

## RECREATION REPORT

### CAMPSITES AT ANTHONY LAKE CAN BE RESERVED

Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, which operates the Anthony Lake Campground, is now offering reservations for campsites through the recreation.gov website. In addition to standard (no electric hookups) sites, campers can reserve one group site as well as two yurts.

The 14 standard sites, which are open for tents and RVs no longer than 22 feet, cost \$14 per night. The group site, which can accommodate up to 60 people, is \$50 per night. The 16-foot-diameter yurt, which sleeps up to 5, is \$40 per night and a 21-foot yurt, with space for up to 8, is \$50 per night.

The sites and yurts are available for reservations from July 1 through Sept. 30. Reservations can only be made at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). More information is available by calling 541-894-2332.

Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, which operates the ski area in the Elkhorn Mountains, manages the campground complexes at Anthony Lakes and at Phillips Reservoir and in the Sumpter Valley area southwest of Baker City.

## FISHING FORECAST

### HAINES POND

Has been stocked with 900 trophy-size rainbow trout

### HIGHWAY 203 POND

The pond has been stocked with 2,250 legal-size and 825 trophy-size rainbow trout.

### MORGAN LAKE

Open to fishing and has been stocked with 500 trophy-size rainbow trout.

### NORTH POWDER POND

The pond has been stocked with 2,000 legal-size and 750 trophy-size rainbow trout.

### PHILLIPS RESERVOIR

Current reservoir storage is at 41 percent of capacity and increasing. The reservoir is ice-free. Approximately 4,700 legal-size rainbow trout have been recently stocked. Anglers usually have good success catching holdover trophy-size trout in the upper reservoir in spring after ice-out.

### THIEF VALLEY RESERVOIR

Ice-free and full. It has been stocked with approximately 7,500 legal-size and 500 trophy-size rainbow trout.

## BICYCLING THE BURNT RIVER CANYON IN BAKER COUNTY

# CANYON COUNTRY

When the inclement spring weather seems to have you trapped indoors, look toward the zones known for their lack of rainfall and summer heat for a wonderful biking adventure. Some such regions, perfect for spring fun, are found in Umatilla and Baker counties.



**THE NEXT RIDE**  
MAVIS HARTZ

In the latter, Burnt River Canyon, with its rocky dry bluffs and burbling river, is perfect for such an escapade. This marvelous 43-mile mixed gravel and pavement ride out to the ghost town of Bridgeport and back begins at the old stage stop of Durkee.

Durkee, renamed to memorialize the ranching family that sold their land to the railroad, is about 25 miles southeast of Baker City to the west of Interstate 84 on Old Highway 30. I suggest parking next to the old iconic stone Community Hall built in 1912.

Roll northwest on your gravel bike along the Durkee Valley past frolicking calves and chirping birds on the paved old U.S. Highway 30 for 1.6 miles. This comparatively lush area once housed a main spur of the Oregon Trail and was a welcome stop for travelers after the nearly impassable Burnt River section that claimed pioneers, wagons and stock at will. The crisscross pattern that had pioneers avoiding rocky cliffs pushed them into fording the river multiple times and damaging wagons on the rough terrain. One wagon train was so unlucky that their tale of woe rivals that of the Donner Party with native attacks, kidnapped children, lost wanderers and cannibalism. Veer west on Burnt River Canyon Lane.

As you enter the Burnt River Canyon, the road turns to improved dirt and countryside more isolated as the rocky hillsides and bluffs become more pronounced. Keep a keen eye out for falling rock, distracted drivers thinking they are alone in the world and bighorn sheep as the road winds along the river. The igneous and sedimentary layers, reshaped in a metamorphic process of extreme heat and pressure, create beautiful rocks. Examples that can be found along the Burnt River Canyon are gneiss, limestone, marble and quartz. During the metamorphic and erosion progression, pockets of minerals form. One of the most sought-after minerals that gather during this process is gold.

Burnt River Lane flows up the Burnt River Canyon at a steady rate of incline infrequently reaching a 3% to 4% grade. Solitary gravel roads such as this are perfect for the new craze of gravel bikes like the Trek 920. These bikes look like beefy road bikes with ram handlebars, elongated chain stays for stability and tires that are at least 700 by 35 cm of width. The road surface continually evolves with grader maintenance, precipitation and traffic. Spring and late fall are the perfect times for this style of riding because the inclement weather and scheduled grading has smoothed out the washboard bumps created by fast traveling cars and the dust is held captive by moisture.

