



Adventure | Design | Food | Real Estate | Trends

Small Rooms & Playhouses

TRISHA WALKER
Hood River News

Jude Russell's playhouse-slash-small room was inspired by a wedding she and husband David attended in the countryside north of Vancouver, Wash., held on the steps of a tiny cottage that reminded her of the playhouse her father had built for her and her sisters when they were children.

"Wow! I love this! Can we build a playhouse in our backyard? Pleeze???" Hey, it will be great for the grandkids," she begged — and it worked.

The couple, who reside in the Mt. Hood-Parkdale area, hired Dan Peirce of Dog River Construction to build the 9-foot by 11-foot cabin/playhouse.

"It is well-insulated, and has electricity and heat, and we love it!" she said. "The grandkids have spent about 10 minutes in it; David and I sleep out there once a week, read, have morning coffee and sit on the porch looking at the mountain. Simple pleasure — priceless."

One finishing touch: Jude mounted a window frame inside and painted a picture of Mount Adams.

They're not the only ones who find the playhouse restful — nesting birds have moved into the birdhouse.

Do you have a garden shed, small room or playhouse you'd like to see featured in a future edition of Home and Garden? Send photos and a brief description — 100 to 200 words or so — to Trisha Walker, twalker@hoodrivernews.com, subject line: Home and Garden.

Photos by Jude Russell



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HOME

TRI-COUNTY WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

The wishful recycler

DAVID SKAKEL
Coordinator, Tri-County Hazardous
Waste & Recycling Program

I just returned from the 38th Annual conference of the Association of Oregon Recyclers. Sharing the numerous topics covered may shed light on the tumultuous, complicated and fascinating nature of what we call materials management here in the Northwest.

The conference in Portland began with tours of Farwest Fibers Recycling, Denton plastics, Lloyd Center EcoDistrict, Metro Paint recycling facility, ReBuilding Center, Glass-2-Glass optical sorting glass plant, and ORPET's state-of-the-art plastic bottle recycling facility (wow). Jordan Figueiredo, with his nationally successful Zero Food Waste forum, gave the keynote speech about "loving ugly food." Breakout sessions included these topics: reuse, repair cafes, business recycling programs, food rescue, multi-family recycling, Master Recycler programs, Oregon Green Schools, WRAP plastic film recycling campaign, and one on solid waste management thru the lens of equity and diversity.

Myself and co-worker Jeni Smith, along with Commissioner Kramer from Wasco County, collectively attended talks about: the challenges of reuse, contamination of commingled recyclables, hosting sustainable events, clean fleets, sustainable product design, tools to waste less food at home,

current recycling market (woes), and youth engagement in recycling. Oregon has primarily tracked waste reduction efforts by measuring how much we recycle. Whereas we heard Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Metro discuss alternative measurement tools being developed that assess environmental and human health impacts throughout all stages of the materials management lifecycle of things we consume, reuse, recycle or throw away.

Much conversation focused on the core activity of finding markets for the recyclables we collect. Readers may be interested to know that a confluence of worldwide market forces, including crude oil pricing, a strong U.S. dollar and Chinese consumer demand, have led to extremely tough recycling markets. Those unstable recycling markets have resulted in closures of numerous pulp mills, scrap metal businesses and plastics re-processors. On that front, we learned how other cities are establishing rate-stabilizing rainy-day funds to help garbage haulers get through the difficult times (versus merely raising garbage rates). The conference ended with truly inspiring stories from Oregon's Recycling frontier about innovative rural recycling methods.

The subjects covered at this three-day conference are obviously too numerous to delve into here and now. But my hope is that a brief description of what's on our radar will provide a window into what's behind what we all experience curbside. And through this ongoing article (column), we can engage in insights and conversation about the world of materials management in the Gorge. So please do send your questions. Here are a few so far:



Q&A

Can I put window glass in with my glass recycling? Ron, The Dalles

Ron, Great question. No. All flat "plate" glass is handled as garbage in the Gorge. Plate glass is different. It contaminates the process of recycling bottle glass.

Where do I need to take my old fridge, and is it free? Christine, Hood River

Christine, fridges and freezers need to be "de-commissioned," which means to remove the harmful Freon gas. Hood River Garbage Service does this. Cost = \$33.30.

