.com; Joanne DeMay, 503/971-237-9775, jodemay@comcast.net

Saturday-Monday, June 20-22 – Deschutes Rafting Trip.  Christy Stevens, 753-4353, christy.stevens@linnbenton.edu

Sunday, June 21 – Solstice Party.  An outstanding event for all.

Saturday-Sunday, July 18-26 – Yellowstone camping/hiking trip.  Larry Davis, (503) 390-8210, larrydavis@wvi.com

Thursday-Monday, Sept 17-21 – Rogue Lodge Trip.  Day hiking from lodges on the Rogue River.  Jim & Nancye Ballard, 752-4441, ballardjn@gmail.com

Contact the leader before each event.  Please arrive before the stated time; we leave on time.  Dress for the weather, sturdy boots or shoes and rain gear as needed.  No jeans or heavy cotton for extended outings.  Bring water, sunscreen, snacks and lunch if outing starts in the morning.

Suggested reimbursement to carpool drivers is $2.50 per person for every hour driven (more for difficult roads).  All participants must sign a standard Sierra Club liability waiver before each outing.  To access the liability waiver, please see www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms, or contact the National Sierra Club Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.  Neither the Sierra Club nor the Marys Peak Group is responsible for participants during the trips to and from the trailhead.

General Outing Rules
THE CORVALLIS-TO-THE-SEA TRAIL: Past, Present, & Future  
**Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.**  
**Corvallis/Benton County Public Library**  
In 1974 a senior OSU Forestry student put onto paper an idea that had been around for some time: to establish a trail from the Willamette Valley to the Coast. In 2003 the Corvallis-to-the-Sea (C2C) Trail Partnership was formed. Since then it has made steady progress toward the goal of a recreational route from Corvallis to the Oregon coast. Currently the partnership is negotiating with several timber companies in an effort to improve the route on the coast end. Gary Chapman, Chairman of the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail Partnership, will illustrate some of the trail’s attractions and talk about its history, current status, and the partnership’s plans for the future.

BACKPACKING UTAH’S PARIA CANYON  
**Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.**  
**Corvallis/Benton County Public Library**  
Join with Salem Chemeketans Allan King and Joanne DeMay, and MPG Chair Barry Wulff as they describe their 42-mile backpack down the Paria Canyon from Utah into Arizona. This illustrated presentation will sweep you along between the towering red rock canyon walls through potentially dangerous narrow passages as they wade and hike the course of the Paria River.

OREGON’S HIGH DESSERTS  
**Wednesday, March 18, 7 p.m.**  
**Corvallis/Benton County Public Library**  
Ken Snider of the Oregon Sierra Club’s High Desert Committee will illustrate the scenic beauty of the eastern Oregon high desert sagebrush steppe and will describe the efforts of the committee to protect and restore this fragile arid environment. One of the major activities of the committee is to conduct educational trips to designated and potential wilderness areas and other special or threatened places on the east side of the state in order to enhance public appreciation of this unique environment and its need for protection.

NEW HIKES ON THE OREGON COAST  
**Wednesday, April 15, 7 p.m.**  
**Corvallis/Benton County Public Library**  
Hiking guru and author William L. Sullivan takes us on a virtual tour of a dozen new trails he discovered on the Oregon Coast while researching the newly released third edition of his guidebook, “100 Hikes/Travel Guide: Oregon Coast & Coast Range.” Included are new paths in the hills west of Corvallis, an Oregon redwood grove near Brookings, a sea cave near Port Orford recently acquired by the State Parks, and new Lewis & Clark trails opened in the Astoria area. Along the way, expect anecdotes about local history, wildflowers, and outdoor lore. Sullivan will also have autographed copies of some of his books available for sale after the talk.
• Offered 112 different outings to MPG members, a 5.2% increase over 2007
  • Hiked a total of 744.75 miles and over 99,555 feet of elevation gain
• More than 489 different individuals participated in MPG outings in 2008
  • There were 2,007 participation days on MPG outings, a 4.5% increase over 2007
• There were 137 days of outings in 2008
  • Five backpack trips were led in Oregon, Idaho and Washington
• Conducted our second annual summer wine tour
  • Three wonderful rafting adventures took place on the Grand Ronde, Willamette and McKenzie rivers
• 16 participants went on the Memorial Day weekend car-camping trip at Sunset Bay State Park
  • 30 participants went on the ninth-annual, three-day weekend Mt. Bachelor ski trip
• Six evening programs presented in Corvallis with an average of 65 people in attendance
  • More than 110 attended the Summer Solstice VII Gala at Dancing Oaks Nursery
• Led first beach walk with a crab Fête in February
  • Led 12 snowshoe/cross-country ski outings through March 2
• Spring Spree tour and luncheon at The Thyme Garden in May
  • September car-camping trip with 12 people, Lewis River in Southern Washington
• Fundraising concert – Bridgetown with Hanz Araki - Celtic music
  • Several MPG activities written-up in the Salem Statesman-Journal
• Maintained an up-to-date web site and weekly e-mail posting
  • 1,259 individuals on weekly e-mail list – a 35% increase over 2007
• Ended 2008 “in the black” for the eighth year in a row
  • Moved to an all-electronic edition of the Benchmark newsletter
• Moved the weekly Sunday evening e-mail to Google Groups server
  • Supported Benton County Commissioners Annabelle Jaramillo and Jay Dixon for reelection
• Led Earth Day tours of Corvallis sites, plus three tabling events for Earth Week
  • MPG is a cosponsor of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
• Four successful trail workdays with 41 participants in Benton County forests and parks
  • Seven field trips to local environmental friendly business enterprises
• Countless hours of work dedicated to the Corvallis to the Sea Trail effort
  • Major cosponsor of Reviving Biodiversity Program in Corvallis, 300 people attended
• Major contributor of money and volunteers to Corvallis’ urban tree planting program
Marys Peak Group, Sierra Club
Executive Committee Elections Results

Four positions were filled on the MPG Sierra Club Executive Committee this year. Elected were Doris deLespinasse, Bruce Encke, Leslie Hogan, and Ralph Nafziger. Each will serve two-year terms. Also on the committee are Barry Wulff, chair; Bob Custer, Jane Luther, and Mike Brantley, treasurer.

