



THE WALLOWA AND ELKHORN MOUNTAINS

Hiking the Trails of Eastern Oregon with Eric Valentine

By Lisa Jacoby

It was August of 1970, and Eric Valentine was walking up the East Fork of the Lostine River when Eagle Cap loomed in the distance.

“When I broke into the valley where you first see Eagle Cap — it resembled a miniature Half Dome,” he said. “I was immediately impressed with the high-country granite.”

Eric, 74, grew up in California and spent time hiking and backpacking in Yosemite National Park — home to the famous Half Dome. He moved to La Grande in 1970.

These days, 47 years after his first glimpse of Eagle Cap, he still marvels at the sight of the mountain rising above the East Fork Lostine River drainage.

“What is exciting for me at my age is I hope for at least another decade where I can hike into that meadow,” he said.

Eric has hiked many miles around the Eagle Cap Wilderness on multi-day backpacking trips that include alpine lakes, passes and peaks. The wilderness is part of the Wallowa Mountains, located in the northeastern corner of Oregon.

“One can spend a lifetime in the Eagle Cap Wilderness and never grow tired of it,” said Valentine.

The meadow along the East Fork of the Lostine River is part of a three-day, two-night hike Eric recommends to those who want to experience the grandeur of



Spring hiking in Hells Canyon.

Photo: Eric Valentine

the Eagle Cap. This backpack trip starts at Two Pan Campground (located at the end of a 18-mile long gravel road south of Lostine). From Two Pan, follow the West Fork Lostine River trail to Minam Lake where you can pitch a tent for the night, then in the morning hike over Carper Pass and into the Lake Basin to camp at Mirror or Moccasin lakes. Eagle Cap rises above Mirror Lake, and the trail to the top is an optional side trip that rewards hikers with a 360-degree view of the Wallowa Mountains.

“It depends on how young your legs are,” Eric said of adding the Eagle Cap trail to this loop.

On the third day, return to Two Pan Campground by hiking down

the East Fork Lostine River. Be sure to pause and look back at Eagle Cap along the way. Total distance of the loop is about 17 miles. The optional hike to Eagle Cap adds 5.4 miles.

“That’s an absolutely superb hike,” said Valentine.

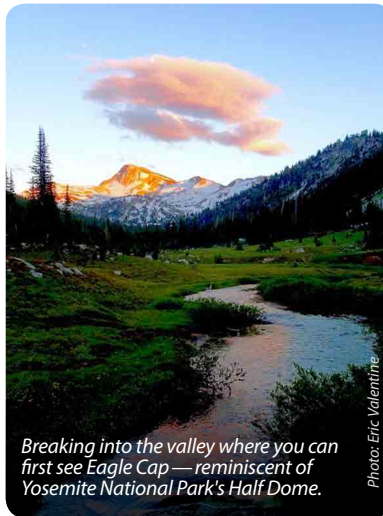
Although trails are long from Wallowa Lake, there is one trip Eric recommends: Ice Lake, located 7.7 miles one-way from the Wallowa Lake Trailhead. Above Ice Lake rises the two tallest peaks in the Eagle Cap: Matterhorn and Sacagawea.

“Ice Lake is a must for anybody who loves the Eagle Cap,” he said. “If you have friends visiting and there’s only one hike you can take, do Ice Lake.”

The Eagle Cap Wilderness is so vast that some hikes are best done with a shuttle— either leaving cars at the start and finish, or enlisting someone for the

drop off and pick up.

One of these hikes Eric started from the Imnaha River—a hike he refers to as the “backside of the Wallowas”—where the scenery includes sweeping glacial valleys.



Breaking into the valley where you can first see Eagle Cap — reminiscent of Yosemite National Park’s Half Dome.

Photo: Eric Valentine

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"It's like the glaciers just left," said Eric. "And you probably won't see many other hikers on these various forks of the Imnaha River because they just don't get explored that much."

The number of days for these backpack trips depend on how much mileage you want to cover in a day – and the more days, the more food you must carry. When planning a trip, Eric suggests thinking about this: "Is the reward at the end of doing 15 miles in the Wallows really worth the effort?"

