

RECREATION
REPORT

STEELHEAD
LIMIT EXTENDED
THROUGH THE
REST OF 2018

The one-fish daily bag limit for steelhead on the Snake River and tributaries will be extended through the end of the year to reduce impacts on wild fish and ensure enough fish are available for broodstock. This restriction applies to the following streams and sections:

- Snake River – From the state line with Washington to Hells Canyon Dam
- Imnaha River – From the mouth to Big Sheep Creek
- Big Sheep Creek – From the mouth to Little Sheep Creek
- Grande Ronde River – From the state line with Washington to Meadow Creek
- Catherine Creek – From the mouth to the Highway 203 bridge above Catherine Creek State Park
- Wallowa River – From the mouth to Trout Creek
- Wenaha River – From the mouth to Crooked Creek

Underperforming runs across the Columbia River Basin have prompted widespread regulations restricting steelhead harvest. Oregon, Washington and Idaho reduced bag limits in September in the Snake River and tributaries to one hatchery steelhead. For Oregon, the regulations were set to expire at the end of October but steelhead numbers have not proven strong enough to increase bag limits. Therefore, the reduced bag limit will continue through the end of the year.

“Steelhead and salmon runs have been an overall disappointment this year, but we feel we can still offer some opportunity while meeting broodstock requirements and reducing impacts on wild fish,” said Kyle Bratcher, acting district fish biologist in Enterprise. “Low densities of fish in the river will generally reduce interactions with wild fish but this regulation takes it a step further by reducing fishing effort as fish are caught.”

With Snake River steelhead crossing Lower Granite Dam at less than 35 percent of the 10-year average, biologists will be sure to monitor the steelhead numbers and harvest to implement management actions as needed.

See the fishing report for more: <https://myodfw.com/recreation-report/fishing-report/north-east-zone>

DAY TWO OF A SEVEN-DAY BICYCLING AND CAMPING ADVENTURE



Photo by Mavis Hartz

A golden field and barn is one of the scenic attractions on a bicycle tour of the Blue Mountains.

Blue Mountain bicycling

The Herculean Loop is a seven-day, 290-mile road cycling adventure through a wide range of ecosystems and summits in the Blue Mountains. Each segment concludes at a seasonal campground suitable for tent camping and covers a wide range of isolated pavement. There are a number of streams and water sources along the way but to truly tour in comfort, I strongly encourage carrying a water filter.

This article covers day two, which starts in the heart of the Blue Mountains at Langdon Lake and plunges to the Columbia Plateau to finish at the Wildhorse RV Park in Mission, just outside Pendleton.

Begin this 53-mile journey in the forested glen of Woodward Campground abutting Langdon Lake. Exit the Forest Service park turning west toward Weston on the Elgin/Weston Highway 204. Rouse your legs as the highway undulates across the top of the Blue Mountains taking in the amazing vistas of the Columbia Plateau, Umatilla National Forest, Coyote Ridge and Grouse Mountain before gliding almost 19 miles to Weston.

While losing an exhilarating average of 3.3 percent elevation, ponder the old grain and pea fields, now planted in native grasses interspersed with pines. Many of the fields surrounding Highways 204 and 11 are part of the Conservation Reserve Program. This federal program has influenced a number of factors including the price of various crops, dust and erosion abatement, wetland retention and wildlife corridors on private land. Historically, farmers elected to have less productive acreages placed into CRP allowing them to focus their efforts on more productive fields. Recently, many of the original CRP fields, designated around 1985, have been reaching the terminus of their 10- to 30-year contracts, forcing many to re-evaluate their land use strategies.

Just prior to mile 17 veer west onto Kirk Road, also labeled County Road 648. Kirk Road sneaks into the



THE NEXT
RIDE

MAVIS HARTZ

pioneer town of Weston and onto East Main Street in winding panoramic style. Weston, the second oldest European settlement in Umatilla County, has a rich history of immigrants, migrants, industry, fire and robberies.

Some of the more residual legacies revolve around peas, and bricks in the iconic brick and mortar buildings and an old cannery. Turn south onto South Water Street at the classic fountain of a boy wrestling a fish, constructed in 1902. Elliot Memorial Park, on the east side of South Water Street, is a wonderful place to take a break with potable water, restrooms, dense grass and a little bit of shade. If you are looking for a snack, I suggest poking around the old town and reveling in their relaxed style. Leave town staying south on County Road 675, McLean Road, as it treks to the first roller of the day.

Though this leg of the Herculean Loop does not contain a notable summit, the numerous rolling hills of the southern tip of the Palouse Prairie will make cyclists work for their mileage and equate to 2,130 feet of elevation gain for the day. Climb out of town and past numerous picturesque barns before swooping down to Wildhorse Creek and Wildhorse Road on the border of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The Umatilla Reservation houses the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla People. They were historically reliant on trade and migration for survival. The main first foods they procured included salmon, elk, huckleberries and biscuitroot. Their hunting and gathering lifestyle took on an added level of sophistication with the introduction of the horse. They still demonstrate their prowess yearly at the Happy Canyon, Indian Pageant and Wild West Show and the Pendleton Round-up. Continue on Wildhorse Road until it intersects Highway 11.

At the busy Highway 11, those wishing a little pick-



Photo by Mavis Hartz

Thorn Hollow descent to the Umatilla River.

me-up and another beautiful park can visit Athena, home of the Caledonia Games. Cyclists longing for more rolling Palouse and to continue on the route, turn west onto the highway trundling less than a mile before merging south onto Pambrun Road.

Pambrun Road weaves through endless fields, past huge haystacks and returns to the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Around mile 33 turn southeast onto Spring Hollow Road. Spring Hollow Road seems to never end as the farms get more spaced out, before skimming down the Thorn Hollow drainage in a smile-evoking, classically smooth descent that passes Thorn Hollow Creek and crosses the Umatilla River. In a short span, Spring Hollow Road becomes Thorn Hollow then Cayuse Road. Stay on the pavement and enjoy the Umatilla River as the road travels next to the sparkling water toward Pendleton.

As Cayuse Road, also marked the 900 Road, departs from the Umatilla River the rolling hills of wheat, legumes and bunchgrass are beautiful and endless.

See **Bike Tour**/ Page 2B



Photo by Mavis Hartz

This fountain, featuring a boy holding a fish, was constructed in 1902 in Weston, the second-oldest European settlement in Umatilla County.