Doris deLespinasse, incumbent—Member for nine years. Frequent outing participant, outing leader, and currently coordinator of the outings schedule. Supports the national Sierra Club’s new broader focus on smart energy and waste reduction.

Bruce Encke—Member of the MPG four years. Participated in many hikes and has become a hike leader. Participated and co-led the MPG on the annual SOLV beach cleanups. Is an active member of the HP Sustainability Network.

Leslie Hogan, incumbent—Member of Sierra Club for 10 years. Currently coordinator of mid-week hikes. Volunteers for trail work, on initiatives, canvassing for political candidates with strong environmental records and with local community groups advocating for stewardship of mature trees.


Also on the committee...

Barry Wulff, Chair
Bob Custer
Jane Luther
Mike Brantley, Treasurer
Oregon’s Oceans Need Our Help
by Hiram Sachs, Our Ocean Oregon

Oregon’s near-shore ocean waters—from shore to three miles out—are home to hundreds of species of fish and a multitude of invertebrates, algae and marine plants.

At least 29 different species of marine mammals use Oregon’s coastal and marine waters including many whales, dolphins and porpoises. Oregon’s rocky islands and sheltered coves provide breeding areas for northern elephant seals, and over a million seabirds nest on Oregon’s shores.

Unfortunately, this diverse ocean ecosystem is currently facing several threats to its diversity and its future. Climate change, habitat loss and pollution all threaten Oregon’s rocky reef and kelp forest ocean habitat. In addition, growing population and development is increasing pressure on marine wildlife and habitats, including some already depleted valuable fish species.

In order to respond to these threats and protect Oregon’s coastal legacy, scientists have developed a new approach to reviving ocean waters, one that’s already being used around the world in cold and warm waters.

Marine protected areas and reserves are part of a science-based approach that helps restore ocean ecosystems and protect the legacy we leave to future generations; a legacy of thriving coastal waters, healthy fisheries, and a vibrant coastal economy that make Oregon a great place to live.

Protected areas and reserves help are important to this legacy because they differ from traditional ocean management techniques in a crucial regard: They focus on protecting entire ecosystems instead of individual species.

As a result, fish, birds, marine mammals, plants, and other species inside protected areas and reserves all benefit. Species within marine reserves have been shown to grow larger, be more diverse, and have more offspring. These results have actually been strongest in temperate ocean waters like Oregon’s.

The recent Ocean Policy Advisory Council recommendation falls far short of what our ocean needs. The Governor’s Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) has been charged with evaluating proposals for protected areas and reserves. Last month, OPAC issued a recommendation that ignored both the science and eight years of community involvement and negotiation.

Community Action Teams up and down the coast submitted proposals for marine protected areas and reserves based upon the ecologically significant areas that need protection in our near-shore waters.

Our Ocean—a coalition of conservationists, scientists, ocean users, local leaders and business people from around the state—also took the recommendations of the communities teams on specific sites, knitted them together and submitted a proposal for a network of marine reserves and protected areas.

All of these proposals were based on the identified ecologically significant areas in our near-shore waters that need protecting. The proposals were designed to be pieces of a larger network of protected areas and reserves that would help fish, seabirds, and other species thrive far into the future.

Unfortunately, the OPAC recommendation includes only six sites for further evaluation with two marine reserves as pilot projects and the remaining four “to be further evaluated.” OPAC omits proposed marine protected areas, so there would be no comprehensive network protecting our coastal legacy. In addition, OPAC’s recommendation doesn’t include any time frames or deadlines for the further evaluation, so this process could drag on for months or even years.

Now that the OPAC recommendation will be one of the topics discussed in the 2009 Legislature, it’s crucial that your local state legislators know that you support a network of marine protected areas and reserves in Oregon’s near-shore waters. Tell your state legislators you support a network of marine protected areas and marine reserves.

Please contact your state representative and senator today. When you contact your legislator, please emphasize the following points:

- Oregon’s near-shore ocean waters need a network of marine protected areas and reserves to protect them from stresses including pollution, development, and climate change.
- Oregon is the only West Coast state without a network of marine reserves.
- Decisions should be based upon the best available science, which identify the ecologically significant areas in Oregon’s near-shore ocean.
- It’s important that the implementation process include clear time frames and deadlines.

If you want to know more about marine reserves, please check out the Our Ocean web site at www.ouroregonocean.org
MY FAVORITE WINTER PLACES
by Larry Davis, MPG Outings Leader

As I write this, the autumn leaves have turned and fallen, backpacking gear is stowed for next spring, and the winter 2008-09 snow season is just around the corner.

I can’t help but feel random pricks of enthusiasm as I go about my regular day. Last year, the Nordic snow gods were good to us in the Northwest, with huge snow drops in the Santiam Pass area and consistent snow conditions for the entire season.

