

# When Eugene sizzles . . .

August 9, 1981, Sunday. Following a week of 100-degree-plus temperatures, the mercury was inching toward 90 by 9 a.m. All week long the Emerald and other local media ran stories about preventing heat stroke, sunburn and forest fires, and published photos of kids running through sprinklers and floating down the Willamette.

By noon, Eugene sizzled under a 100-degree sun. University lawns, parched by a dried-up budget, baked brown. The campus was deserted, houses were empty, the streets were silent. Everyone was swimming.

By the time the temperature reached its record 108 degrees, the Willamette River was choked with rafts, canoes and inner-tubes. Florence looked like Miami Beach.

Last summer may have been a bit extraordinary, but long spells of hot weather are not uncommon for Eugene. What follows are descriptions of some of the better places to cool off during the dry months.

## Willamette River

Easily the most accessible place to take a dip, it has a few prime swimming holes. One of the most popular is located closest to campus.

Just west of the Autzen bicycle bridge is a shelf of rocks along the river bank that is ideal for sunbathing. Devil-may-care tubers and swimmers mix it up with practicing kayakers who run the short rapids that start just before the bridge along the south bank.

Another popular cooling-off spot on the Willamette is located in Eugene's appendage city, Springfield.

Just across the bridge that divides the two cities, take a left turn to Island Park. A grassy shoreline, a rope swing and calm, slow-moving water keep this park crowded on hot days. Many use it as a jumping-off spot for inner-tubing or rafting.

The Waterworks Canoe Company, located across Franklin Boulevard, rents canoes for trips along the Mill Race or for longer excursions down the Willamette. Rental prices vary from \$22.50 for

off-Mill Race rentals to \$2.80 for a restful hour among the ducks on the Mill Race. The rental price includes paddles and lifejackets.

Waterworks is open Sunday through Thursday from noon to sundown and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to sundown.

## Fern Ridge Reservoir

This Army Corps of Engineers creation is sometimes swamp, sometimes lake. On good days the water is calm and deep and a little warmer than the Willamette. People use it for water skiing, so the water gets a little oily and the bottom is sort of squishy. About 10 miles west of campus, the reservoir is an easy bike ride. The reservoir is accessible by the West Eugene bike trail and West 11th Avenue.

## Dexter Reservoir

Beautiful setting but cold water. Pine trees, hills and quaint towns surround this picturesque swimming hole. Home of the University sailing club, the reservoir has a roped-in swimming area and a wide expanse of water for sailing or water skiing.

To get there, follow Highway 58 toward Oakridge and look for the covered bridge.

## Triangle Lake

Actually, the lake isn't the fun part. Bypass the lake and look for cars parked alongside the road a few miles away. That's where the rock slides and cliffs are. Water rushes over steep, moss covered rocks and empties into a warm pool 100 feet away.

People wear holes in their shorts by sitting at the top of the slide and letting the water sweep them down into the pool. Meanwhile, the thrill seekers climb up 30-foot vertical cliffs and heave themselves into the small, deep pool below.

Others lay around on rocks, drink beer and listen to AC/DC on portable tape players. The atmosphere can get sleazy. It has the reputation as a nude beach so some people swim *au naturel*. It is not

recommended to try the rock slides that way, though.

