



JAMES JOHNSTON

## Indigo Lake

Plan a last fall fling in the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area.

**T**he 157,000-acre Oregon Cascades Recreation Area includes portions of the Willamette, Umpqua and Deschutes National Forests southeast of Eugene. It's a roadless wilderness (wilderness with a small "w") stuck between the congressionally designated Thielsen and Diamond Peak Wildernesses (wilderness with a large "W"). Unlike big W wilderness, the congressional mandate for the OCRA is to provide an array of different types of recreation, not necessarily to maintain the primi-

Springs on the west side).

The hike to Indigo is easy, just a two-mile one-way trip. The first part of the hike makes some gentle switchbacks uphill before leveling out near a trail junction, where you'll stay straight past several small meadows, splashed with crimson and gold during the autumn. If you reach Indigo Lake and still want to do some more hiking, the trail extends all the way around the lakeshore, making for a five-mile round trip back to your vehicle.

**RIGHT NOW IS ONE OF THE BEST TIMES TO ENJOY THE HIGH CASCADES, AND INDIGO LAKE IS THE PERFECT DESTINATION FOR AN OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIP OR A DAY HIKE.**

tive feel of the backcountry.

The crown jewel of the OCRA is Indigo Lake, one of the most beautiful of the thousands of alpine tarns that dot the crest of the Cascade Range. There are still plenty of warm days left in 2004. The mosquitoes have vanished, the big summer crowds have departed, the trails are dry, and huckleberries and other shrubs have turned the mountains a hundred fiery hues. Right now is one of the best times to enjoy the high Cascades, and Indigo Lake is the perfect destination for an overnight camping trip or a day hike.

Directions: Take I-5 south from Eugene for approximately three miles. Take the Oakridge/Klamath Falls exit (Exit 188A). Stay to the left onto Hwy. 58. Take 58 for approximately 37 miles. Just past Dink's Market on the east side of Oakridge, take a right onto Kitson Springs Road. In .4 miles, take another right onto Forest Service Road 21 (sign for Diamond Drive). Stay on 21 for approximately 31 miles, and then take a left on the paved FS 2154 road. Follow the 2154 road for 9.2 miles to Timpanogas Lake. All of the intersections have signs for Timpanogas or Diamond Drive, except for a fork in the road after 6.9 miles. Stay right at this junction.

When you pull into the Timpanogas Lake Campground, stay to the right and hit the trailhead at the southeast end of the parking lot (there are trails to June Lake and Chuckle

If you've got lots of energy you'll want to appreciate the lake's brilliant azure color properly — from the top of Sawtooth Mountain, the 1,000-foot wall that rises directly out of the lake's east shore. Back track to a trail junction about 200 feet from the lakeshore. Turn right and trudge up some steep switchbacks with occasional views back downhill. In 1.7 miles you'll come to a junction. Taking the trail to the right for a mile and a half will take you to the very top of the 7,301-foot mountain (watch your footing, it's a sheer drop-off in places).

If you're super-energetic, you can continue straight at the intersection 1.7 miles from Indigo Lake and make for Cowhorn Mountain. After descending and then climbing some more, you can complete a 10-mile loop back to Timpanogas on the Windy Pass Trail.

All is not quiet in this alpine paradise. The 1984 Oregon Wilderness Act which created the OCRA and other nearby engine-free wildernesses allows off-road vehicle use on the trails to Indigo Lake and Sawtooth Mountain, and a number of otherwise peaceful fall days are ruined by the obnoxious growl of dirt bikes and four wheelers. If you're lucky enough to have some peace and quiet, do yourself and other hikers a favor and make a call to your elected officials and ask them to turn the OCRA into a real wilderness.

**ew**

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## Explore the Amazon...

### Amazon Creek that is!

Come celebrate the creek in our backyard at the 13th annual Amazon Appreciation Day, Saturday October 23rd!

**7:30 am:** Bird Walk, Hilyard Center, 2580 Hilyard in Amazon Park  
**9:00 am:** Meet at the following locations along Amazon Creek:

- Hilyard Center
- 18th and Chambers behind Albertsons
- Oak Patch Street at Amazon Creek

**Noon:** Gather at the Hilyard Center for lunch and door prizes.

Bird walk ☿ Plant native trees and shrubs ☿ Creek clean up  
Free lunch and door prizes ☿ Fun for the whole family!

Dress for outdoor work and Eugene's unpredictable weather.  
Eugene Stream Team will provide all tools, gloves, and instructions.

For more information, and to RSVP, please contact Eugene Stream Team at 682-4850 or lorna.j.baldwin@ci.eugene.or.us

Eugene Stream Team Weekly Eugene Parks and Open Space EUGENE