Whether they like to snowshoe, cross-country or downhill ski, the Santiam Pass area provides quite a number of winter opportunities for outdoors people in the Willamette Valley. When the snow tires come out, many of my winter outings point me toward the Ray Benson Sno Park and Hoodoo Ski Area. Both share an entrance road off of Highway 20 near its junction with Highway 22, about 20 miles west of Sisters.

The Ray Benson Sno Park serves the larger snow-loving community, with both a network of dedicated snowshoe and cross-country ski trails and a separate area for snow machines. The parking lot has a warming hut and concrete outhouses to help you start and end your activities on the right foot.

There are three winter shelters on the trails in the Ray Benson park, which on weekends often have a fire in the stove to warm outdoor travelers. Shelters are a good way to get warmed up during lunch and have some conversation with other people enjoying the area, and you often run into other folks you know.

The South Loop Trail offers a great place for beginning cross-country skiers to have a rewarding experience. The trail is wide with very little incline and is rated as easy. The full South Loop Trail is about five miles long and passes the Brandenburg shelter, which was rebuilt in 2006 due to deterioration.

The North Loop Trail runs about four miles long and is appropriate for intermediate skiers. The trail has varied terrain and some moderate uphill and downhill sections. The North Blowout Shelter is found near the middle of this loop. Although this shelter was burned down in the 2003 B&B Complex fire, it also was rebuilt in 2006.

Directly behind the shelter, the terrain drops away from the shelter ridge to form a wide slope that is steep enough to be challenging to cross-country skiers. Adventurous souls may like to practice some downhill telemark turns or tuck and race other skiers into the wide meadow below.

A winter Sno-Park pass is required for the parking lot at Ray Benson, and trail maps are available for download from the Willamette National Forest web site.


The Hoodoo Ski Area is right around the corner from Ray Benson and maintains a grooming schedule for Nordic trails during the regular ski season. Two sets of trails provide skiing opportunities at Hoodoo. The lower trail system has about five miles of Nordic fun for beginner and intermediate skiers.

For a little extra Nordic ski adventure, the Skyline Loop at Hoodoo gives solid intermediate cross-country skiers a challenge, as well as great views of Three Finger Jack and Mt. Washington from the open terrain on the west side of Hoodoo Butte. The loop measures about 5.5 miles. Skiers start at the Hoodoo lodge and take the Manzanita chair lift up to the start of the
Skyline Trail. Head straight after you gracefully get off the chair.

One trip up the Manzanita chair lift is included with a Hoodoo Nordic ski pass, which is about $10 and is available at the Hoodoo lodge. The Skyline Loop circles the mountain in a counterclockwise direction and passes the Hodag chair lift before splitting into a figure-eight loop.

After completing the rolling terrain of the Skyline Loop, cross-country skiers can return to the lodge on one of the green downhill runs, such as the Over Easy or Hesitation trail to the left as you get back to the top of the Manzanita Chair. Cross-country skiers with a solid snowplow turn should be able to complete this run without too much difficulty or breakage.

As an aspiring telemark skier, I like to go to Hoodoo on days when I downhill ski. I have found it to be a very friendly place, with a mix of ages and snow equipment. Special events like the Tele Fest, Winter Carnival and Rodeo Day add to the local flavor and charm of Hoodoo. The Hoodoo Ski Area is a member of Sustainable Slopes, an environmental charter for ski areas from the National Ski Areas Association.

Cross-country ski rentals are available at the Hoodoo rental center. Call ahead to the Hoodoo Ski School for Nordic lessons or to the Hoodoo Lodge for trail conditions.

With the winter season ramping up for the Marys Peak Group, quite a few cross-country ski and snowshoe activities have been added to the calendar. Please check the outings list in this newsletter or the outings page on the MPG web site for an activity at your level. I hope to see you on the snow soon.
What's in a Name? I seriously hope this Trail will someday be called something different, perhaps just the “C2C Trail.” This could be interpreted as “Corvallis to Coast” or “Coast to Corvallis,” removing the current directional bias.

We have an historic identity as Corvallis-to-the-Sea and are incorporated under that name, so we live with that for now. Under the right set of circumstances we’d even call it the “Bill and Melinda Gates Trail.”

Oregon State University Forestry students were often in the forefront of planning for the C2C Trail through the preparation of senior projects proposing routes, analyzing costs, and estimating projected usage and benefits.

In 1974, the first of these plans was submitted to the Siuslaw National Forest (SNF) which circulated the plan internally and to the State of Oregon and local governments. In 1976, a Corvallis Trail Committee was formed.

Student plans for a trail to the coast were submitted to the SNF in 1977, 1978, and 1980. As a result, several short trails were constructed on SNF lands on Marys Peak and in what is now the Drift Creek Wilderness Area. But necessary permission to cross private timberlands was not forthcoming and the idea went into hibernation throughout the 1980s.

In the 1990s, the SNF and BLM became involved in the project again. OSU forestry class trail plans were solicited by the SNF and at least three detailed proposals were produced by 1994.

In 1993, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SNF and BLM was signed regarding the trail. The MOU agreed “to proceed with the planning and prepare an environmental assessment, Decision Record, and Final Management Plan by the end of Fiscal Year 1995.”

This route was to proceed southwest toward Cape Perpetua and the Cape Mountain Equestrian Area near Florence. But this effort again came to naught. Anecdotal sources suggest that private landowners resisted “big government” attitudes and that agency resources also became a limiting factor.

A meeting for people interested in the trail was convened in March 2003, and the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail Partnership was born. A sufficient level of citizen interest was shown to pursue the project solely with volunteers. Many volunteers were members of trail-friendly organizations, while others were unaffiliated local residents. Local and federal agencies cooperated by identifying persons to act as liaisons with the partnership.

