

Outdoors

STRAWBERRY MOUNTAINS



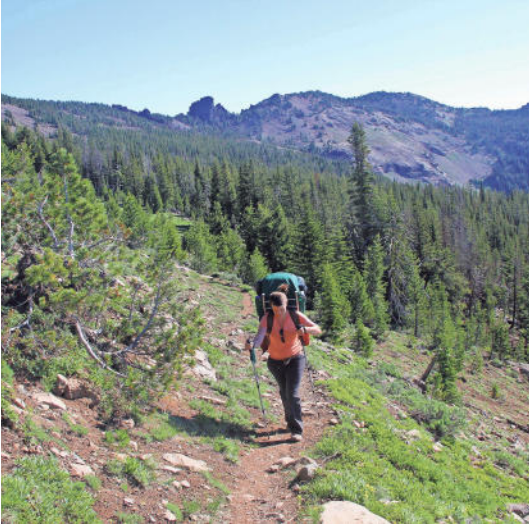
Strawberry Lake is the centerpiece of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness. PHOTOS BY ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

A 'diamond in the rough' for backpackers, anglers

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Editors note: Oregon's outdoors is largely closed to outdoor recreation following COVID-19 restrictions. Until that changes, the Statesman Journal will feature "greatest hits" from outdoors writer Zach Urness each week in a nod to armchair adventure and for future trip planning purposes.
This story was originally published July 18, 2013.

The Strawberry Mountain Wilderness is a place that, for many Oregonians, sits just beyond reach.
Many have heard of it, some dream of traveling there, yet surprisingly, few make the five-hour trip over the mountains and through the desert to John Day and Prairie City.
"The Strawberries are really a diamond in the rough, if you'll excuse the cliché," said Daniel Soupir, wilderness trails coordinator for Malheur National Forest. "It's still a pretty unknown place. Most people that come out here actually miss it."
That, as a man once said, is their misfortune.
Wrapped in craggy peaks and glacier-carved valleys, this 69,350-acre wilderness is home to blue lakes, pine forest and alpine meadows



Backpacking is a common activity through the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness.
speckled with — you guessed it — wild strawberries.
Mountain goats roam the high country, and nine different streams begin here, their headwaters tumbling down waterfalls and creeks, from the summit of 9,038-foot Strawberry Mountain to the sunbaked desert below.
In early July, my wife Robyn and I backpacked over high mountain passes and down into glacial valleys during a wild and beautiful 14.5-mile loop that lasted three days. It began, as all Eastern Oregon trips must, in the early-morning hours.

Day 1 - A long day (High Lake Trailhead to Slide Lake)
The temperature was expected to reach 102 degrees in John Day the day we arrived, but high on a crest of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness, our problem was snow.
After backpacking in from High Lake Trailhead, we climbed over an 8,100-foot ridgeline to find a steep, treacherous snowfield covering the trail and offering an exciting way to break our legs.
Great.
The day had begun at 6 a.m. in Salem — on the other side of the state — with coffee, cinnamon rolls and quiche from The Beanery, just enough to keep us filled up for the five-hour drive.
After lunch in John Day, we headed south toward the Strawberry Mountains. We decided to begin our loop at High Lake Trailhead — as opposed to Strawberry Campground— because it makes the journey shorter and easier.
From the trailhead, we passed beautiful, cliff-walled High Lake at mile 1.2 and continued onto a high ridgeline where we ran into the snow. (According to Soupir, the snow usually stops being a problem by mid-July.)
To get around it, we picked our way down a steep rockfall into the Slide Lake Basin, using my handheld GPS and a Forest Service map to navigate.
It wasn't easy with full packs, but we arrived at the lake just before the sky started to darken.

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Now is a good time to plan fishing trips



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

OK, so here's the deal: Being in the demographic hot spot for coronavirus, and being somewhat more vulnerable because of asthma, venturing far afield offers few options.
And along with pining to get out, there also is a desire to help out those who have provided memorable experiences in the past.
The quandary, combined with a surplus of enforced down time, tapped the 10-watt bulb in the cerebral cortex to wink on.
If you look online, most ocean charter-fishing outfits and guide services offer gift certificates for fishing, whale-watching and crabbing trips that can be redeemed after the viral cloud lifts.
Some even are offering discount offers, sort of a pandemic prize, and a pay-to-play by delay.
It's a win-win situation.
The charter or guide gets something



For right now, all some of us can do is plan, and invest, in fishing plans for the future. HENRY MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL
to help them over the curve-flattening during the current economic crisis. It's sort of fishing it forward.
And as with making reservations for a dream trip that is several months away, you get the delicious anticipation of fun to come.
Here is a list of contacts for charters in Depoe Bay and Newport:

Depoe Bay

Dockside Charters: (541) 765-2545
Online: <https://www.docksidedepoebay.com/>
Tradewinds Charters: (541) 765-2345
Online: <https://www.tradewindscharters.com/>

Newport

Captain's Reel Deep Sea (541) 265-7441
Online: <https://www.facebook.com/CaptainsReelDeepSeaFishing/>
Newport Marina Store and Charters: (541) 867-4470
Online: <http://nmscharters.com/>
Newport Tradewinds: (541) 265-2101
Online: <http://www.newporttradewinds.com/>
Osprey Fishing Adventures: (541) 410-0623
Online: <http://ospreyfishingadventuresoregon.com/home.html>
Yaquina Bay Charters: (541) 265-6800
Online: <http://www.yaquinabaycharters.com>

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