

Kings Mountain

An accessible but demanding hike that starts in lush woods and ends in alpine meadows with sweeping views of the Tillamook Forest and Cascade peaks to the east. Make sure you have sturdy boots and bring plenty of water, especially on warm days.

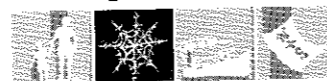
Strenuous

Distance: 5.4 miles round trip

Elevation: 2,450 feet elevation gain

Maps: USGS Jordan Creek Quadrangle topographic map
ODF 1998 Northwest Oregon Protection District map

See map on page 49

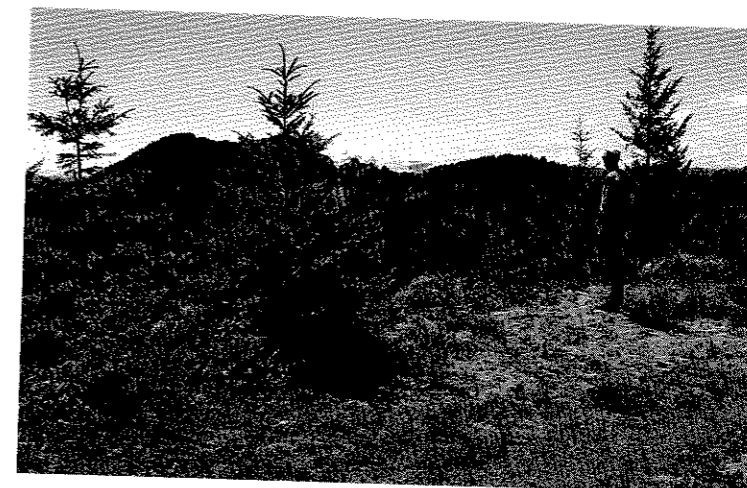


Ann Pickar

Getting There: From Portland, drive west on Highway 26, then Highway 6, toward Tillamook. Shortly past milepost 25 look for the Kings Mountain trailhead, marked by a sign with a hiker symbol, on the north side of the highway. Park in a parking area at the trailhead.

Walk up the Kings Mountain trail, marked with blue dots on trees,

through second-growth forest with lush undergrowth. Here and there amid a carpet of sorrel and ferns, you'll pass huge stumps remaining from the original old growth forest. At about 0.25 miles, keep straight where the Wilson River Trail branches right. A short distance farther, pass a creek in a ravine on your left.



Tom Thrall

A sign at 1.0 miles tells you you've reached 1,500 feet elevation. At 1.5 miles, another sign lets you know you've gained 500 more feet in just half a mile. Continue climbing at a mostly steep grade, passing through open areas along the south-facing slopes of Kings Mountain that allow panoramic views of the Wilson River corridor and the coastal mountains to the southwest.

At 1.8 miles (2,250 feet), pass a sign on a tree indicating a distance of 0.63 miles to the summit. Keep straight and uphill, avoiding a trail that branches left and may be blocked. Beyond the sign, the trail rises gently for a short distance, then becomes steep once more. At 3,000 feet, come to a small bench of land with a picnic table – a good place to take a break before the final push to

the 3,226-foot summit. As you climb from here, you'll leave the woods to scramble up a rocky path lined with wildflowers such as phlox, Indian paintbrush, penstemon and asters, depending on the season.

Notice the tall gray snags that tower over the new forest on the upper slopes of the mountain. These weathered reminders of the Tillamook Burn more than half a century ago still have a niche in the forest ecosystem as nest sites for certain species of birds. At the summit, a meadow invites a well-deserved rest. Sign the summit register next to the trail and take time to savor the views of the ocean to the west, Cascade peaks to the east and the rolling mountain ranges of the Tillamook Forest all around. When you're ready, retrace your steps to the trailhead ☞