The vision of the C2C partnership has been to connect Corvallis with the coast via a continuous, non-motorized route for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Since 2003, over 10,000 hours of exploration and meetings plus agreements with a half-dozen land owners have produced a minimally acceptable trail route.

Much of the trail is on overgrown, abandoned, or decommissioned forest service or county roads. Some new trails and one existing trail will be used on forest service lands to avoid active roads or to link road segments. The trail uses some active roads with almost no motor vehicle traffic.

On the downside, there are a few miles of paved roads near Philomath and Ona Beach that have considerably more traffic. Indeed, passage through or around Philomath is a major problem.

We are currently continuing our explorations in an effort to find better trail routes on SNF lands. We are also seeking additional private landowner cooperation so that we can provide a route that avoids the most heavily motorized road segments. A high priority is to obtain the permissions needed for a route that links to the South Beach area immediately south of Newport.

Once we have finished trail route exploration and landowner discussions we will submit a final trail plan to the SNF. An environmental assessment of the project must then be completed. Indications are that scarce forest service resources will mean that the C2C Partnership will bear the responsibility of obtaining the assessment.

This could require considerable time and resources. Once the assessment is complete and approved, we could then solicit grants and funding for trail construction, signage, maps, etc.

People often ask if they can use portions of the C2C trail today. The answer is inevitably “yes, but…” In 2006, two of us hiked from Corvallis to South Beach State Park, but we skipped a four-mile vacated portion of Old...
Peak Road for which we had no permission. In 2006, we also had one-time permission to cross private land near Newport, but permission for the trail has since been denied on that land.

In August of this year, five of us hiked a slightly different route from Philomath to Ona Beach with a special one-time permission to use the four-mile vacated portion of Old Peak Road (see accompanying article by Linda Dunn and Denise Nervik). Although we have permissions to use the vacated Old Peak Road segment for the C2C trail, until the trail is a reality this segment is closed to the public.

More than 90 percent of the route can be hiked today. This represents both the public road and public land sections of the currently proposed Trail. However, this includes areas of heavy bushwhacking where new trails will have to be constructed.

There is no signage to direct anyone along the route, and many of the old roads are confusing networks that are difficult to follow, overgrown with brush and impeded by downed trees, slides, culvert removals, and water bars. New trail routes are usually unmarked and often traverse steep and brushy hillsides.

Bicycles can make the journey using currently available roads, but many of the abandoned roads we propose to use as trail are not sufficiently clear of blow-down and brush to be passable except on foot. Equestrians face the same obstacles plus additional problems with motor vehicles on some of the hikeable, bikeable segments.

It is almost certain that the C2C trail will not be completed for five years, but it is possible that a route will be adequately signed and opened by 2012. Much depends upon the environmental assessment.

We know that new trail construction will be phased. Links between road segments are of highest priority. Once these links are completed we will target new trail segments that will take the trail off those active roads that will be used as trail on an interim basis.

Many of the abandoned roads being used need to be cleared of blow downs and brush. In addition, we may need to modify water bars and construct short trails around berm-and-ditch barriers on decommissioned roads in order to make the trail bike and horse-friendly.

It is likely that some segments of the trail will initially be open only to hikers. Where possible, we will designate alternate road routes for bikes and horses. This separation will be necessary because some of the terrain and soil conditions make construction of suitable bike and horse trail difficult, if not impossible.

In other cases, preliminary forest service inspection of water crossings in remote areas indicated that we need to construct equestrian bridges of appropriate strength and of significant height and length to be above expected flood levels. Finally, in some cases motor traffic on the various routes may be too intimidating for some horses.

We see the C2C trail as having a major educational role regarding forests and timber management. The trail user sees a full spectrum of forest landscapes on public and private lands along the trail. The route passes over land that was a patchwork of homesteads with dwellings, barns and even schools over a century ago.

Most of those homesteads have long-ago returned to the native forests of the Coast Range. The flora and fauna along the Trail provide a marvelous first-hand way to learn about the natural history of the region. There’s always something new to experience.

You can get involved. Come to our Wednesday morning meetings and help us design, build and maintain the trail.

Meeting details are posted on our web site at www.c2ctrail.org. We plan to schedule some evening meetings in 2009 to allow broader public participation.

You can contact the C2C Partnership via e-mail: info@c2ctrail.org, by phone: (from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.) 541-754-6088, or by mail: P.O. Box 1562, Corvallis OR, 97339-1562.
Hiking the C2C

by Linda Hunn & Denise Nervik

In June 2006, Gary Chapman and Al LePage hiked one of two proposed routes of the Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail (C2C), starting at the Willamette River/Marys River confluence in Corvallis and ending at South Beach State Park on the coast.

This year, Chapman expressed a wish to redo the C2C hike, and several MPG members decided to join in. The group consisted of Chapman—the only person who knew the exact route—Maureen Beezhold, Linda Hunn, Denise Nervik and Janet Throop. Everyone but Nervik carried a full backpack. She carried a daypack instead; opting to have her husband, John, transport her gear by car from campsite to campsite.

Below is a day-to-day description of their hike as logged by MPG members Linda Hunn and Denise Nervik.

Our group started the hike at Old Peak Road in Philomath on Saturday, August 23, with a destination for that day of the North Ridge Trail on Marys Peak. At this time of the year, the road is lovely with diverse vegetation, and not far up the trail we spotted an enormous fir in the forest.