As you gently toil your way west to Bridgeport, notice the large number of small bright yellow signs marking various federal mining claims. (Prospecting is not allowed on these existing claims.) A variety of stories and finds make this area



The Burnt River flowing high through the Bridgeport Valley, near the western end of the Burnt River Canyon in southern Baker County.



Photo by Mavis Hartz

Whitfield Hartz pedals through the Burnt River Canyon in Baker County. The gravel road runs from near Durkee, along Interstate 84 about 25 miles southeast of Baker City, and Bridgeport.

very intriguing to miners. One of the most notorious tales is that of the Blue Bucket.

The story of the Blue Bucket relates that in 1845, prior to the gold rush, a wagon train of lost pioneers were making their way west. At some point, three small children on the train became dissatisfied with their duty of collecting water and started collecting pretty rocks instead. The winsome trio returned to camp with a bucket of pebbles that a fellow traveler suggested might contain copper due to the color. Time passed and the baubles were discarded or forgotten until 1848 when the country caught gold fever. By the time the pebbles were identified as

gold nuggets, the location of the rock collecting expedition had been long forgotten.

Since that time, the search for the gold in the canyon has been endless and narrowed down to 40,000 square miles of rugged terrain of which the Burnt River Canyon is included. Linger to enjoy the canyon with its joyful numbers of falcons, hawks, eagles, geese and ducks until about mile 20. Exit into Bridgeport Valley. Glide past Clarks Creek Road, which would take you to an older abandoned mining town to Bridgeport Lane. Bridgeport Lane is paved and travels both west and south. Continue to coast south toward Bridgeport.

There are a handful of ranch houses and an informative kiosk at the once booming mining, cattle and timber mecca. The end of John Dooley's toll road, Bridgeport, saw Chinese workers who dug miles of ditch to move the precious water to sluice out gold and mill timbers, stage coach runs, gypsies, Native Americans and more. The majority of the mining operations in the area had petered out by 1937, just scant years before the War Production Board passed order L-208. With order L-208, gold mining in the United States came to a screeching halt as mines were no longer able to purchase much needed supplies and machinery to

facilitate their search of the mineral unnecessary to the war effort. Miners, machinery and supplies were flung into the World War II campaign without recourse, many never returning or reopening their old diggings.

Turn around at the Bridgeport kiosk and enjoy the slight undulating return to the former Express Ranch, Durkee, and the Durkee Valley. If you pull off the road to enjoy a wonderful snack, make sure to watch where you walk. Burnt River Canyon with its arid rocky terrain hosts a fair number of rattlesnakes and prickly plants.

Those with an urge to learn more about mining and have a little fun should join the Lost Dutchmen Mining Association's Digger's Dirt Party June 25-30 at the Burnt River camp, or April 30-May 5 at the Huntington site. Camp in a beautiful location, meet new people, split any gold found and have a little fun.

Serious cyclists looking for an incredible day should link Old Highway 30 from Baker City with a travel down Burnt River Lane to Bridgeport Lane, then following Highway 245 up over Dooley Mountain and back to Baker City.

I, however, will enjoy looking at the birds and dreaming about trying my hand at finding some coarse placer gold.

## ODFW: Don't wait to apply for fall hunting tags

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is advising hunters to not wait until the last minute to apply for controlled hunts.

There is always a rush the last few days before the May 15 deadline. In 2018, for instance, 83,630 of 471,262 total applications were submitted on the last day. ODFW expects even higher call volumes and traffic this year on the last few days before the deadline, as custom-

ers get accustomed to the agency's new electronic licensing system.

You can skip the line and apply online on the new system at [MyODFW.com](http://MyODFW.com) (click Buy License button). Anyone who has applied for controlled hunts in the past and has preference points needs to use the "Verify/Look Up your Account" button to retrieve and verify their account first if they haven't already. (Hunters/anglers who have purchased

an annual license in the past three years, or have Pioneer or Disability status, also need to Verify/Look up their account as they already have a profile in the new system.)

"It's important to use Verify/Look Up Your Account, or you'll end up creating a duplicate account and won't see your preference points, a problem some customers have encountered," said Linda Lytle, ODFW license services manager.

Complete the steps to verify your online account, including providing a current email address, and then apply for a controlled hunt. Go to Purchase from the Catalog / Big Game Hunting / Controlled Hunts to choose your hunt series and/or Premium Hunt. Then Proceed to Checkout to complete hunt selection. New this year, there are no longer limitations on party sizes for controlled hunts.