In the Eagle Cap, the most popular destination is the Lake Basin by way of the Wallowa River trail that starts at Wallowa Lake. The basin has seen so much use that campfires are banned and camping is restricted from certain areas.

Another trip that requires a car shuttle starts at Cornucopia, outside of Halfway, and includes the South Fork of the Imnaha River, Hawkins Pass, Little Frazier Lake, Frazier Lake, Glacier Lake, Glacier Pass into to the Lake Basin, then over Horton Pass and down the East Eagle trail. Again, this one takes several days.

Although he spends most of his hiking hours in the Eagle Cap, Eric does venture to the Elkhorns every once in a while. This mountain range lies within part of OTEC's service territory of Union, Baker and Grant counties. Most roads are gravel and require a high-clearance vehicle except for the paved highway to the Anthony Lakes area.

"Everyone should go to Anthony Lake at least once a summer," said Eric.

From Anthony, Eric suggests hiking to Dutch Flat Lake, either

as a day trip or for overnight camping.

"That's only four miles in and it's a beautiful lake," he said.

Anthony Lake is also the start of the Elkhorn Crest Trail,



Eagle Cap with a dusting of snow.

Photo: Eric Valentine

a 23-mile trek along the top of the mountains. There is not, however, any water on the trail—hikers must either carry what they need, or go down to one of the alpine lakes.

Eric also likes the Strawberry Wilderness near Prairie City, and the Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch area in the Owyhee country.

The Hiking Season

This summer, the snow still lays deep within the mountains of Eastern Oregon. When it is still too early to hike into the backcountry, Eric heads to the lower elevation of Hells Canyon to a trail that starts at Copper Creek. He said the route goes three miles to Spring Creek, then up to a bench with spectacular views and bright flowers.

"The wildflowers—balsam, phlox, Indian paintbrush—are just thick," he said. "That's absolutely a gorgeous mid-spring hike."

He also appreciates the Mount Emily Recreation Area (MERA) that is located just minutes away from his home. Trails are open for hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders.

"You can get to various trailheads in 15 minutes," he said. "For us in La Grande, it is the most incredible investment. It's just superb."

Eric and his wife Meg use MERA year-round — snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter, and hiking in the spring and summer.

"It's a real treat," he said. "For anybody who likes to hike and exercise, it's really a gem."

MERA is also a good place to find huckleberries – tiny, purple berries that grow wild in the forests.

The Gear

Eric's backpacking style has changed over the years — mainly to trim the amount of weight he carries on his back.

"When I was scoutmaster of Troop 514, I'd take the boys on



Hiking along Carper Pass.

Photo: Eric Valentine

50-mile hikes and carried 60 pounds," said Eric who served as a scoutmaster from 1983 to 2003, and then became reinvented with Boy Scouts — and backcountry hikes — in 2011.

After retiring at age 60, Eric and a friend started hiking sections of the Pacific Crest Trail that winds through California,

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Stop Scams Before They Begin

Over the past few months several of our members have received phone calls from someone who is claiming to be a representative of OTEC and demanding money over the phone or your electric service will be disconnected. Some calls even show up on a member's caller ID and match OTEC's public numbers. This method of scam is called "spoofing" and has been used to impersonate police, hospitals, utility companies and others. It makes it very difficult to determine if the call is legitimate or not. If you are concerned about your electric service and receive a call that service is going to be disconnected, the best way to make sure it originated from one of the OTEC offices is to hang up and call one of our local offices back. Our Member Service Representatives will give you all the information you need to know about your account as well as provide you the various payment options available to you. A legitimate business or government agency will not push you into making an immediate decision or payment. Scam artists capitalize on the fear of "disconnecting your service," or when making false threats, they



pressure you into a quick decision. You should not give any personal or financial information to anyone over the phone, especially if they are the ones who initiated the call.

We like to think we can't be hoodwinked by financial scams, but it does happen. Although senior citizens are targeted a little more often by fraudulent schemes, anyone of us can fall victim.