We continued past the Corvallis Watershed, Starker Forest and Siuslaw forest signs, coming out on Woods Creek Road and entering the lower part of the North Ridge Trail. We were amazed to see the great number of trees that had blown down on this trail, and were extremely grateful that someone had cleared most of them away.

After hiking 10.5 miles, our first night was spent on Woods Creek Road in a nice, large, moss-covered clearing with some big hemlock trees and lots of ferns. After dinner, we spent a peaceful evening of talk, singing, and recorder playing.

On Sunday morning, day two, the group was up around 6:15 a.m. to prepare breakfast and break camp. The first part of the day’s hike was on the gravel Woods Creek Road. No cars, just us. Toward lunch time we crossed Shotpouch Creek, climbed a short hill and turned onto the mostly-neglected Sugarbowl Creek Road. We crossed several creeks along the way, including Sugarbowl, Spout, and Feagles. A couple goats were tethered near the road and they seemed quite nervous and then curious about us with our backpacks.

After hiking 11 miles by the end of day two, we crossed Grant Creek Road and headed into Big Elk Campground along Big Elk Creek. The campground fee is $10 a night and includes pit toilets, water, fire rings, picnic tables and a grassy camping area with some large trees.

John Nervik and Kathi Leebelt, Chapman’s partner, were waiting for us at the campground. They had built a campfire and brought a magnificent dinner of skewered vegetables and meat to cook. As we prepared to set up camp, a couple of local guys stopped by to alert us to a small herd of Roosevelt elk eating apples off a tree just across the creek and up the hill from us.

A light rain had started, and by the time we began to cook, the rain was really coming down, so we moved our table back under a big fir tree where we stayed relatively dry. Chapman would turn 71 that Saturday, and Leebelt had brought Linda’s chocolate cake to celebrate. A nice way to end our second day on the trail!

By day three, we were heading from Big Elk Campground to Gopher Creek for another 10-mile day. We headed back up Grant Creek Road and, after crossing a bridge over the creek, we came to a fork in the road. It was time to make a decision: Road hike or trail hike?

Chapman laid out the choices: Right went uphill onto the one-lane paved Hilltop road; left

continued on next page . . .
continued on Grant Creek along the valley. Hilltop road was a gradual climb and was easier and faster- but has more log truck traffic. On the other hand, the valley trail would necessitate a bush-whack with a fairly steep beginning, but the scenery was better.

Since I (Denise Nervik) was fairly well acquainted with this part of the trail, having done a couple of summersaults down a particularly steep slope, the women left it up to me. I knew that after we made it up the steep part the trail, the rest of the hike would be a pleasure. After a moment’s hesitation, I opted that we continue down the valley and hike the bush-whacking steep hillside route.

The trail first took us through a very scenic valley passing goats, sheep, horses, and cows; all of which seemed very curious-and sometimes wary-about us with our packs. We also passed a cob house being built close to the road.

After several miles, we hit the bush-whacking-up-the-steep-hillside part of the trail. Mostly we were following elk trails. Our group had developed a healthy respect for the elk that used these steep trails! C2C volunteers had also left flags marking the trail. We followed the flagging along a soft, needle-covered path though a Douglas fir forest and continued on to the top of the ridge. The trail came up to a small, overgrown side road and we followed that back to the paved Hilltop Road. The way we came had taken at least an extra hour of hiking time, but I don’t think any of us regretted our choice of routes.

We hiked Hilltop Road until we came to another decommissioned road known as Branch Creek. We had to scramble across four of what the Forest Service once called a “tank trap,” although they are no longer called that. To make one of these, the Forest Service removes a culvert and leaves behind a ravine that is 10 feet or more deep. This is done to help restore natural drainage through the old roadbed.

At this point, the road takes a right turn and, after stopping on a small ridge to have lunch and admire several enormous Douglas firs, we set out on Hilltop again. This part of the road is covered by shoulder-high ferns, small shrubs and trees. But there were no culvert removals; no tank traps. The road went uphill and was steep in places, but not elk trail steep.

After several miles, we headed south on Bullrun Road for a mile before we turned west onto the recently decommissioned Gopher Ridge Road to Gopher Creek Road. The end of day three had us camping on the edges of a large, sloping meadow above Gopher Creek Road.

After a quick breakfast, we packed up the tents, refilled our water bottles, and set out on day four of our hike to the sea—a stretch covering 12 miles from Gopher Creek to Beaver Creek. Chapman pointed across the road to a place where he would like the trail to go eventually, but we would not be bush-whacking it on this trip.

Instead, we rejoined Hilltop Road, which we shared with several empty log trucks that were heading farther into the hills. We soon turned off Hilltop and onto Forest Service road 3127, another decommissioned road. We were amazed at how overgrown it had become since our last visit here.

Along the way, we counted 80 water bars, or shallow ditches dug to drain water off the road, on one decommissioned road. We counted 42 on another, as well as some deep culvert removals, some over 20 feet deep. We hiked up a beautiful, but overgrown, trail that skirted the edge of the Flynn Creek Research Natural Area and then up to Palmer Mountain Road.
Once up on Palmer Mountain Road the going was easier. Although partially decommissioned with small water bars, this road had no culvert removals. We stopped for lunch in a sunny spot and had a beautiful view of Marys Peak in the distance to the east.

Late in the afternoon we hiked down to a cutoff over Plum Creek land. Chapman had received prior permission from Plum Creek Logging for us to skirt one of their clearcuts. At first we were on a beautiful path under fir trees. Then we skirted the clear-cut, coming out on the far side at a point where several gravel roads joined. We followed a side road until we spotted John Nervik’s car. The road was decommissioned beyond this point, and John had hiked on to scout out a campsite for us.

