

Kings Mountain Junior

A very accessible loop hike to a scenic summit southwest of Kings Mountain.
Some navigation skills required.

Moderate, with one short, very steep section

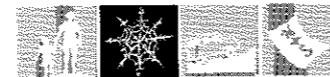
Distance: 3.6 miles round trip

Elevation: 1,690 feet elevation gain

Maps: USGS Jordan Creek Quadrangle topographic map

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. Watch for milepost 25 and shortly thereafter, the Kings Mountain trailhead, marked by a sign with a hiker symbol on the right (north) side of the highway. Park in a parking area at the trailhead.

Walk west 0.3 miles along the north shoulder of the highway to the entrance of an old logging road. Follow the road as it climbs gently through pleasant mixed woods and crosses a small stream. Soon afterward it approaches, then abruptly turns away from, a larger creek. Observe caution as you head uphill from here, as a recent mudslide has obliterated a section of the road ahead. Bushwhack through the woods above the slide to avoid walking on the unstable edge, which continues to erode.

At 1.0 miles from the trailhead, the road turns north, then eases in grade as it passes through a scenic woodland carpeted with oxalis and sword ferns. Note the huge stumps that remain from the original old-growth forest. At 1.7 miles, the path steepens, then levels out briefly and seems to disappear. Continue straight across a small talus field, ignoring a tempting side trail to the right. The path remains faint and rocky for a short distance where rock slides have covered the old roadway; proceed due west to regain a clear trail. Watch for the first views of Kings Mountain Junior to the north at 1.9 miles.

At 2.2 miles the trail descends slightly, then ends in a small clearing surrounded by an alder grove. Look for a blue dot on a tree on the north side of this clearing, marking the



Tom Thrall

continuation of the trail up the southwest flank of Kings Mountain Junior. Scramble steeply uphill for the next 0.2 miles (a descent by this route is not recommended during the dry season, when there is no soft earth to help keep you from sliding). As the grade eases near the top, glance back to find a small sign on a tree that identifies the section you've just climbed as the "Bun Buster Trail."

Walk along the summit ridge and enjoy expansive views of the Wilson River Valley and the secluded west face of nearby Kings Mountain. Stop and inspect an unusual rock formation resembling a pillory on the right side of the trail shortly before the start of the final slope to the summit. A sign on a tree announces the top of Kings Mountain Junior (2,190 feet) at 2.4 miles. In the right season, you

may find edible red huckleberries to sample. From here, the trail descends steeply to the northeast, then regains elevation to join the Kings Mountain Trail at 2.7 miles (2,240 feet). Turn right and follow this well-traveled path down the south slope of Kings Mountain. At one point the trail briefly levels out, then makes an abrupt left turn to continue downhill to the trailhead ☞