

Fishing, camping free in state parks throughout Oregon

This weekend, families throughout Oregon have the chance to experience some of the best recreation the state has to offer as favorite fishing holes, hiking trails and camp spots are offered fee-free from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD).

During the state's annual Free Fishing Weekend, June 4-5, social events are planned around the state to help families make the most of this opportunity, including free fishing for anglers of all ages.

During Free Fishing Weekend, fishing licenses, tags and endorsements are not required anywhere in Oregon.

In addition, the ODFW is making sure there are plenty of fish to catch, thanks to the release of more than 185,000 trout at 80 locations around the state by the ODFW.

Even before this week's stocking of popular lakes, other locations have been stocked in recent weeks.

That means most everyone who drops a line has a good chance of some pole-bending action.

"Free Fishing Weekend is a great opportunity for families to get out and enjoy a day or two of fishing," said Rick Hargrave, administrator of ODFW's Information and Education Division. "Lakes



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Today, fishing is free for all ages throughout Oregon, along with free camping and day-use areas in state parks.

and ponds are fully stocked, a number of rivers are open — and don't forget about the coast for crabbing and clamming."

As in years past, ODFW is teaming up with the Oregon State Parks Department to encourage people to explore Oregon's parks and outdoors by waiving fees and offering a plethora of recreational activities, including fishing events,

nature walks and specialized outdoor-related workshops.

Several state parks are hosting ODFW Free Fishing Weekend fishing events and waiving park admission and camping fees during "State Parks Day," today.

Along with Free Fishing Weekend events today, most locations will offer free fishing gear, bait and instruction pro-

vided at no charge to participants. Some events will have additional activities for kids and people with disabilities.

Near Florence, Cleawox Lake and Honeyman State Park are offering a special fishing event from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, contact Christine Clapp, 541-265-8306, ext. 253.

For those who prefer a little

more solitude, there are dozens of other lakes, ponds, streams and ocean waters around to explore.

Many are listed on ODFW's website at www.odfw.com under the tab "Free Fishing Weekend."

If fishing isn't your gig, state parks throughout Oregon are inviting the public to camp and play for free this Saturday, in celebration of State Parks Day.

Overnight camping is free tonight in traditional sites, including full hookup (sewer, electricity and water), electrical hookup (electricity and water), and tent sites.

For day trippers, parking is free today and tomorrow at the 26 Oregon parks that charge a day-use parking fee.

For campsite availability, call 800-452-5687 or visit www.oregonstateparks.org.

Keep in mind that while the campsite rental is free, an \$8 nonrefundable reservation fee still applies. Of the 52 state park campgrounds, 42 take reservations.

"State Parks Day is our way of thanking Oregonians for their commitment to our state parks," said Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Director Lisa Sumption. "We invite Oregonians to come out and explore a new park or visit an old favorite."

The Oregon State Legislature established Oregon

State Parks Day in 1997 to focus public attention on Oregon's state park system. The event is always the first Saturday in June.

Parks throughout the state will host activities including guided hikes during National Trails Day today, plus open houses, tours, special barbecues and guest appearances by J.R. Beaver, Oregon State Parks' mascot.

The popular Silver Falls State Park, east of Salem, will have free refreshments, a guided waterfall tour and its annual Foot Race Challenge, with a 5K, 6-mile and kids' race.

Stub Stewart State Park west of Portland will host a volunteer work party in the morning, followed by free lunch at Hilltop Day-use Area, a guided bike ride, scavenger hunt, skins and skulls display and more.

See a fur trappers' encampment at Champoeg State Heritage Area. Walk among the tents and work stations, ask questions of the interpreters and watch demonstrations of trapping, shooting, cooking and packing for the fur trade.

Visitors will also be able to fish, crab and clam without a license all weekend.

For a complete list of events, go to www.oregonstateparks.org and click on "Things to Do."

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State barbecue competition in Florence June 4-5

Three Rivers Casino Resort will host official Oregon State barbecue championship Fire It Up! featuring Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) official judges to find the state's best chicken, pork, ribs and brisket.

Fire It Up! kicks off on today, at Three Rivers Casino Resort, and continues through tomorrow.

Event attendees are welcome to sample the state's finest barbecue from noon to 5 p.m. The public will vote People's

Choice for chicken, pork, ribs, and brisket. The winners will walk away with bragging rights for the very best fare in the Northwest, a cash award and free casino play.

Everyone is a winner at Fire It Up! because you won't walk away hungry.

"We're very excited to partner up with KCBS to host the official Oregon BBQ championship," said Gary Gortz, director of food and beverage operations at Three Rivers Casino Resort. "The competi-

tion will be fierce this year."

KCBS is the world's largest organization for barbecue and grilling enthusiasts.

The official competition takes place on Sunday, June 5, between noon and 2 p.m. Official judging will begin with chicken entries at noon, followed by ribs at 12:30 p.m., pork butt at 1 p.m., and brisket at 1:30 p.m.

The competing teams include Tin Star BBQ, Smokin' Timbers NW, Booties BBQ and more.

The Grand Champion receives \$700 cash and the Reserve Grand Champion receives \$600 cash. There will be eight winners in each category with cash and free-play prizes.

"Everyone's a participant in this event, whether you're indulging in samples, judging or cheering on the contestants," said Erin Knowlton, events manager at Three Rivers Casino Resort.

For more information, visit www.ThreeRiversCasino.com.

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Fishing from 1B

use lighter gear and target the deeper holding areas.

Trout season is now open.

YAQUINA RIVER:

Steelhead

The river basin is now open to all fishing, including above the head of tide.

COOS COUNTY LAKES

and **PONDS:** *Trout, warmwater fish*

Legal size trout were stocked this month into **Powers Pond, Empire Lakes, Bradley Lake, Butterfield Lake, Saunders Lake, Sru Lake, and Tenmile Lakes.**

Anglers that catch a tagged trout in Empire Lakes can report the tag number to

ODFW by stopping by the Charleston Office, calling 541-888-5515, or report tags online.

A few of these tags are worth a \$50 gift card. Fishing in the area lakes for trout has been ok with anglers having the best success using small spinners, spoons, or garlic flavored Powerbait. The daily trout bag limit in these lakes is five trout per day with only one trout over 20 inches.

There are trout available for kids in the Millicoma Pond at the Millicoma Interpretive Center and fishing is excellent. Millicoma Pond is set aside for kids fishing only and is a great chance for them to hook into fish.

Call before traveling to Millicoma Pond to make sure the gates are open. The phone number is 541-267-2557.

Largemouth bass and bluegill fishing is picking up with the warmer days. This time of the year bass and bluegills will be found in shallow water typically near a weedline or structure. Plastic worms, shallow crankbaits, and spinner baits are good to use for bass.

Bluegills will bit on worms, small jigs, or flies.

COOS RIVER BASIN:

Dungeness crab, bay clams, rockfish

Trout season is now open in rivers and streams.

Anglers have been catching rockfish along the jetties and submerged rock piles. An occasional ling cod is also being caught in the bay. The marine fish daily bag limit for bottom fish (rockfish) is seven fish and a separate daily limit for lingcod (two). Anglers can only keep three blue rockfish and one canary rockfish as part of their daily limit and there will be no harvest of China, quillback or copper rockfish.

Retention of cabezon is prohibited through June 30.

Crabbing has been decent with the best crabbing near high tide. There has been a mixture of hard shell and soft shell crab in the catch. It is still recommended you discard the crab viscera (guts/butter) before cooking.

Recreational harvest of bay clams remains open along the entire Oregon coast.

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