By the time we arrived at the campsite, which was on the decommissioned road that runs above the Beaver Creek tributary, the sun was setting behind the hill to the west. Chapman apologized for having to camp “in the road,” but said he doubted that we would be in anyone’s way. We set up tents, quickly heated water for our dinner meals, and were comfortably into our sleeping bags, aches, pains and all, before it got completely dark. We were exhausted.

We slept well in that quiet spot. Towards morning it started to pour. By 7 a.m., the rain had let up quite a bit. After breakfast we packed up the wet tents and gear. We were already dressed in our raincoats, pants, and hiking boots, so it was not much to get packed up and leave our campsite.

Day five, our last, had us hiking 14.5 miles from Beaver Creek up and down decommissioned roads to reach the coast and Ona Beach State Park eight miles south of Newport. We were anxious to get started.

We continued down the “road” and across the creek. This road had been decommissioned with waterbars and with a process called “picking.” Picking is where the road surface is raked up to make it slightly irregular to promote the growth of vegetation. In this part of the coastal rain forest we hiked through head-high ferns and thick stands of young alders; alternately climbing over or crawling under blown down trees.

At one point a few of us at the back suddenly realized we could not see our leaders. We could not hear them either. We shouted and blew on our whistles. One of their heads suddenly appeared 50 feet ahead of us in the dense undergrowth. Vegetation had definitely taken over this part of the trail.

We finally emerged onto a Forest Service road that, if we turned left, would lead to the north entrance of the Drift Creek Wilderness Area. We turned right instead, heading west toward the coast and coming out on the paved Elkhorn Road. Just 10 miles to go!

Here the hiking became easier. We stopped off to rest, and Chapman found some incredible shelf fungi on a couple of rotting logs that were so well developed they looked like small cowboy hats-crown, brim, and all. None of us had ever seen anything like them before.

We hiked up and down long gradual hills. Ripe blackberries and salmonberries hung in bunches right next to the road. The sun was out, the sky was blue, and there was no road traffic. We stopped for a break on a grassy spot at the intersection of Elkhorn Road and Beaver Creek Road. Just four miles to go!

The road was flatter now, and we made good time. Chapman thought we might actually arrive at Ona Beach before the sun went down. There was little traffic, but it was five o’clock, mid-week, rush-hour and what cars did pass were moving fast. We soon found ourselves walking on the side of the road or on the shoulder where possible, as a FedEx truck hurtled by. We were especially careful going around curves where we might not be easily seen by an approaching vehicle.

As we were passing the last house on Beaver Creek Road, a pickup truck pulled into the driveway.
and a dog jumped off the back and greeted us. Chapman introduced himself to the dog’s owner. The man turned out to be Terry Keady, the person who had recently sold the land to the State of Oregon for a new state park. The new park would be a nice place to route the C2C trail instead of having to walk on the paved road for the last few miles.

From the house, we had less than three miles left to go. We could smell the sea on the breeze and we powered on. Once we hit the Ona Beach parking lot, we exchanged boots for sneakers or sandals and headed for the beach. We stuck our bare feet in Beaver Creek where it flowed into the sea. Five days and 60 miles later we finally made it. Whoppee!!

Some of the flora, fauna and birds identified on the C2C hike included an assortment of small birds, pileated woodpecker, scrub and stellar jays, flickers, red-tailed hawks, owls, elk, deer, rabbits, squirrels, snakes, newts, frogs, slugs, blackberries, huckleberries, thimbleberries, salmonberries, salal, Oregon grape, blue elderberry, baneberry, poison oak, stinging nettle, oxalis, vanilla leaf, bleeding hearts, foxglove, trillium, columbine, yellow monkey flower, wood violets, stream violets, assorted lilies, false Solomon Seal, starry Solomon Seal, Indian pipe, skunk cabbage, twisted stalk, sword and maidenhair ferns, vine maple, big leaf maple, Douglas fir, noble fir, hemlock, cedar, alder, and assorted mosses, lichens, mushrooms, slime molds, conks, and fungus.

Get Involved!

You joined the Sierra Club because you like the outdoor life, or because you want to support the environment. The Marys Peak Group offers opportunities to engage more actively in both. Here are a few areas where you can become involved.

- **Trail maintenance/building** – Interested in working on local and regional trails? There’s an opportunity for joining with a great group of folks for trail building and maintenance in the Corvallis area. Contact: Denise Nervik, nervikd@peak.org

- **Leading outings** – Do you enjoy working with people in group settings? How about leading an outing, such as a snowshoe or ski trip, hike, rafting adventure, backpack or special field trip of interest? Training is available. Contact: Doris deLespinasse, ddeles@proaxis.com

- **Conservation/Sustainability** – You may be interested in specific environmental issues. Would you like to get involved in a specific conservation issue? Do you want to repair environmental damage? Would you be willing to attend meetings of government agencies to monitor their activities and testify at hearings? Contact: Barry Wulff, wulffb@peak.org.

- **Political activism** – How about engaging in lobbying? Would you be willing to become involved in political issues relating to the environment or supporting a candidate for election? Would you join with a team to interview a candidate for a potential endorsement? Training is available. Contact: Debra Higbee, dwhigbe@juno.com

- **Graphics/Illustration** – Have you graphics and illustration skills? Have access to Adobe InDesign or Photoshop? Like making displays for events and booths? Contact: Barry Wulff at wulffb@peak.org.