Are used paper plates, constructed of uncoated recycled paper, and wiped or rinsed to remove gross food waste, recyclable in the blue bins for pick-up? John, Odell

John, unfortunately once paper has been "soiled" with food, it is deemed "contaminated." Yet uncoated paper would do well in backyard composting. Most kitchen compost tends to be rich in nitrogen. Whereas that paper (along with paper towels, napkins, tea bags and coffee filters) provides that balance of carbon nourishment.

Send any questions to: Tri-County hazardous Waste & Recycling Program 2705 East 2nd Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058 541-506-2636 www.tricountyrecycle.com

OLD into NEW

Packers incorporates old crates into new décor

Photos by Trisha Walker

Packer Orchard Farm Place, located at the old Rasmussen Farm, 3020 Thomsen Road, might have held its grand opening June 10-11, but work to update and replant the farm, which had been vacant for over a year, has been going on much longer than that — specifically since Nov. 1, 2015. Tammi Packer, owner, said that part of that work was incorporating old pieces of the farm into new spaces, such as this display wall created from old crates in the retail space — an idea of her daughter's — which now holds Packer Orchard's canned fruit and vegetables. The farm is filled with such reused pieces, inside and out, ushering in a new era for the farm while giving a nod to its past.



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DESIGN



Gorge Interior Designer, Ashley Neff Designs is a full service interior designer located in the Gorge.

"I design the spaces you work in, live in and play in!"

A designer's secrets for timeless home design

ASHLEY NEFF
Owner/Designer, Neff Designs

Style and color trends come and go. This goes for clothing and your home. Have you ever stepped into a home and felt like you were stepping back in time? It was probably hot in the '90s but now, not so much.

Here are my secrets to beautifully designing a home that will stand the test of time.

Opt for a neutral base for the items that are really expensive to replace such as cabinets, flooring, tile, countertops etc. While certain species of wood can be more popular than others, natural wood is a great selection for flooring, cabinetry, trim, doors etc. as it never really goes out of style.

Natural stone is another great material that will stand the test of time. If you select a flashy granite with lots of movement, there is a possibility either you might not love

it in 10 years or the next buyer might not love it as much as you did. If you select a granite that has little movement, in neutral colors, it will never look bad! I'm not crazy about quartz countertops but they look great in some spaces and are the perfect product if you are looking for zero maintenance.

Bring in trendy or bold styles and colors through accents. Accent pillows, furniture, etc., are great ways to stay trendy without spending a fortune. These styles come and go and it's easy to replace a throw pillow. If you're interested in a bold color, paint the walls or add accent pieces of furniture.

Add texture. Textures add another layer to your design. Some of the best designs have layers of colors and textures. Pick a timeless pattern though. A cow hide rug or a rattan ottoman may look amazing for 15 years, unlike a chevron area rug that will be out of style in couple years.

Clean Lines. When designing trim, cabinetry and furniture, stick with clean lines. Overly ornate items like kitchen cabinets will soon look dated. Clean lines never go out of style. Timeless design is not overly stream-

lined, but also steers away from overly decorated and busy patterns.

Functional and sensible. Timeless design is both functional and sensible. It is neither boring nor over the top. It is scaled perfectly and proportioned. When creating a functional space, see that the furniture fits perfectly in the room, not too small and understated or overstuffed and overpowering. Timeless design incorporates all of the elements in that space: Room size and shape, fireplace location and style, windows and their scale. There are a lot of key factors to achieving a design that will stand the test of time.

Splurge on items that will last like a dining table, real wood flooring, a farmhouse sink, and architectural details such as exposed beams. These items help create a space with staying

power, a space you don't tire of and is here to stay.

Select items you really like regardless of trends. If it makes you happy then get it. It's all about creating a space that you love and feel comfortable in. If you tend to gravitate towards a particular style, then you will probably love it in the future. The most important aspect of designing is loving your space. If you love it, it will show and truly reflect you!

Timeless design is not always what's in and trendy. It's design techniques that have been used for decades. By selecting neutral big ticket items, layering texture throughout the space, adding a splash of color with a stylish pattern, you can achieve a timeless space that is here to stay!

