



Henry Miller fishes at Pond 6 at St. Louis Ponds.

STEVE MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

# St. Louis Ponds have fish, great memories



**OUTDOORS**  
HENRY MILLER

**GERVAIS** - A good friend and longtime fellow outdoor writer (see next Saturday's column about the legendary John Higley) once remarked that "I don't know which I enjoy more, fishing, or being at the places where fish are found."

We were, as I recall, at Big Boulder Lake in the Trinity Alps Wilderness. Or it could have been at Eiler Lake in the Thousand Lakes Wilderness, both in Northern California.

Ah the fog of time. Higley's comment was made all the more pertinent because of the settings and because the brook trout were plentiful and voracious at each of those locations.

As an addendum to Higley's musing, nostalgia also adds a not-inconsequential dimension in the "why we fish" explanation, at least for me.

Case in point, and a lot closer to home, St. Louis Ponds west of Gervais rings all of the bells for me as far as the fishing/place/memories goes. I've been a shameless promoter for this network of shallow, warm-water fishing ponds for decades.

The back story is that the almost 22 acres of ponds were carved expressly to provide maximum bank access for anglers on a 260-acre property owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and co-managed now with the Marion County Parks Department.

Since the week of Feb. 27 through March 3, more than 3,500 keeper-size and some larger rainbow trout have been stocked in the ponds, according to the department's stocking schedule.

As an aside, if you would like to give trout fishing at St. Louis a shot, Fish and Wildlife will hold a family

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**JOHN HIGLEY**  
OUTDOOR WRITER

fishing event at Pond 6 just north of the parking lot at the pond complex from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 15.

Admission is free, as is loaner equipment, bait and tackle along with assistance for first-timers. A fishing license, which must be purchased before you get there, is required for those 12 and older.

The final scheduled trout-stocking is the week of April 17-21, after which the shallow ponds usually will become too warm to support the fish.

But all of the ponds have populations of smallish warm-water fish from bass and bluegill to crappie and catfish, the latter including an occasional surprise such as the 3-footer that was caught in 2008.

And access from wheelchair- and stroller-friendly paved trails to accessible fishing decks and platforms recently has been installed.

The nostalgia angle comes from the occasional and fondly remembered outings with my daughter, Meghan, about age 5, during her all-too-infrequent custody visits from her home in Southern California.

We would catch bluegill and occasional bass among the myriad snags using a cane pole, bobber and garden worms.

As I said ... a true nostalgia-bath all the way; it's how I learned as a small kid fishing with my grandfather, also Henry Miller, during family visits to the other St. Louis, in Missouri, where I was born.

On another fateful fishing trip a couple of decades ago before officials instituted an after-dark closure (currently 8 p.m.), then-editor Dan Bender and I went to the ponds on a

nighttime catfish trip.

Neither of us caught a fish, but I heard a "hiss," pointed my flashlight at the sound and was staring at the glowing eyes and candy-corn orange teeth of an overprotective, pug-sized mother nutria 2 feet away guarding her two guinea pig-sized offspring.

It was one of those M. Night Shyamalan fishing moments where the word "evacuate" takes on multiple meanings.

Because of their interlaced construction, the network of seven ponds is also a hikers', dog-walkers' and birders' paradise with a chance to see occasional garter snakes and other critters.

The ponds are about 12 miles north of Keizer on River Road NE/French Prairie Road NE. Watch for the St. Louis Road turn on the right, then take a right on Tesch Road on the right just after the railroad tracks coming from the west.

Or from the Brooks Exit on Interstate 5 northbound, go right to Highway 99E, then left on 99, to the stoplight at Gervais Road. Go left through Gervais, where the road becomes St. Louis Road, and take a left on Tesch just before the tracks.

Go slow after you leave the paved section. It's a winter-rutted bone-shaker most of the way to the parking lot.

Check it out. You'll thank me later.

Former Statesman Journal outdoors reporter Henry Miller returns to the outdoors page with a weekly column. To contact him, email [HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com](mailto:HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com).



MOLLY J. SMITH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Silverton High junior Maggie Buckholz was voted the athlete of the week.

## Silverton junior is athlete of the week

Shortstop commits to play at Oregon

**BILL POEHLER**  
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Putting up big statistics is what Maggie Buckholz does.

Silverton High School's junior shortstop was 3 for 4 with a triple and three RBI in a 16-3 win against South Eugene April 4.

Buckholz was voted the athlete of the week by a poll of readers.

All Athletes of the Week will receive a complimentary ticket to the June 6 Statesman Journal Sports Awards.

Buckholz is batting .567 with 11 runs scored, 18 RBI, four doubles, three triples and three home runs and a 1.200 slugging percentage through nine games this season.

She has verbally committed to play softball in college at Oregon.

**STATESMAN JOURNAL**  
**SPORTS AWARDS**

## Scholarship award now accepting nominations

**BILL POEHLER**  
STATESMAN JOURNAL

High school athletes are often feted for their accomplishments in sporting arenas.

When a basketball player scores 30 points or a football player runs for four touchdowns in a game, thousands of fans will see it.

But those fans don't see it when that same athlete spends countless hours studying in libraries or pushes themselves to higher levels in academic arenas.

The Statesman Journal will recognize athletes for their academic accomplishments.

At the June 6 Statesman Journal Sports Awards, one scholar athlete from the Mid-Valley will be awarded the Scholar Athlete Award and receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

To nominate an athlete, fill out the form at <http://community.statesmanjournal.com/sportsawards/2017/scholar.php>. Nominations close at midnight on April 16.

Three finalists will be selected from those nominated by a panel of judges.

The three finalists will be invited to the Statesman Journal Sports Awards where the winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

For more information about the event go to [StatesmanJournal.com/sportsawards](http://StatesmanJournal.com/sportsawards)

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TIMOTHY J. GONZALEZ FOR STATESMAN JOURNAL  
All of the winners from the 2016 Mid-Valley Sports Awards are pictured with Joey Harrington and Jerry Rice on June 7, 2016.