

Mountain Man

Portland's last generation of hikers passed the secrets of the Columbia Gorge to Scott Parker.

To Beacon Rock and Hardy Ridge:

Skamania Transit

- Departs C-Tran Fisher's Landing TC (14 min. from Parkrose/Sumner station on TriMet Red Line), 6:15 p.m. Friday
- Ask to be dropped off at Beacon Rock State Park. Great dayhikes on Hardy Ridge.
- Ask for a pick-up 6:10 a.m. Monday
- Price: \$3 round trip

To the coast range:

Tillamook Bus

- Departs downtown Greyhound station, 10:35 a.m. Saturday
- Ask to be dropped off anywhere along Hwy 6
- Ask for a pick-up Sunday afternoon, 4 p.m.
- Price: \$15 round trip
- Just call to set it up: 503-815-8283

Scott Parker's bushwack tips

Because trails are for conformists.

- First, choose a destination. Waterfalls are good. Lay stream routes against topographical maps – steep drops are where you want to be.
- Second, look for old roads – they go places. You can tell an abandoned road by the flattening of a hillside and the alder trees that once sprouted in its sunlight.
- Third, be prepared to get totally lost.

Now, every summer, he leads cheap car-free trips into the hills in hope of passing his secrets on to you.

When the old Portland men began to tell Scott Parker about the hidden gullies and forgotten wildflower fields of the Gorge, they didn't give directions.

Only clues.

"They knew they needed to tell younger people where those trails were, or they were going to get lost – essentially die with them," Parker said, relaxing in the shade outside Portland State University's bookstore last month. "There's some waterfalls out there – they're not like Multnomah Falls, but they're as good as Horsetail Falls."

But the old men couldn't just give him directions. They knew that'd kill the magic of the Gorge.

"They found the stuff that way, right?" Parker said. "And they figured that's the way I need to do it."

Parker didn't catch the hiking bug until his 30s, but it bit hard. The former Tektronix engineer sprang for a GPS receiver and joined legendary wildflower hunter Russ Jolley and others on uncharted trips through the wilderness.

But now, Parker said, his guides are falling away, just as they knew they would.

"One of them has died," Parker said. "Another has Alzheimer's and so can't remember where all the trails are."

That's why Parker, 56, is recruiting young nature lovers that want to carry on the wisdom. (See star, upper right.)

"In general, people ought to use the same process I used," Parker said with a smile. "Meeting old guys."

Fri., May 14
11:30 am-7 pm
hike with Scott Parker
on Cape Horn Trail
bring \$3 to
Fishers Landing TC

To The Dalles:

Greyhound and Wasco County Transportation Network

- Call one day in advance to get a ride to your campsite, anywhere in Wasco County: 877-875-4657
- Depart downtown Greyhound station, 12:10 p.m. Friday, change to Wasco County Dial-A-Ride after arriving at 1:50 p.m.
- Call for a pickup in time to catch the Greyhound home on Monday, 3:55 a.m. or 2:30 p.m.
- Price: \$67.20 round trip