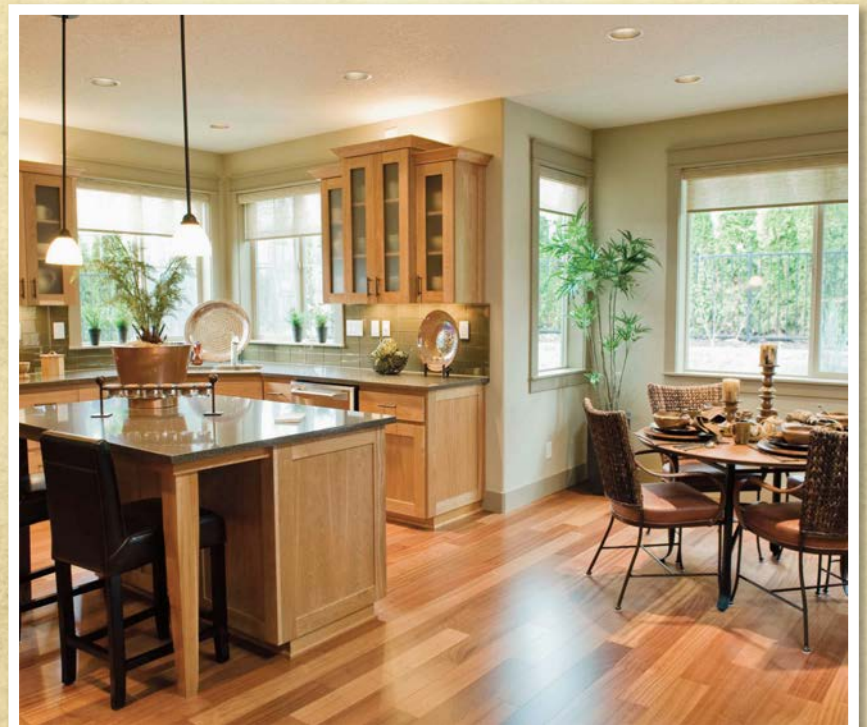


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GARDEN



MULCHING CUTS DOWN ON WEEDING AND WATERING

Mulch to the gardener's delight

KYM POKORNY
Oregon State Extension

CORVALLIS, Ore. – Grabbing a shovel, rolling out the wheelbarrow and digging into a mile-high pile of mulch can put gardeners into avoidance mode, but the effort pays off with less labor for the rest of the season.

"It really does reduce your work load," said Linda Brewer, a senior research assistant in Oregon State University's department of horticulture. "Once applied it cuts down on weeding and watering."

Weed seeds struggle to push through mulch, which means fewer of them germinate. Those that do are easier to yank out of the looser-than-soil layer piled over them. Keep in mind, though, that mulch discourages any type of seed, including those of self-sowing plants you may want growing in the garden like Verbena bonariensis, California poppy, columbine, bachelor's button, calendula, alyssum and viola.

During warm weather, soil under cover of mulch stays cooler and retains moisture longer than uncovered ground, which reduces the need for watering, noted Brewer, who is a certified soil scientist. In winter, the same covering helps prevent frost damage. "In winter, heat that rises off the soil is held in place," she said. "It's the same as when we sleep under a blanket in an unheated house. During the summer, it's like insulation that keeps the heat out."

Add to its other benefits that mulch aids in erosion control, reduces compaction from rain and foot traffic and releases nutrients. Not all mulches are created equal when it comes to the amount of nutrients available or how quickly they break down. Compost is quickest to decompose and one of the most nutrient-rich, said Brewer, who urges homeowners to use it.

"If we expect the cart to go away every week, it behooves us to purchase compost to keep the cycle going," she said. "Compost won't smother weed seeds as well, though, because it's a great growing medium." To help with that, no matter the type of mulch, put down five to 10 layers of newspaper

before spreading the mulch. The newspaper lasts longer than you may think, said Brewer, who used it under wood chips over a weedy lawn. Seven years later, she dug down and found the newspaper still intact. Landscape fabric or plastic would do the same, but aren't free.

"From my point of view, the best mulch is one we don't pay very much for or is a waste product," she said.

An example of that is mint compost from local farmers, usually available in August and a good source of nutrients. An easier option for urban homeowners are the wood chips generated by tree pruning or removal. Catch them as you drive around the neighborhood or call a few companies to see if they sell to the public and how much they charge.

When applying mulch, how much depends on which type you're using. Spread finer-textured products such as yard debris compost or mint compost one to one and a half inches deep.

Coarser wood products such as bark dust, wood chips and arborist waste can be as deep as 3 inches. Keep any material at least 2 inches away from the base of trees, shrubs and woody perennials.

To help you choose a mulch, Brewer discussed some pros and cons.

BARK DUST

Pro: Cheap. Easily available. Comes in several colors. Good weed control.