Our advice is to be diligent in keeping personal and financial information private. Be certain to be the initiator, or the one who makes the initial contact for phone

calls, when conducting business affairs over the phone. Before sharing personal information or making a payment, get a salesperson's name, company name, physical address (not a P.O. Box), their phone number and business license number. Our Member Service Representatives will take the time needed to ensure you are confident in making any financial transactions to your cooperative. ●

Baker City: 541-523-3616
Burns: 541-573-2666
John Day: 541-575-0161
La Grande: 541-963-3155

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Oregon and Washington. They would cover about 20 miles a day, so Eric switched to lightweight backpacking gear.

These days, he also trains year-round to stay in hiking shape.

"A lot of core work, and I make sure my glutes, quads and hamstrings stay strong," he said. "It really is about staying in shape — you've got to keep your legs in shape."

And these days, he doesn't necessarily need to hike to the tallest peak he can find.

"In the old days, I needed a goal — to get on top of Matterhorn or Eagle Cap," he said. "Now I'm content with breathing

the fresh air and being out in the mountains. Now the journey is more important than the destination." ●

Hiking resources:

"Hiking Oregon's Eagle Cap Wilderness" by Fred Barstad
 "100 Hikes in Eastern Oregon" by William Sullivan
 Maps are available at U.S. Forest Service offices

Hiking information:

Wallowa Mountains and Elkhorn Mountains:

www.fs.usda.gov/activity/wallowa-whitman/recreation/hiking

Strawberry Wilderness:

www.fs.usda.gov/activity/malheur/recreation/hiking

YOUR MEMBER-OWNED COOPERATIVE

OTEC Delivers Notification of Capital Credit Allocation to a Mailbox Near You!

By Lara Petitclerc-Stokes

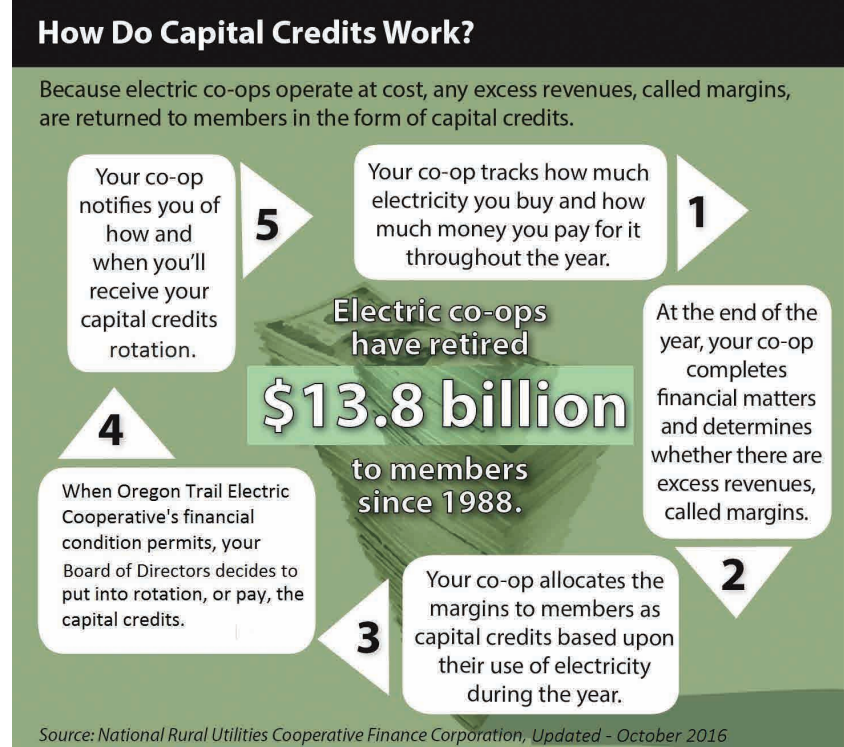
Beginning in late May, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) began mailing out their annual capital credit allocation notices to all members. OTEC, as a not-for-profit electric cooperative, delivers electric service to its members at cost. In the event that revenues exceed the operational expenses of providing electricity, OTEC allocates these operating margins back to its members.

"Members of Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) share in any margins or profit OTEC earns," said OTEC's Chief Financial Officer Anthony Bailey. "At the close of each fiscal year, all revenue received in excess of expenses (i.e. margins) is allocated back to our membership proportionate to the amount of patronage each member had with OTEC during the year. These allocations are called 'capital credits' and represent our membership's personal investment in the cooperative and their stake in all of its assets."

