

Oregon still looks for rec agency leader

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon is still searching for a leader of the newly created Office of Outdoor Recreation.

Created by the state legislature in 2017, the office is designed to become a central clearinghouse for outdoor recreation projects and businesses across Oregon.

But officials have struggled to find the right person to lead the new unit. After a months-long process of reviewing more than 100 applications — and interviewing a number of candidates — state officials decided they hadn't found the right person.

"Unfortunately, as qualified as they were, their considerable talents and skills do not exactly match the expected demands of the office as it ramps up," an update from the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation said. "We will not be hiring from this pool."

It's unclear how the department will fill a position that pays between \$70,000 and \$97,000 per year at this point.

Officials will focus on beginning some of the work called for in the legislation, according to the note.

"We knew at the outset finding a person for this new office would be a challenge, and while the hiring process didn't produce the ideal candidate in our first attempt, we are thankful for your continued patience and support,"

the update said.

Here's what the parks and recreation department will focus on in the foreseeable future:

- Establish a high-level, policy-driven advisory group to develop a prioritized hotlist of top policy or statutory barriers to outdoor recreation success, and use their expertise to guide recruitment of the office's executive. This could take some months.

- Cooperate with the higher education system to create a strong foundation for degrees related to outdoor recreation engagement, business development, management and research.

- Begin work with Travel Oregon and other partners on a detailed statewide outdoor recreation economic impact study and communication plan.

- Contribute to signature trail and transportation plan strategies.

- Lay the groundwork for a recreation participation and employment diversity audit.

- Integrate all this work in the context of the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Initiative convened by Travel Oregon and supported by dozens of organizations.

Zach Urness has been an outdoors writer, photographer and videographer in Oregon for 10 years. He is the author of the book "Hiking Southern Oregon" and can be reached at zurness@StatesmanJournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.



Oregon still is searching for a leader of the newly created Office of Outdoor Recreation. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

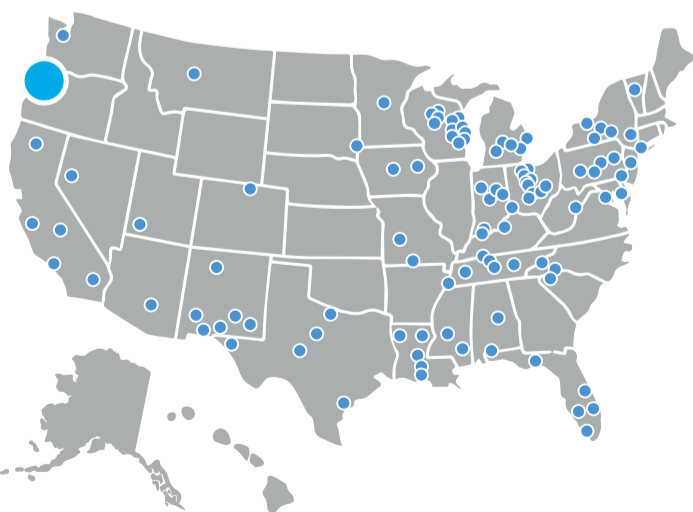
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P-PP

E.E. Wilson Pond provides plenty of history, fishing



Darin Hyde of Albany plays a trout that he caught on a chironomid artificial fly at E.E. Wilson Pond north of Corvallis. HENRY MILLER/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Fishing

Henry Miller

Guest columnist

CORVALLIS — If you're looking for a pleasant walk with a productive fishing hole at the end, along with a generous smattering of history thrown in to the mix, you ought to give E.E. Wilson Pond a visit.

It's just one of the attractions on the 1,700-plus-acre E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area, a former World War II-era military base that now is managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

It's a shade more than a half-mile hike on a flat, graveled, family friendly path from the fishing pond parking lot to the berm that encloses the pond. The stroll includes views of the fragments of crumbling foundations and other structures from the former base.

On a recent visit, the spectators watching the dozens of anglers ringing and floating on the pond included a large bald eagle perched high up in a tree on the west side of the water body.

E.E. Wilson was stocked with 1,225 rainbow trout — 800 keeper-size, 400 foot-long-plus and 25 larger fish — the week of March 5, and is scheduled to get another 1,075, including 50 "trophy" rainbows and 25 "trophy-plus" trout sometime during the week of March 19.

It first was stocked the week of Feb. 12 with 1,000 keeper-size rainbows and again the week of Feb. 26 with 1,100, including 400 "trophy" trout.

"We usually come three times a winter," said Darin Hyde of Albany, who was joined by his fishing buddy Randy Pepin of Jefferson.

Pepin and Hyde were getting steady action fishing from their U-shaped float tubes.

The hot tickets for the pair were twig-looking chironomid artificial flies meant to imitate the larvae of flying insects.

Both were slow-twitching their of-

ferings with small brightly colored floats called "indicators" several feet above the sub-surface flies to show when trout grabbed them.

One E.E. Wilson regular who was spin-fishing on the opposite side of the pond was Dillon Hammer of Monmouth.

"I came here earlier this year, pretty early this year, and this thing (the pond) was empty," Hammer said about the smallish puddle that has re-filled with winter rains. "I do come here pretty often ... I got a couple of bites on the other side, but I'm trying the deeper side right now."

Non fly anglers have success with night crawlers or, "like fake trout (patterned) spinners," he added.

As the morning fog burned off and the bright sun chased the away the chill, a steady stream of anglers, many families with kids, walked over the lip of the berm to the pond.

The pond parking area is on the north side of Camp Adair Road. Take Highway 99W south to the "wildlife area" turn on the left about six miles north of Corvallis.

A wildlife area parking permit — \$10 a day or \$30 a year — is required to park at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife wildlife areas. Those are available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed for lunch from noon until 1, at the Fish and Wildlife office 2 miles south of Camp Adair Road (left-hand turn off Highway 99W). The wildlife area headquarters does not sell parking permits.

You also can purchase permits at any fish and wildlife license agent as well as online at <https://myodfw.com/articles/buying-odfw-wildlife-area-parking-permit>

While you're at the wildlife area, check out the Camp Adair Memorial Garden honoring those who trained at the base before shipping out to fight during World War II.

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

Chia seeds with rodent poop given out in food boxes

Tracy Loew Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Marion-Polk Food Share received 134 cases of chia seeds contaminated with rodent excrement and distributed about 77 cases to local food banks and meal sites over the past three months, distribution manager Tom Oblack said March 13.

Cases varied in weight but averaged about 20 pounds each, he said, meaning about 1,500 pounds of the contaminated seeds ended up in Marion and Polk county cupboards.

On Monday, the Oregon Food Bank of Portland initiated a recall of 11 tons of chia seeds donated last October by Live Local Organics of Milwaukie.

Between Nov. 1 and March 9, Oregon Food Bank sent the seeds to food banks and pantries across Oregon and southwest Washington, including Marion-Polk Food Share.

The contamination was discovered after a customer complained. Seeds still in Oregon Food Bank's inventory were found to contain rodent droppings.

Further investigation indicated the donor knew the seeds were contaminated, Oregon Food Bank said in a statement.



Marion-Polk Food Share received 134 cases of chia seeds contaminated with rodent excrement, and distributed 77 cases to local food banks and meal sites. GETTY IMAGES

Oregon Food Bank is asking people who received the chia seeds to immediately throw them away and to see a doctor if they are experiencing any symptoms of foodborne illness.

"While no known illnesses have been associated with this product, use or consumption may present a health hazard to consumers," the Portland organization said.

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