Con: Ties up nitrogen in the soil so not good for plants that aren't established.

WOOD CHIPS

Pro: Easily available. Lasts a long time. Good weed control.

Con: Ties up nitrogen in the soil so not good for plants that aren't established.

BARK NUGGETS

Pro: Attractive appearance and easily available. Lasts a long time. Good weed control.

Con: Expensive. Ties up nitrogen in the soil so not good for plants that aren't established.

YARD WASTE COMPOST

Pro: Good source of nutrients. Locally produced.

Con: Can promote weed growth. Doesn't last long so must be refreshed each year.

TREE LEAVES

Pro: Free and easily available. Good source of nutrients.

Con: Not easy to spread to a consistent thickness. Must be mowed or turned to get it to break down in a season.

ARBORIST MULCH

Pro: Cheap and easily available.

Con: Not consistent in size or appearance. Low in nutrients.

MINT COMPOST

Pro: Locally produced material. Good source of nutrients. Smells good. Nice silver-gray color when dry.

Con: Only seasonally available.

SAWDUST

Pro: Good for vegetable paths. Holds down weeds well.

Con: Repels moisture because it's so fine. Fresh sawdust shouldn't be used on bedding plants.

HAZELNUTS

Pro: Nice appearance and sound when walked on. Durable.

Con: Hard to walk on barefoot. Not good for slopes. Expensive because most often found in bags rather than bulk. Only seasonally available.

For more information about mulches, refer to the Extension publication Mulching Woody Ornamentals with Organic Materials.

About Gardening News From the OSU Extension Service: The Extension Service provides a variety of gardening information on its website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/community/gardening>. Resources include gardening tips, videos, podcasts, monthly calendars of outdoor chores, how-to publications, and information about the Master Gardener program.



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GARDEN

Green space, landscaping contribute to health, happiness and intellect



Researchers have studied the impact of nature on human well-being for years, but recent studies have found a more direct correlation between human health, particularly related to stress, and the importance of access to nature and managed landscapes.

“The advantages of grass and landscaping surpass the usual physical benefits that result from outdoor activity,” said Kris Kiser, president and CEO, Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). “Numerous studies have found that people who spend more time outside or are exposed to living landscapes are happier, healthier and smarter.”

Getting dirty is actually good for you. Soil is the new Prozac, according to Dr. Christopher Lowery, a neuroscientist at the University of Bristol in England. Mycobacterium vaccae in soil mirrors the effect on neurons that Prozac provides. The bacterium stimulates serotonin production, which explains why people who spend time gardening and have direct contact with soil feel more relaxed and happier.

Living near living landscapes can improve your mental health. Researchers in England found that people moving to greener areas experienced an immediate improvement in mental health that was sustained for at least three years after they moved. The study also showed that people relocating to a more developed area suffered a drop in mental health.

Green spaces can make you healthier too. People who live within a half mile of green space (such as parks, public gardens and green ways) were found to have a lower incidence of 15 diseases by Dutch researchers — including depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, asthma and migraines. A 2015 study found that people living on streets with more trees had a boost in heart and metabolic health.

Living landscapes make your kids smarter and reduce ADHD symptoms. Children gain attention and working memory benefits when they are exposed to greenery, says a study led by the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona. In addition, exposure to natural settings may be widely effective in reducing attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms in children.

Spending time around plants also improves concentration and memory. Research shows that being around plants helps you concentrate better at home and at work. Charlie Hall, Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University, believes that spending time in gardens can improve attention span and memory performance by as much as 20 percent.

Gardening is great for the body and the soul. People who gardened for at least 30 minutes a week had lower body mass indexes (BMIs), a measure of body fat, as well as higher levels of self-esteem and better moods overall. They also reported lower levels of tension and stress.

Nature walks (or runs) are great for your brain and stress levels. A National Institute of Health study found that adults demonstrate significant cognitive gains after going on a nature walk. A Stanford University study found that walking in nature, rather than a concrete-oriented, urban environment, resulted in decreased anxiety, rumination, and negative affect, and produced cognitive benefits, such as increased working memory performance.

Living landscapes help you heal faster.

Multiple studies have discovered that plants in hospital recovery rooms or views of aesthetically-pleasing gardens help patients heal up to one day faster than those who are in more sterile or austere environments.