"After all, they are the owners of the cooperative," said Bailey. "Members who receive electricity from OTEC are not just customers, they are vested members with a stake in the operations of the cooperative. Our members enjoy certain rights that investor-owned, for-profit, utility customers do not have."

The amounts shown on the allocation notice represent each member's share of the operating margins realized by OTEC in the previous year, as well as, the cumulative unpaid capital credit balances.

"OTEC works hard to keep our member's rates as low as possible," said Bailey. "We are continuously searching for ways to reduce operating costs and advocating on our member-owners behalf with the Bonneville Power Administration to keep wholesale power costs low — all while providing a stable supply of



clean, renewable hydropower."

Allocation notifications are a record of each OTEC member's ownership in the Cooperative and should be preserved. Funds are not paid out immediately, but are instead used temporarily to fund capital needs for items such as power line construction, transformers, trucks, inventory and other equipment.

The mailed announcements are for informational purposes only, are not negotiable and cannot be applied to a member's electric bill.

"When it is determined by the Board of Directors that the cooperative is financially able, the funds are returned to the membership in actual "cash back" dollars," said Bailey. "Last December, OTEC paid out \$2.6 million to the members as a portion of their personal investment in the cooperative. That represents the largest amount of capital credits we have ever retired in one year and more than double from what we gave away just a few years ago."

For more information on capital credits visit: www.otecc.com under the "Members" tab.

What are capital credits?

The difference between a cooperative such as Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) and an investor-owned, for-profit, utility is that a cooperative is owned by the members it serves. As a member-owner, you share in the margins of the co-op. At the close of each fiscal year, all revenue received in excess of expenses (i.e. margins) is allocated back to the membership in the form of a credit, a "capital credit." This allocation, in OTEC's case, is based on the dollar amount of your purchases during the same year.

How do capital credits work?

You need to know two things about capital credits in order to understand how they work for you:

1. Allocations: Each year, you are "allocated" your portion of the previous year's margins based on the amount of electric service and power delivery you purchased from OTEC in relation to the total amount purchased by all members during the year. This amount is used by

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SUMMERTIME IS FAIR TIME



Photo: Lara Pettigler-Stokes

Have a question for the board?

Email: BoardSupport@otecc.com

Upcoming Board Meetings:
July 25 August 22 September 26



Visit One of Our Local Fairs
Four fun options for our members

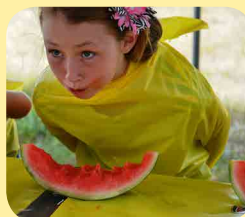
The Baker County Fair
"100 Years — Celebrating Traditions"
August 9–12, 2017
For more information visit:
<http://bakerfair.com/>
Phone: (541) 523-7881



The Grant County Fair
"Red, White and Blue —
This Fair is for You"
August 9–12, 2017
For more information visit:
<http://www.grantcountyfairgrounds.com>
Phone: (541) 575-1900



The Harney County Fair
"Country Themes and Children's Dreams"
September 7–10, 2017
For more information visit:
<http://business.harneycounty.com/events/details/harney-county-fair-rodeo-race-meet-09-06-2016-1213>
Phone: (541) 573-6447



The Union County Fair
"Ham It Up at the Fair"
August 2–5, 2017
For more information visit:
<http://www.unioncountyfair.org>
Phone: (541) 963-1011

Fair photos: Baker County Tourism / Basecamp

MEMBER-OWNED COOPERATIVE

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OTEC to fund capital needs for items such as power line construction, transformers, trucks, inventory and other equipment. This "allocation" becomes your equity in the cooperative and is maintained in a separate account assigned to you.

2. Rotation or "retirement":

This is what you will get in cash at a later date. OTEC uses the amount "allocated" to you for a time, but then returns this amount to members. When it is your turn in the retirement rotation, this is when you get actual "cash back" dollars.

When are capital credits returned to members? Per cooperative bylaws, your locally elected Board of Directors determines the amount of rotation cycled (cash back) each year, based on the financial condition of the cooperative and other considerations. These payments are usually made in December in the form of checks or bill credits.

