

# Sports

## PREVIEW PERMIT SYSTEM WITH HIKE TO PAMELIA LAKE



A view of Pamela Lake and Mount Jefferson. PHOTO BY WILLIAM SULLIVAN

**Zach Urness**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The summer of 2020 is shaping up to be a pretty interesting one in Oregon's outdoors.

Two years from now, the Forest Service is expected to impose the most widespread limits on hiking and camping in state history in three popular wilderness areas — Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and the Three Sisters.

You'll need a permit to day-hike from 19 trailheads accessing 450,000 acres of Oregon's most beautiful backcountry. If you're camping overnight, you'll need a permit to enter from all 79 trailheads.

Only a handful of permits will be available since the program's goal is to cut down on damage from skyrocketing crowds and the damage they cause.

I've been writing about this plan for the last two years, yet still feel as though a lot of people are in the dark about what this will all mean.

That's why you should consider a trip to Pamela Lake this summer. It's an easy and beautiful hike into the Mount



Bridge over a small stream on Pamela Lake Trail. ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Jefferson Wilderness to a mountain lake.

It's also the model for the 2020 permit system.

Since the mid-1990s, you've needed a permit to hike Pamela Lake Trail. The system has been so successful at limiting damage from overuse that it was

adopted on a larger scale by the Forest Service.

In other words, if you want to understand what the experience of hiking Oregon's wilderness will be like in coming years, head to Pamela.

**The trip begins on your computer**

A trip to Pamela begins by logging onto your computer, visiting Recreation.gov and typing in "Pamela Limited Entry Area." Here, you can reserve one of the 20 permits available each day.

With the exception of peak summer weekends, they're usually easy to get.

The permits are technically free, but the website charges a "vendor fee" of \$6.

After choosing a date and printing your permit (or just having it on your phone), you're ready to hit the road.

**'Hey, we should take care of this place'**

It's about a 90-minute drive from Salem to Pamela Lake Trailhead, located east of Detroit. Part of the trail's popularity is that it's short — 2.2 miles to the lake (4.4 miles round-trip).

The trip takes you through mossy, old-growth forest along a tumbling creek that should be blooming with trillium right about now. The trailhead's low elevation means this route opens earlier than many in the Jefferson wil-

**See PERMIT, Page 2B**

## A full dam means a full stringer and a lot of stories

**Fishing**  
**Henry Miller**  
Guest columnist



**Rich Gardner, a longtime frequent angler at the dam at Detroit Lake, is adroit at catching kokanee and rainbow trout on a variety of lures and baits.** HENRY MILLER/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

DETROIT — In solidarity with all of the similarly pun-impaired out there, and with apologies to those more skilled than me, I offer the following: This is the best dam place to go fishing close to Salem.

With Detroit Lake near-brimming, congregations of trout and kokanee are kegging up near the face of the dam. Ditto for the anglers pursuing them.

"Oh, yea, pretty often," Agustin Garcia said when asked how often he fishes off the dam. "I grew up fishing. I've been coming with my dad (Andy), and I'm 29, so my whole life."

How much does the Hillsboro resident enjoy fishing at Detroit?

"That's what this tattoo is actually based on is fishing at Detroit," he said, showing a black line drawing of a casting angler on his right forearm accented with three green evergreen trees and a mountain silhouette.

Garcia even hooked his fiancée, Stephanie Keys (somewhat hesitantly) on fishing at Detroit.

"Well, we were dating. I like to go outside. And he was like, 'Well, we're going to go here.'"

Keys laughed. "And then he does most of the work,

so it's all right."

Agustin grinned. "I wouldn't call it work. It's fun for me," he said.

"I get sunshine. And I catch occasional fish," she replied.

"So it all works out," Garcia said. "She got the biggest fish last time, a nice little 16-inch trout. The filets covered up a dinner plate."

Sure enough, with a little assistance from her betrothed, Keys scored a fat foot-long rainbow trout, but was a little nonplussed about how to deal with it.

Both were using PowerBait (char- treuse for him, pink for her) fished below bobbers.

"Your disgusting (fishing) towel just

got more disgusting," she said after hesitantly dispatching the trout, picking it up gingerly with the sodden towel and dropping it in the soft-sided cooler.

Plenty more where that came from, Garcia said, referring to the towel, and come to think of it, the trout.

Even if you don't get a bite, the dam provides a loose social club of like-minded fishing enthusiasts with wildly diverse, but always entertaining tales.

Come for the fishing. Stay for the stories.

"My son caught a 52-and-one-half-inch landlocked Chinook on his Spiderman fishing pole," said Rich Gardner of Dallas, then laughing. "He was sitting in his crib just bouncing it."

Rich, who was fishing about 20 feet away from Garcia and Keys, said he's been coming to the dam "since I was about 2. I'm 45, so about 43 years."

The dam fraternity is a spritely group always willing to share stories and fishing tips, even between and during casts and retrieves, along with providing running play-by-play.

"My favorite is a Kastmaster," Gardner said, letting fly with a jointed rainbow-trout patterned plug.

"Hang on ... I need to let it sink. They're going after this. I'm just getting it deep enough.

"Whoa. There was a really nice one that came up after it," he added as a silver flash, a substantial kokanee, rushed the lure then backed off.

"I'm going to go with this bad guy," he said, switching to a smaller, glittering, torpedo-shaped lure that he called a pink striper. "The fun thing is that when they hit them ..." he paused to reconsider. "The sad thing is the little ones hit it."

Rich smiled. "But I have caught a little one on it, and then a big one took the little one," he added of the best-of-times, worst-of-times, back to best-of-times situation.

Sure enough, several small chrome-bright flashes, 4-inch kokanee, a landlocked variety of sockeye salmon, hooked themselves on the pink striper.

But no big fish came up for the lure-and-small-fish combo plate.

So he switched to his go-to lure, a rainbow-patterned Kastmaster.

And then hooked and lost, two large fish in succession, one of them coming about a foot and a half out of the water.

"I love these glasses, and I hate them sometimes," Gardner said about his polarized shades that offered way too much information about the fish chasing his lure beneath the sun-flecked surface of Detroit Lake. "You jerk way too soon."

With deadline pressing, that's how I left the informal fishing club at the dam.

Talk among yourselves.

I'll be back. Save me a spot on the rail.

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