You can also be a nicer person, when you spend time in nature. Less stress means better well-being, and that bubbles over into other parts of life. Nature makes you nicer, enhancing social interactions, value for community, and close relationships. A systematic research review concluded that “the balance of evidence indicates conclusively that knowing and experiencing nature makes us generally happier, healthier people.”

All of these benefits reinforce the importance of maintaining our yards, parks and other community green spaces. Trees, shrubs, grass and flowering plants are integral to human health. Not only do they provide a place for kids and pets to play, they directly contribute to our mental and physical well-being.

For more tips on maintaining a living landscape, go to www.opei.org/stewardship.

Contributed article by Outdoor Power Equipment Institute.

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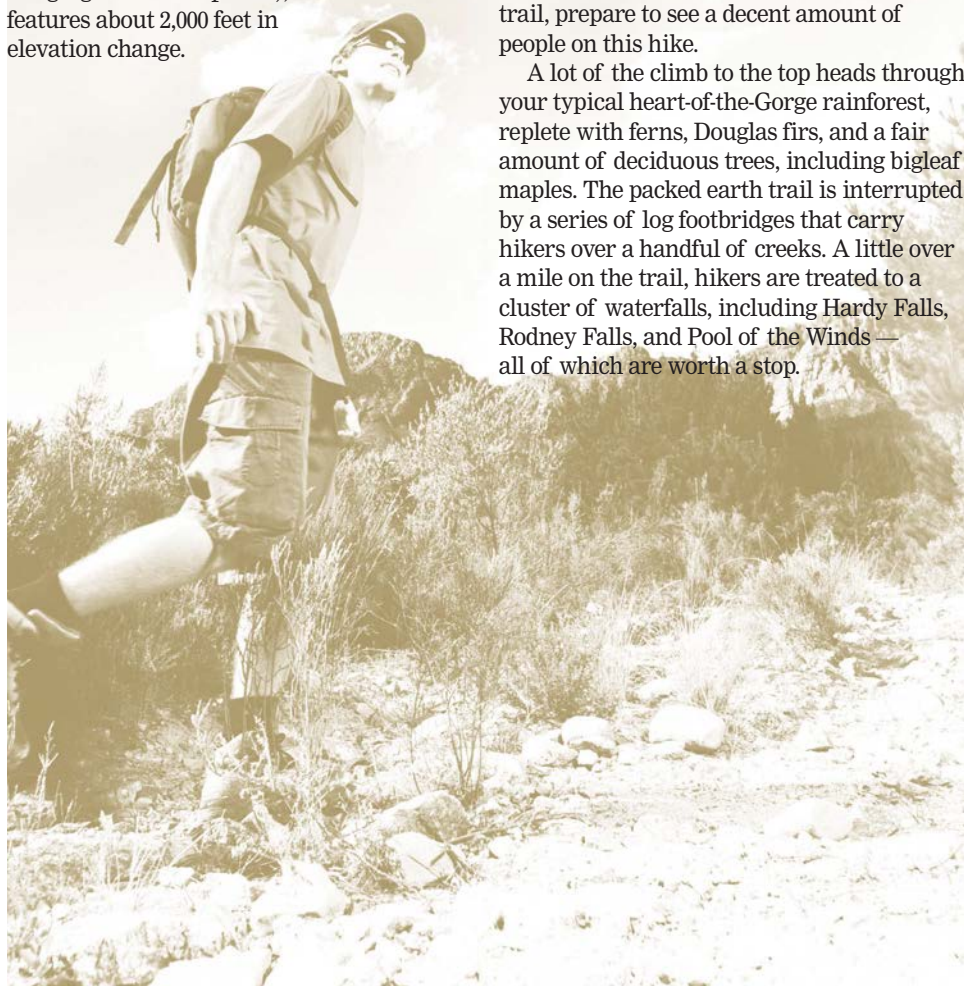
ADVENTURE

