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# Students can rely on LTD for local, fun daytime trips

GUEST COMMENTARY

Pat Payne

One of the perks of summer for most college students is freedom. Hop in a car, get the motor running, and soon, they're off down I-5 looking for adventure. Unless, of course, they don't have a set of wheels.

But don't panic yet, because there are still some fun locations to visit that are only a few miles from Eugene and campus. The best part of all: These local spots can be reached by Lane Transit District buses.

Out in Veneta, the Fern Ridge Reservoir is a great place for water activities of all kinds. Created in 1941 after construction of Fern Ridge Dam, the artificial lake is ringed by marvelous wetlands and forested areas. Lane County operates four parks around the area.

Orchard Point Park has a small shop offering food, boat rentals and supplies, and sailboard and Jet Ski lessons. The parks are generally open from 30 minutes before dawn to 30 minutes after dusk. There is a \$3 parking charge for cars.

LTD's Route 93 goes around Fern Ridge Lake. Although the buses don't make any direct stops at the parks, the drivers will make stops at the parks as long as it's safe, according to LTD. Route 93 runs twice in the morning and three times in the evening on weekdays, and once each way on Saturdays.

For a day trip that's a bit further, there are several small parks around the McKenzie River. Out near the far end of Lane County, the area is still heavily forested, with the McKenzie River flowing through.

Hendricks Bridge Park, outside of Waltherville and nine miles east of Springfield, has beautiful maple groves and the river flowing serenely throughout. Boating ramps are available, as is an unsupervised swimming area. There are also volleyball courts and horse-



Adam Jones Emerald

A lone fishing dock floats in the evening chop of Fern Ridge Reservoir on U.S. Highway 126, west of Eugene.

shoe pits. The fee is \$3 per car or free for pedestrians, bikes and LTD passengers. LTD's Route 91 goes by the park twice in the morning and evening and once on Saturday and Sunday. Park hours are from 8 a.m. to dusk.

Finally, for a place to go and spend a few hours, try Armitage Park, just five miles north of Eugene, and conveniently located on LTD's Route 96. Armitage, which until recently was a state park, is also on the McKenzie River. The park is open from dawn to dusk, is set up to accommodate large gatherings of people and has eight reservable areas for large picnics. LTD runs three trips in the morning and three in the evening on weekdays.

"It's a great place for people to come and enjoy the outdoors, and close enough to town to come in on the lunch hour," Lane County Parks spokeswoman Lauryn Osborne said.

For more information on any of these parks, call 682-2000. For more information on bus routes, contact LTD at 687-5555.

Pat Payne is a freelance reporter for the Emerald. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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