What should a member do if he or she moves from our service area? It is a member's responsibility to make sure the cooperative has up-to-date address information at all times. By keeping your contact

information up to date, you can take full advantage of the services OTEC offers.

How does a member know the amount of their capital credits?

Each member has a separate capital credit account, which represents the member's ownership in the cooperative. When capital credits are allocated at the end of a year, all members who received electric service during that year will receive an allocation notice showing their current year's allocation and their accumulated balance of all prior years' service. ●

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Fresh Morel Mushrooms in Cream Sauce with Pasta



8 oz. fresh morel mushrooms, cleaned and halved lengthwise
1/2 tsp. snipped fresh thyme
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup chicken stock or vegetable broth
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1 cup heavy cream
1/3 cup finely chopped shallots
1/4 cup snipped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley
1 tbs. all-purpose flour
 Hot cooked pasta

A Call for Recipes

The window to pick fresh morel mushrooms is small. But, if you are lucky enough to find them the savory rewards are endless. Here is a recipe my family used to celebrate the spectacular morel season this year.

If you have a favorite summertime recipe to share, submit it along with a photo of your creation, your name and address to newsletter@otecc.com or mail to Newsletter, PO Box 226, Baker City, OR 97814. If your recipe is selected for our next issue, you'll get a \$10 bill credit. Happy Hunting!

Directions:

1. Clean fresh morel mushrooms by placing in a bowl. Cover with water; add a dash of salt. Soak for 10 – 15 minutes. Drain, rinse, and repeat two more times. Slice lengthwise and set on paper towel to dry while preparing cream sauce.
2. In a medium saucepan, melt 1/4 cup butter over medium heat. Add shallots. Cook and stir for 3–5 minutes or until shallots are tender. Sprinkle flour over shallots; stir to combine. Slowly add 1 cup broth, stirring until smooth. Reduce to low heat. Cook, uncovered, for 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in thyme, salt, and pepper. Slowly whisk in the cream. Cook, whisking constantly, over medium heat for an additional 7 minutes or until the mixture thickens. Stir in morels and 1/4 cup parsley. Cook and stir until heated through.
3. Spoon sauce over cooked pasta. If you like, sprinkle with additional parsley. Makes 4–6 main-dish servings. Enjoy!

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

The Cost of Service and Rate Design

Last month, I outlined several areas of concern that our power supplier, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), is facing and how it may impact our local electric rates. BPA has confirmed that we will receive an increase that will take effect in October, however, they have not determined to what level the increase may be. We have indications that we will have the final numbers by the end of this month.

We certainly understand the sooner we can let our member owners know the amount of a potential rate increase, the better you can plan. To that extent, I wanted to share with you part of the process we go through to appropriately allocate rate impacts such as the BPA power supply, transmission increases and/or increases that are from the distribution of energy into your home or business.

As a member-owned cooperative, our allocation

methodology through rate design is not driven by motives of turning a profit. We are a not-for-profit electric cooperative and all revenue received in excess of expenses (i.e. margins) are allocated back to our membership in the form of capital credits.



LES PENNING
General Manager

To ensure appropriate rate allocations are equitable by class, we have a third party conduct a "Cost of Service" study. Our Board and staff rely on this study to help determine rate design and the amount required to serve each rate class – whether the rate class be residential, small commercial, large commercial or irrigation. This process looks at all the costs incurred across the system and assigns those costs across all rate classes. For example, the study will determine all the costs associated with bringing power to our residential homes and apply the appropriate costs to the "residential rate" class.

Our Board of Directors will review the allocation of costs as

they are developed, as well as the proposed rate design for approval, generally focusing on two primary categories for our residential members. The first category is the delivery charge (costs associated with bringing power to your home) the second is the energy charge (based on how much energy you use). The delivery charge should cover all fixed costs including poles, wires, transformers, etc. that are associated with bringing power to your home. If this charge is set at the "cost of service", it does not matter how much or how little energy you consume. In theory, your cooperative is breaking even on providing the service to the home.

Over the last several years, the board has gradually been bringing this "Cost of Service" charge closer to its true amount. We will continue to keep you informed as we better understand the impact from BPA— or any distribution cost increases that may be associated — as we work through our current "Cost of Service" study. ●