

OUTDOORS



Use hidden points to float North Santiam

Zach Urness
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Jared Linkhart wasn't sure what to expect when he returned to the North Santiam River with his family to raft the stream's iconic rapids last weekend. ● It's been nine months since the Beachie Creek Fire burned down the Santiam, and many of the communities along the river remain impacted while parks that access the stream remain closed. ● "There were parts of the float that were heartbreaking, but it definitely still felt like the Santiam," said Linkhart, who lives in Dundee and has been floating the river east of Salem for over 20 years. "The people who were out along the river were very friendly and waved just like they would have a year ago. That made us feel welcome to be back here." ● As rafters, anglers and floaters return to the North Santiam's so-called "whitewater section," they'll find a stream that's recovering nicely after the fires, with more green than expected, plenty of fish to be caught and the sight of many homes being rebuilt along the river's edges. But floating the river also presents a unique set of logistical issues this summer. ● The two most frequently used boat ramps — Packsaddle County Park and Fishermen's Bend Recreation Site — remain closed with no timetable for reopening. The two parks acted as gateways for the North Santiam's upper and lower whitewater sections that center on Mill City.

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