- **Fundraising** – Do you like to promote activities for organizations? Like to meet people? How about producing concerts or managing a party? Do you have fundraising skills? Contact: Barry Wulff, wulffb@peak.org

- **Membership** – Do you like to communicate with people? Are you able to organize tabling events? Help assure the future of the environment by getting more people interested and involved in MPG activities. Contact: Kay Yates, kyates@peak.org

- **Writing/photography** – Do you like to write? Would you like to research an issue and then write about it? Are you handy with a digital camera? Want to show off your camera skills? Contact: Lori Fluge-Brunker, flugeb@linnbenton.edu

We Need Your Photos!
TAKE A HIKE ON THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL
by Ray Drapek, MPG Outings Leader

Last August, MPG leader Ray Drapek led a group of five on a backpacking trip along a 94-mile section of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Santiam Pass to the Willamette Pass. This is his fifth year for leading trips on the PCT. Below is a day-to-day account of his most recent trip.

Day 0 – Friday, August 30: 2 miles. The plan was to stop at the Suttle Lake Resort, grab some quick burgers, and get a couple miles on the trail. But the Suttle Lake menu proved a little spendy for our pocket books. We found ourselves eating from the appetizer menu, paying our clearly disappointed waiter, and heading out late with growling stomachs (thank goodness I packed that extra Clif Bar!). It was after dark by the time we found our camp site.

Day 1 – Saturday, August 30: 10.8 miles. The weather was cool as we headed out. For the first couple hours there was a near constant buzz of ATVs as we hiked through the Big Lake Basin, but eventually we entered the Mt. Washington Wilderness area, started to climb, and left the buzzing behind us. Our goal for this day was George Lake, which is on the south side of Mt. Washington. This lake is a one-half mile off the trail and so some bushwhacking was going to be required to find it. Fortunately, the lake proved rather easy to find. It helped that the area had recently burned and so the forest was relatively open. Unfortunately, temperatures steadily dropped and the winds steadily rose. The lake was in a bowl which seemed to catch most of the winds. We started a fire and braved the cold for a while, but soon retired to our tents and listened to the howling winds and flapping tents.

Day 2 – Sunday, August 31: 9.6 miles. Temperatures dropped to below freezing in the night, and while there were brief lulls the winds never stopped either. My down sleeping bag is often too warm, but that night I was thankful for it. Some of the crew spent a cold night. The next morning rather than eat our breakfast in the cold and in the wind we packed right up and made our way back to the PCT. We were entering the lava flow area and we found a sunny sheltered spot in the lava flows where we could eat our breakfast more comfortably. The weather stayed sunny and relatively warm as we climbed over Little Belknap, but steadily got colder as we descended through the lava flows to McKenzie Pass. At McKenzie Pass we joined the tourists climbing the rocky Dee Wright Observatory and we ate our lunch up at the observatory. Though we had only been on the trail for about a day and a half we felt like grizzled mountain men (and woman) in comparison with the fresh faced and extremely under-dressed tourists. After the McKenzie Pass we climbed our way up to South Mathieu Lake. The weather was cold by then. A light rain started to fall as we set up our tents and it eventually evolved into a show. I was in bed by 6 p.m. without any dinner, though the rest of the crew took advantage of a lull in the weather to cook their dinners. It was another cold night for those of us who didn’t have warm sleeping bags.

Day 3 – Monday, September 1: 8.1 miles. The sun greeted us on Monday morning and we were treated to a spectacular view of North Sister with a fresh powder of snow on it. The weather was beautiful and remained so for the rest of the trip. The hike today included some of the most spectacular views of the trip. Crossing the lava fields before Yapoah Crater we were given beautiful views of Adams, 3-Finger Jack, Jefferson, and Hood. The climb over Opie Dilldock Pass was particularly spectacular. Sections of the trail were snowed-over and for one steep section I would have wished for a pair of crampons.

Day 4 – Tuesday, September 2: 8.7 miles. Today was probably the easiest hike of the entire 9-day trip. We hike through several large meadow areas with beautiful views of Middle Sister, South Sister, and the Husband. That night we stayed near a lovely meadow with Mesa Creek flowing through it. Temperatures were warm enough for the first time that afternoon to do some real bathing in the icy Mesa Creek.

Day 5 – Wednesday, September 3: 10.4 miles. Today was our last chance to catch spectacular Cascade mountain views. The views from the Wickiup Plain in particular were striking. After that we steadily descended over 1000 feet to reach Elk Lake. There is a resort there and we had resupply boxes waiting for us there. After 5 days of eating freeze dried dinners we were eagerly looking forward to downing large greasy burgers and French fries. Alas the resort was closed. The owner had decided to take a quick post-Labor Day break. So, no burgers. Fortunately, there was a bike tour having dinner on the lake-front and they took pity on us and let us take part in their picnic. So we did have cold-meat sandwiches, chips, and cookies and these were a real treat just the same. The lodge owner had thought to pile up all the PCT re-supply boxes on the back porch of the lodge and sure enough ours were there waiting for us. Fortunately our boxes weren’t

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on the bottom of the pile, since some rather voracious chipmunks were chewing their way through those boxes. We found a nice lakeside campsite and I was able to find open and functioning washing machines. A load of laundry later and a quick dip in the lake and we were as good as new for a fresh start for the last 4 days of the trip.

Day 6 – Thursday, September 4: 11.2 miles. We hiked up into the Mink Lake Basin and ended up staying at Mac Lake. This day lacked the spectacular views of the previous five, but the trail wended its way around many small lakes and ponds and the scenery was still lovely. The mosquitoes started to make their presence known, but still were not nearly as bad as allegedly they can be in the Mink Lake Basin. By late evening temperatures cooled down enough so that the mosquitoes stopped being a problem.

