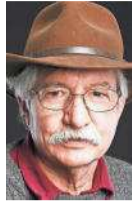


OUTDOORS

Detroit Lake primed for rebound year



HENRY MILLER

"It should be a great weekend for fishing," said Dean O'Donnell.

O'Donnell, the owner of Mountain High Grocery in Detroit and also the longtime president of the Detroit Lake Recreation Area Business Association, plans to recycle that quote repeatedly during the coming months.

With 18,000 hatchery rainbow trout scheduled to arrive this week, Detroit is above 82 percent full according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. That's more than 60 feet higher than it was during the fourth week of April during the disastrous drought year in 2015.

"We're looking good in what, the first time in three years?" O'Donnell asked rhetorically.

Along with the first major trout stocking of the year — 10,000 trout were dropped off during an initial plant the week of April 3 — there is an added bonus for neophyte anglers and the, ahem, thrifty among us.

April 22-23 also were the first of eight Free Fishing Weekend days in Oregon during 2017. During those days, no fishing license or shellfish permit is required to fish, crab or go clamming in the Beaver State for both residents and visitors.

The others, by the way, are June 3 and 4 — the biggie with a wealth of free clinics and other events on June 3 statewide — as well as Nov. 25 and 26 and Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

The steadily rising lake level adds to what already has been a good start to the



Docks sit on dry land at Kane's Marina at Detroit Lake in June 2015. The docks at Kane's Marina and Detroit Lake Marina were moved to Detroit Flats because of low water levels that year.

recreation year for the tourist-dependent community. The town drew a lot of pass-through visitors heading for the Sno-Park Permit areas and ski resorts to the east, O'Donnell said.

"We've had a good winter, too," he said.

Detroit was overdue for some good news after the disaster of 2015, when rivers such as the North Santiam and Breitenbush that feed the lake fizzled to trickles that occasionally didn't make it to the lake. And lake levels didn't catch

up in 2016.

I particularly remember covering the Free Fishing Weekend event on June 6 of that desiccated year.

The water was so low on the North Santiam River arm of Detroit Lake that the traditional event site at the accessible fishing platform at Hoover Campground had to be moved to Detroit Flats Recreation Site downstream near where the North Santiam joins the lake.

The event turned into a tank-on-the-bank fishing experience with trout plant-

ed in a plastic-lined pool.

The headline says: "Kids declare Free Fishing event at Detroit 'awesome.'" That's what reporters and editors call a "lipstick on a pig" headline.

Kids think almost anything is awesome, even catching fish in an out-sized wading pool. You want optimism? Quote a kid.

Writing about and taking pictures of the effects of the drought was similar to reporting on any other drawn-out natural disaster. One of those "sorry, but it's my job" situations.

Which is why I went back to O'Donnell for this column.

Throughout that summer of 2015, he was always available and willing to talk despite the evident pain that the situation was causing. So he was the obvious source for this column about the turnaround.

"Do you think it hurt the image of Detroit long-term?" I asked about all of the stories, photos and TV footage that came out of 2015.

O'Donnell hesitated for a couple of seconds.

"I think that most people accept that it was just part of nature," he said. "Most people are very supportive."

Ironically, that sounds similar to the optimism that O'Donnell expressed about the future during the depths of late summer 2015.

Henry Miller is a retired outdoor writer at the Statesman Journal. You can contact him via email at HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com

PREP FOOTBALL



Silverton head coach John Mannion walks back to the sidelines in the first quarter of a game against Redmond on Sept. 9, 2016, at Silverton High School.

MOLLY J. SMITH/STATESMAN JOURNAL

MANNION LEAVING SILVERTON

Head football coach accepts same position at Mountainside

BILL POEHLER
STATESMAN JOURNAL

John Mannion has resigned as Silverton High School's head football coach and accepted the same position at the new Mountainside High School in Beaverton, he confirmed April 19.

In his seven years at Silverton, the football program went 57-20, won league championships in 2014 and 2012, was in the state semifinals three times and placed second in state after reaching the state championship game in 2014.

"I would say first that I am so grateful for my time here at Silverton and for the players, my fellow coaches and the community," Mannion said. "They embraced me, they embraced our program and I'm so proud of being part of what's gone on here the last seven years. As this opportunity presented itself, the whole process has been very bittersweet in that I'm in a job that I love.

"It was an incredibly hard decision. When Beaverton reached out to me, it

was really not something I was looking for. The more I explored it, it was a really unique opportunity. Kind of as the process unfolded, it was something that we as a family decided to do, but it wasn't without a lot of reflection and a lot of soul searching."

Mountainside is opening in the fall for its first school year with only freshmen and sophomores.

The football program will field freshman and junior varsity teams only for the 2017 season, play an independent varsity schedule in 2018 and play a full Metro League schedule for the first time with the 2019 season.

Mannion said that the administration of the Beaverton school approached him unsolicited and he wrestled with the decision to leave Silverton.

"It was and continues to be hard to wrap my head around the idea that we won't be here anymore," said Mannion, who will continue to teach social studies and physical education at Silverton through the end of the current school

year. "It is a multi-layered decision that involved a lot of things. I never thought I'd leave here.

"Telling the players was very difficult because of how hard they worked for me. The fellow coaches have been phenomenal. It's really a difficult thing, but in life you never really know what the right decision is for things. As things come your way you weigh it and you make the best decision you can."

In his time at Silverton, Mannion's football teams had one losing season in the seven years and reached heights that had not seen in 20 years.

He not only wants to have the same kind of success he had at Silverton, but he wants to do it the same way he did at Silverton.

"I'm looking forward to do some of the kinds of things that we did here at Silverton," said Mannion, father of Los Angeles Rams quarterback Sean Mannion.

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FORMER SILVERTON HIGH HEAD FOOTBALL COACH