

For the Good of the Greenbelt

Daytripper: Fitton Green Natural Area

By JEN MATTEIS, For Oregon Outdoors Jun 17, 2012 Updated Jun 19, 2012 0



Alsie Campbell, right, and daughter-in-law Mary Campbell pause during their recent hike at Fitton Green Natural Area west of Corvallis. Alsie is a fan of the lightweight backpacking courses, which are a huge help for senior backpackers. "They've been able to do more after they learned some of the techniques," she says. (Jesse Skoubo | Oregon Outdoors)



Listen to this article now

Powered by Trinity Audio

00:00

1.0x

06:15

By JEN MATTEIS, For Oregon Outdoors

Eighty-year-old Alsie Campbell of Corvallis and her daughter-in-law, Mary Campbell, plan to hike the Oregon segment of the Pacific Crest Trail as a fundraiser for the Greenbelt Land Trust Trails Fund. They took a warmup hike June 1 at Fitton Green Natural Area.

It's no easy task, hiking Oregon's stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from California to Washington. But Alsie Campbell, 80, of Corvallis thinks she can do it. Not just that, but Campbell is using the hike as a way to raise money for the Greenbelt Land Trust Trails Fund, which helps protect and maintain the trails within easy reach of Corvallis that Campbell and others enjoy.

"I always want to have everything I carry have two functions, and that's how I feel about the Pacific Crest Trail—I want to do it; let's have it do something else positive at the same time," Campbell said.

People are also reading...

- 1 Scientists break new record for deepest fish ever caught on camera
- 2 John Clay: Kentuckians will soon be able to legally wager on sports. Why that's a good thing.
- 3 Meet the Titanosaur: Largest dinosaur ever discovered goes on display in Europe
- 4 Sunbathing sea lion sends kayakers overboard in California

The PCT is a National Scenic Trail spanning 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada. Campbell's hike will take her more than 450 miles across Oregon, past Crater Lake in the south and Mount Hood in the north. The funds that she raises will benefit the trails fund for Greenbelt Land Trust properties, which include Bald Hill and Fitton Green.

Appropriately, Campbell's been using these areas as her training grounds.

The latter was the target of a hike earlier this month by Campbell; her daughter-in-law, Mary Campbell, who will join her for the PCT hike; her friend, Janet Throop; and Claire Fiegenger of the Greenbelt Land Trust.

The area is one of the most accessible hikes near Corvallis with a great view.

"You can drive here and it's a really easy walk, and then you have the bald area to overlook," said Campbell. "A lot of people who are basically in good shape but using a walker would be able to get up there."

From the bald at the top of Fitton Green, the four paused to take in views of Marys Peak and properties protected by the land trust. Directly below, Lupine Meadows hosts a variety of species, including the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly.

Here up top, the wildflowers were blooming. The meadow was dotted with the pale blues of flax and brodiaea, the bright yellow Oregon sunflower, and the pinks and purples of checker mallow, wild hollyhock and larkspur. If anything, Campbell pondered, she might bring a field guide on the PCT.

The group then passed a memorial for Allen Throop, Janet's husband and a founding member of the Greenbelt Land Trust. The one-mile Allen Throop Trail at Fitton Green was dedicated following his death in 2004.

"He was one of the true leaders of the Greenbelt and a visionary of our community, dedicated to preserving natural areas," Fiegenger said.

Campbell's connection with the Greenbelt Land Trust is bolstered by her friendship with Janet Throop, who will help replenish food supplies on their journey. They met six years ago at the Better Bones and Balance course at Linn-Benton Community College's Benton Center. Campbell takes the course year round, doing squats, lunges and other weight-bearing exercises to combat osteoporosis.

"Exercise, exercise," she advised. "Benton Center has a number of exercise courses, several of them for women particularly."

Campbell is also a fan of the lightweight backpacking courses offered by community colleges, which are a huge help for senior backpackers.

"They've been able to do more after they learned some of the techniques," she said.

On the Pacific Crest Trail, Campbell will carry a 30-pound pack, which doesn't seem too bad until you consider that it's almost a third of her body weight. Her homemade lightweight gear includes a "shower cap" for her sun hat, so she can see and hear during a rainstorm. She trimmed the hood off her rain jacket to cut the weight. Her cooking gear is an aluminum tea kettle heated on an alcohol stove made of a Pepsi can and a Guinness can.

To keep her pack weight down, Campbell cuts corners everywhere — with one exception. She carries a litter bag to collect trash along the trail.

"You pick up a bit when you go through a campground. The trail people tend to leave no trace," said Campbell, who noted that she picked up the idea — along with lots of advice — from Jason Mulkey of Peak Sports.

Descending from the viewpoint at Fitton Green, the group was in high spirits. Campbell admitted to a trail name: the Greenbelt Granny, given to her by her old hiking group, the Lost Ladies. The group consists mostly of women from Corvallis who married men in the Forest Service. Campbell herself worked as a longtime Forest Service volunteer, specializing in streamside ecology.

Campbell plans to start her hike in the south as soon as the snow melts, then take a little over two months to complete the trail.

"I'm eager to get out there," she said.

The hike isn't entirely a solitary experience. Register books on the trail allow hikers to record notes to each other and comment on their experiences.

"The trail is like a long, thin village," said Campbell, who in 2003 hiked most of the Washington section. "You can keep track of each other."

And as for the question: Why hike the trail?

"The hike is the reason. You don't expect to get anywhere—you expect to experience it."

Mostly, she'll just take in the sights, as she did that day at Fitton Green.

"It's nice to just look around, just be there," she said.

Jen Matteis of Corvallis is a freelance writer. She can be reached at jen.matteis@yahoo.com.

HOW TO HELP

To contribute to Mary Campbell and Alsie Campbell's fundraising hike:

- Send a check to Greenbelt Land Trust, P.O. Box 1721, Corvallis, OR 97339.
- Make an online contribution or pledge by going to www.greenbelt

land.trust.org.

"It's over 450 miles, so watch out if you do it per mile," Campbell warned.

All proceeds benefit the Greenbelt Land Trust Trails Fund. Donors will receive Pacific Crest Trail updates, including photos and Campbell's musings from the trail.

For more information or to volunteer with the Greenbelt Land Trust, contact development director Jessica McDonald at 541-752-9609 or visit www.greenbeltlandtrust.org.

HOW TO HELP

To contribute to Mary Campbell and Alsie Campbell's fundraising hike:

- Send a check to Greenbelt Land Trust, P.O. Box 1721, Corvallis, OR 97339.
- Make an online contribution or pledge by going to www.greenbeltlandtrust.org.

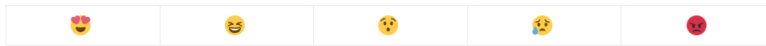
land trust.org.

"It's over 450 miles, so watch out if you do it per mile," Campbell warned.

All proceeds benefit the Greenbelt Land Trust Trails Fund. Donors will receive Pacific Crest Trail updates, including photos and Campbell's musings from the trail.

For more information or to volunteer with the Greenbelt Land Trust, contact development director Jessica McDonald at 541-752-9609 or visit www.greenbeltlandtrust.org.

0 comments



Tags [Alsie Campbell](#) [Mary Campbell](#) [Fitton Green Natural Area](#)

LEBANON EXPRESS



Sites & Partners

Special Sections
Beavers Sports
Albany Democrat-Herald
Corvallis Gazette-Times
Online Features

Services

E-edition
Contact Us
Classifieds
Jobs
Work Here