

# Kings Mountain-East Ridge

A scenic, challenging hike to the summit of Kings Mountain that provides an alternative to the standard Kings Mountain trail. Requires some bushwhacking on elk trails and navigational skills; includes exposed hiking on cliff edges. Not recommended for young children, pets or people unaccustomed to heights.

**Strenuous**, with some Class 3 scrambling and dangerous exposure along cliff edges

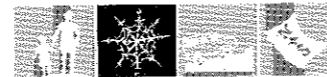
**Distance:** 4.6 miles round trip

**Elevation:** 2,695 feet elevation gain

**Maps:** USGS Woods Point and Jordan Creek Quadrangles topographic maps

ODF 1998 Northwest Oregon Protection District map

See map on page 49

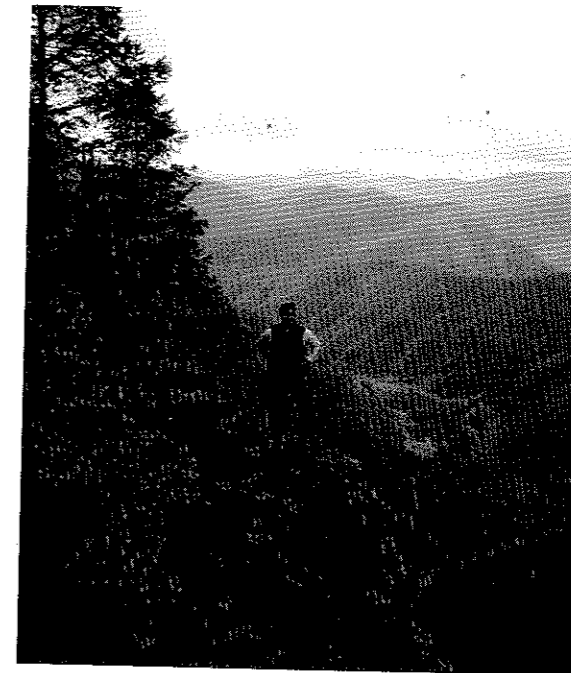


**Getting There:** From Portland, drive west on Highway 26, then Highway 6, toward Tillamook. Continue 1.7 miles past the entrance to Elk Creek campground. At the end of a long straight section of the highway, just before a left curve, watch for a small forest access road on the right. Park on the shoulder near the entrance to this road or drive in about 100 feet to find a wide spot suitable for one or two vehicles. A large creek runs nearby.

Walk north on the access road along the creek, into the basin between Elk and Kings Mountains. After crossing the Wilson River trail,

the road ends abruptly at 0.2 miles. Continue north along the west side of the creek on a hunters' trail for another 0.2 miles, crossing a tributary coming in from the west. Beyond the tributary, walk another 100 yards north, then about 60 yards west to the base of the East Ridge of Kings Mountain.

Find a well-padded elk trail on the southeast toe of the ridge and follow it uphill heading generally northwest. The trail follows the backbone of the ridge as it rises steeply through woods for about 0.5 miles in several switchbacks. Along the way, an over-



Tom Thrall

look provides fine views of Coxcomb Ridge to the south and the southeast ridge of Kings Mountain. Higher up, a short scramble over a rock band brings you to the top of the major cliffs of the upper East Ridge.

From here, follow a more westerly compass bearing as the trail narrows and becomes quite exposed. In several spots, a thicket of manzanita will force you to the very edge of the precipice. Those less certain of their footing should consider a roped belay. From East Ridge, you'll have dramatic views of Coxcomb Ridge to the south, the Wilson River Valley

to the west, and Elk Mountain and the Elk-Kings basin to the north. Continue the scenic scramble for about 0.5 miles, then reenter woods at 2,900 feet elevation. For the final 0.25 miles to the summit, follow elk trails once more in a generally northwest direction. Sign the summit register before descending via the main Kings Mountain trail. About 200 yards before reaching the highway, turn left onto the Wilson River trail and follow it 1.4 miles to its intersection with the initial forest access road. Turn right to retrace your steps to your car.