Day 7 – Friday, September 5: 11.4 miles. Today was another pleasant day of hiking a meandering wooded trail past many small lakes and ponds. The weather was really starting to get quite warm and we were looking forward to swimming in Taylor Lake, our planned destination. Taylor Lake proved to be a disappointment. The bottom was quite mucky and the water was murky and filled with floating algal mats that were reminiscent of jelly fish. Up to today I had been somewhat envious of the people from our group who were using UV water purifiers, but today I was happy to run the water through a filter. I was hot enough after the day’s hike that I braved the waters for a swim, but checked my legs for leaches afterwards (fortunately there were none). Others from the group managed to find logs from which they could clean up in the water without venturing out into the muck.

Day 8 – Saturday, September 6: 13.2 miles. Today was a day that looked tough on paper. It featured 13 miles (though some sources seemed to indicate 11), 2 significant climbs, and a lack of water for the duration of the day except maybe at Charlton Lake if we were willing to hike off the trail. But the morning hike was cool even though we hiked through a large open burn. The first climb was done in no time. Charlton Lake was a beautiful and large lake and it proved to be easily accessible from the trail, so as it turns out water was not an issue at all. The climb after Charlton Lake proved to be more strenuous. We had already done some significant hiking by then and temperatures got quite warm. At the highest elevation for this second climb we were allowed occasional glimpses of Waldo Lake which was only a couple of miles to our west. We hiked down to Bobby Lake, which proved to be clean and had a nice sandy bottom. It was a welcome improvement over Taylor Lake.

Day 9 – Sunday, September 7: 9.3 miles. Today was expected to be an easy day and so it proved to be. We were at the PCT park at the Willamette Pass by a little after noon. We climbed for most of the first half of the hike, and then we came out on a ridge looking over the Rosary Lakes. From this ridge we got a spectacular view of the Rosaries, Odell Lake, Crescent Lake, Diamond Peak, and off in the distance Mt. Thielsen. The Rosary Lakes proved to be quite lovely. A spectacular rock formation over North Rosary Lake added a little drama to the scenery. I duly noted a campsite between North and Middle Rosary Lakes that I will someday need to make a point of coming back to as an overnighter. We had been disappointed at Elk Lake when no burger feasts awaited us, but the burgers at the Odell Lake Resort proved worthy of the delayed gratification. After gorging ourselves we said our good-byes, at least until we pick up the trail again next year at the Willamette Pass.
October 19 ~ Mulkey Creek Family Hike

Left to right, standing: Garry Seeley, Merra Frochen, Tom Bucht, Mike Wolfson, Angela McFarland, Scott McFarland, Bryce Rasmussen, Randy Rasmussen, Sage Rasmussen, and Christi Raunig; seated, left to right: Lily Liu, Xuan Cheng, Michelle Zbou, Suyang Liu, Huixian Shi, Marie McFarland, Doreene Carpenter, Cara Still, Crystal Still, Jeannine Hart, and Elena Hart; kneeling in front: Grace Carroll.

November 1 ~ Dixon Creek Tour

Hydrologist Diana Sharps, left, discusses healthy waterway features to a group of 15 on their tour of the Dixon Creek tributaries and watersbed in Corvallis. Tour participants in photo, left to right, are Diana Sharps, James Rodell, John Thaw, Oscar Guadayol, Linda Hunn, Susan Cowles, Denise Nervik, Janet Throop, Daryl Thaw, Bob Custer, Lyn Cornell, and Lon Otterby.

November 9 ~ Dimple Hill Hike

Left to right, standing: Linda Lamb, Donna Silver, Elizabeth Agoff, Gabor Temes, Randy Selig, Miriam Richards, and Hilary White. Kneeling or sitting, left to right: Carol Fobar, Tom Bucht, Mike Wolfson, Jane Luther, and Dave Madison. Photograph by Barry Wulff.
November 16 ~ McCulloch Peak

On Sunday, November 16th, 19 hikers climbed up McCulloch Peak through pea soup fog and were rewarded by emerging at the top into warm sunshine, with crystal clear views across the blanket of white to the Three Sisters in the Cascades. Left to right, back row: Ken Williams, Steve Braden, Bob Custer, Sharon Powers, Donna Silver, Nita Eggers, Robert White, Hilary White, Suzanne Lazaro, Maya Lazaro, Sandra Verboogen, Robert Verboogen, Sally Shaw. Kneeling in front, left to right: Doris deLespinasse, Frances Stilwell, Randy Selig and Carol Fobar. Photo by Bruce Encke.

November 28 ~ Walk off the Turkey Hike

The traditional “Walk Off The Turkey” hike, was enjoyed by 17 people on November 28th, with a brisk 7-mile loop on Vineyard Mountain roads in McDonald Forest. Shown on a stretch of the beautiful Old Growth Trail are, left to right: Frances Stilwell, Mike Wolfson, Ralph Nafziger, Ken Ash, Ken Williams, Jovanna Petrie, Glenn Burket, Lyn Cornell, Pat Wickum, Jean Berlowitz, Linda Lamb, Doris deLespinasse. Photo taken by leader, Lelia Barlow.

Finley Family Hike

Left to right, back: Peggy Osburn, Jim Krueger, Christi Raunig, Diane Krueger, Daniel Bledsoe and Mike Wolfson; in front, left to right: Mia Krueger, Grace Carroll and Claire Krueger. Photo by Jane Luther.