

Outdoors

DRAMATIC VIEWS



The North Sister is seen behind the South Matthieu Lake. WILLIAM SULLIVAN/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

McKenzie Pass offers up beautiful forested vistas

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's a place of fire, ice and lush forest. And lots of hiking trails. McKenzie Pass is perhaps the most dramatic landscape in Oregon, a place where lava flows and old-growth forest spread out below towering volcanoes. Located between Sisters and McKenzie Bridge, the pass is usually accessible from June to November via Scenic Highway 242 depending on conditions. The highway makes an ideal place to launch a hiking or backpacking trip, with direct access to the Mount Washington and Three Sisters wilderness

area on either side. There are countless campgrounds nearby, but two favorites include Belknap Hot Springs and Scott Lake Campground. Here are nine of the best hikes and trips beginning on McKenzie Pass. We're going from the west side, near McKenzie Bridge, to the east side near Sisters.

Proxy Falls

Lush forest, lava flows and two spectacular but differing waterfalls highlight this short and sweet trek on the west side of McKenzie Pass. The trailhead is on the side of Highway 242, between mile markers 64 and 65 at an obvious sign with parking pull-outs on the side of the road. The trailhead gets busy during peak season, so come early or hike midweek. Autumn colors are bright here in the fall. The entire trail includes a 1.7 mile

loop to an upper and lower falls. The upper falls is a scenic 50-foot fan of a waterfall, while the lower falls is taller at 100 feet. The hike is easy overall and a good option for people hiking with kids. It makes for a fun winter adventure as well, but you have to start at a gate and follow snow-covered Highway 242 a total of 7 miles round-trip. **Directions:** From Salem or Eugene, follow Highway 126 to the beginning of Highway 242. From the junction, drive 9 miles to the obvious trailhead on the side of the road. **Coordinates:** 44.1679, -121.9272

Linton Lake

Similar to Proxy Falls, this trail is easy, pretty and located on the far west side of McKenzie Pass — the side closest to the Willamette Valley. Unlike Proxy Falls, the trail leads to a mountain lake.

From a small parking area just across from Alder Springs Campground, follow signs onto a trail of giant Douglas fir and hemlock to a lake surrounded by lava, forest and with creeks rushing in. The hike is just under 4 miles round-trip with 250 feet of climb. The lake is best in autumn, when the colors really pop. The trail leads to a small beach, then becomes increasingly brushy. A boot and bushwhack leads up Linton Creek to mythic Linton Falls, a waterfall with numerous tiers that all combined measure close to 600 feet, according to Northwest Waterfall Survey. There's no single place to view the full scope of Linton Falls, and it's very difficult to access, but there's no denying its power. **Note:** Beginning in summer 2020, a permit will likely be required to enter from Linton Lake Trailhead.

See MCKENZIE PASS , Page 2B

Plan early for next year's local trout stocking

Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist



Dates for the stocking of hatchery brood rainbows won't be known until closer to the dates the fish will be delivered, usually in November.
STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

This just in ... Or at least it's the first time that it came to my attention. Normally, you have to wait until around November to find out the Oregon trout-stocking schedule for the following year. But if you go to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's online fish-plant listings (<https://myodfw.com/fishing/species/trout/stocking-schedule>), the planned deliveries are given through mid-July 2020. The first loads of rainbow trout to be dropped at the two venues inside the Salem city limits during the new year, Walter Wirth Lake in Cascades Gateway Park on the east side of Turner Road just south of Walmart and Walling Pond, 16th and McGilchrist, are set for the week of Jan. 6. Wirth is scheduled to get 1,700 legal-size (8 inches long) and 150 keeper-plus-size fish; while Walling in due to get 400 keepers and 50 keeper-plus trout. Those, as well as other sites closest to Salem, are in the Willamette Zone on the schedules. As usual, the regular disclaimers apply, especially when looking that far out: Trout plants are contingent on the availability of fish and the vehicles to carry them as well as weather, road and water

gallows humor as "a tank on the bank event." And in between and since there were years when prolonged cold spells slowed trout growth, delaying early stockings. So by all means pencil in your plans for the first half of 2020, check as the date(s) get closer, and have an eraser handy just in case. One thing that isn't listed is the release of the behemoth "brooders" or surplus hatchery brood rainbow trout that are put out to figurative pasture because they are past the peak of their reproductive lives. Broodstock plants normally start at Willamette Valley ponds around Thanksgiving. Stay tuned.

Dog Days of Summer

No, Harry the mostly Jack Russell terrier isn't dead. The road-kill tableau is a picture of him loafing on the lawn in the shade of the ironically appropriate dogwood tree in our back yard during a 90-degree afternoon in South Salem. I know how he feels. Sometimes, the only way to get Harry to move is to say the magic words. "Harry, dinner." Again, I know how he feels, motivation-wise.

Angry birds, Oregon edition

When Kay and I were in Newport re-

cently, a guy sitting on the balcony of his bay front condo at the Embarcadero said, "Look at the bald eagle." And there it was, dodging and weaving over the fleet of moored boats while being pursued and harassed by a group of screeching seagulls. Apparently, the gulls were peeved about America's national symbol intruding on their territory and taking their lunch. Gulls also steal from anglers. I once had a couple of pounds of salmon roe filched off the cleaning table at the Embarcadero a couple of years ago when I walked down the dock to get a plastic bag to pack it. Bald eagles are no slackers in the criminal mischief department, either. They steal from osprey, as witnessed during a mid-air theft seen from the Willamette River trail at Minto-Brown Island Park a while back. There's a great word for these multiple misdemeanors (although the victims probably consider them felonies). I learned it as an undergraduate environmental biology major in college. The professor said it's called kleptoparasitism, a parasite by theft. Great word. Remember it. It will come in handy someday. In certain instances, it applies to humans as well. Just so you know. *Henry Miller is a retired Statesman Journal outdoor columnist and outdoor writer. You can reach him via email at HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com*