Hamilton Mountain hike has something for everyone

BEN MITCHELL
Hood River News

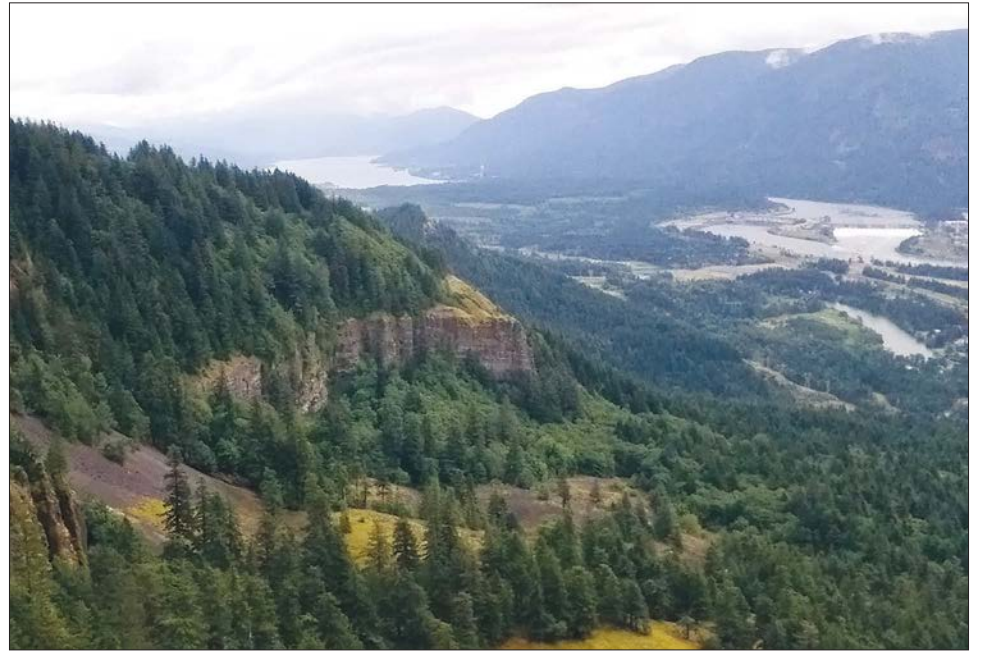
Waterfalls, wildflowers, lush rainforest, shear basalt faces, and sweeping views of the Columbia River Gorge and snow-capped mountains — all await hikers willing to put in the time and effort to climb Hamilton Mountain.

Located on the Washington side of the Gorge, just east of Bonneville Dam at Beacon Rock State Park, Hamilton Mountain packs a lot of what makes this area great into an approximately eight-mile roundtrip loop hike (allow for about 3.5 hours of hiking/hanging out at viewpoints), that features about 2,000 feet in elevation change.



The trail is well-maintained and well-marked and is on the higher end of moderate in terms of difficulty. The trailhead is located off a park access road right off State Route 14 (turn right to go up the campground access road), and includes plenty of parking, a picnic area, restrooms and an information kiosk. For those who didn't bring a Discover Pass that is required to park at the trailhead, there is an automated pay station across the highway at the Beacon Rock Trailhead (another fun hike) where the passes can be purchased (\$10 for a day pass, \$35 for a year pass, or try to hit up the park during one of the Discover Pass free days, the next of which is Aug. 25). Due to its proximity to the highway, to Beacon Rock, and to Portland, along with its well-maintained trail, prepare to see a decent amount of people on this hike.

A lot of the climb to the top heads through your typical heart-of-the-Gorge rainforest, replete with ferns, Douglas firs, and a fair amount of deciduous trees, including bigleaf maples. The packed earth trail is interrupted by a series of log footbridges that carry hikers over a handful of creeks. A little over a mile on the trail, hikers are treated to a cluster of waterfalls, including Hardy Falls, Rodney Falls, and Pool of the Winds — all of which are worth a stop.



Eventually, the trail will come to a fork (follow the sign to the "more difficult route" to Hamilton Mountain) and then a false summit that offers great views of Bonneville Dam, basalt faces, and the Gorge. You should also be able to see some of the Cascade volcanoes like Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams, although the hike was socked in with clouds when I attempted it mid-June. Be careful, as cliffs here at the false summit are shear and a wrong step could be a last step.

Push on to the true summit of Hamilton Mountain, which would be more impressive if it wasn't partially obscured by brush; a better view is located just a short walk north of the summit, which is the beginning of the return loop. A large, flat, and stony overlook provides a good spot to relax and have a snack.

The trip back runs along a ridge and offers some great views of a forested drainage area, and the path gets pretty wide as it links up to an equestrian trail. It eventually leads to a picnic area at Hardy Creek where you turn left and take the trail back to the original Hamilton Mountain Trail you started on. Turn right and head back to the trailhead.

For more information, got to parks.state.wa.us/474/Beacon-Rock and click on the "Hamilton Mountain Trailhead" or head to a hiking website (oregonhikers.org, nvhiker.com, wta.org, or gorgefriends.org are all good resources).



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