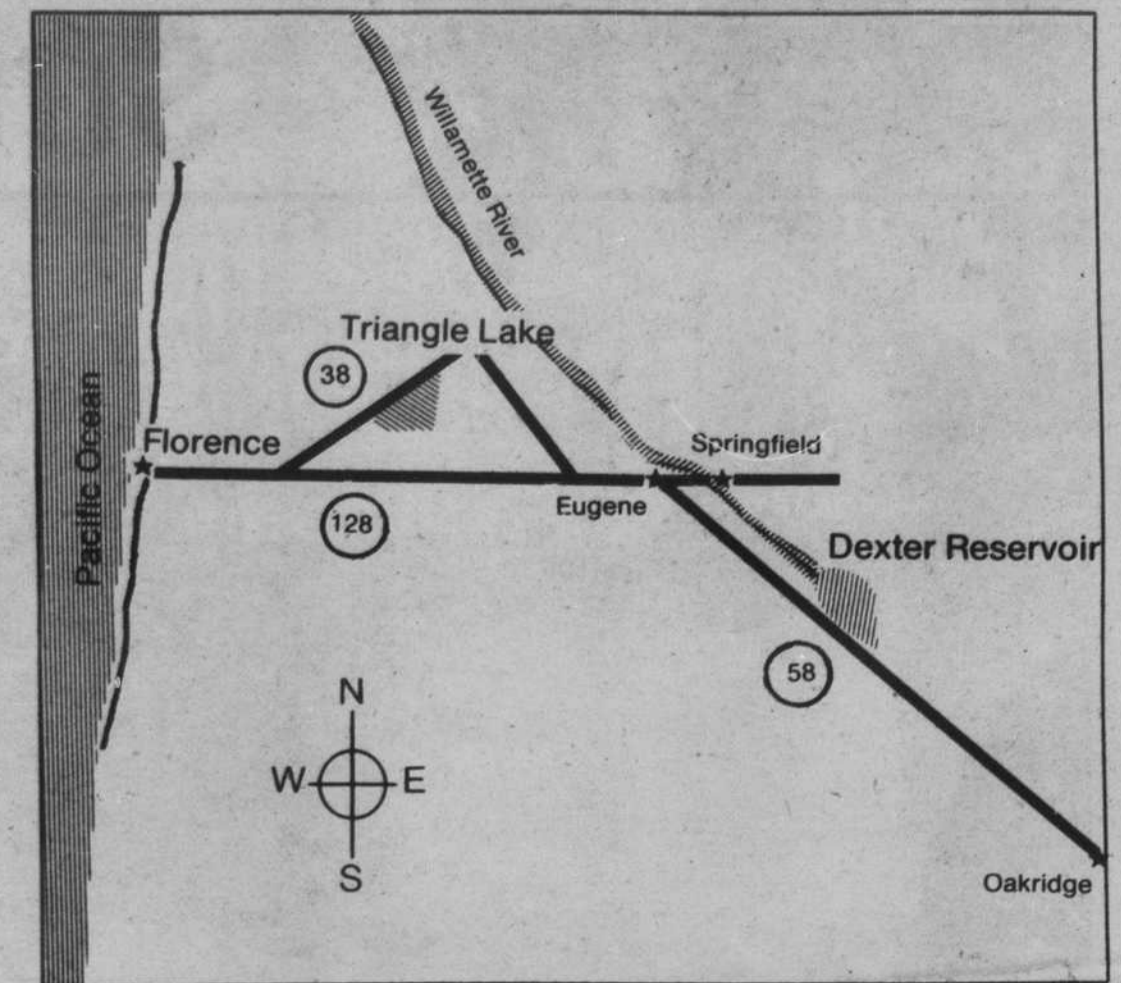
Triangle Lake is located about 40 miles west of Eugene near the junction of highways 36 and 126.

## Florence

During last summer's heat wave long traffic jams snarled the route between Eugene and this Pacific town. Bodies covered what normally are vacant beaches and the Florence tourist mongers made a bundle.

Florence is the closest coastal town to Eugene. Ocean breezes and salt air keep its climate mild. The beaches are long and clean and although the water is too cold to spend much time in, a few quick dips among the breakers are enough to reduce mid-summer misery. Florence is about 60 miles to the west.

Stories and map by Harry Esteve  
Photos by Mark Pynes



Lane County offers both swimmers and sunbathers endless choices.



# The hazards of sunbathing

Some people will risk anything for a good tan — including early wrinkles and skin cancer.

According to a recent article in "Newsweek" magazine, 400,000 people are expected to develop some form of skin cancer this summer and nearly all will be due to prolonged exposure to sunshine.

Although skin cancer — the most common form of cancer — is highly curable, it can leave permanent scars or can leave a person more susceptible to other, more dangerous, forms of cancer.

Sunbathing exposes the skin to ultraviolet radiation produced by the sun. The ultraviolet rays react with cells on

the outer layer of skin, causing the coveted brown pigmentation.

"Tanning is the skin's response to ultraviolet injury," Dr. Mark Greene of the National Cancer Institute says in the article.

Prolonged exposure to sunlight also interferes with the production of fibers in the inner layer of skin and that causes the skin to lose its elasticity. Thus the skin wrinkles prematurely. Exposure leads to "atrophy of the skin" or dryness and aging, the article says.

But cancer is the most serious side effect. The ultraviolet rays break down DNA strands in skin cells. The strands then rejoin randomly and become abnormal. Sun exposure inhibits enzymes

from rearranging DNA, and the "mutant DNA may produce a colony of cancer cells," according to the article.

Fair-skinned, blue-eyed people stand the highest risk of cancer from sun exposure.

Naturally, sunburn is also a danger during the summer. Medical authorities stress that tanners often are unaware if they are burning their skin. Some develop third degree burns without knowing it.

The best protection against sunburn and skin cancer is some form of sun screening lotion. Sun blocs that contain chemicals such as zinc oxide or para-aminobenzoic acid help diffuse the dangerous ultraviolet rays.

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