



Mike Whittle looks out over Lava Lake while bank fishing; his fishing pole is wedged in the lava rock shoreline.

Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin

## Fishing

Continued from B1

### On the lava banks

Lava Lake is aptly named. The lake was formed when lava flows created a dam along the east shoreline and subsurface springs at the northeast corner fed it. There are no permanent streams entering or exiting the lake but in good years, water can come in from Wire Meadow and flow out to Little Lava Lake from a channel on the southeastern corner of the bigger sibling.

The lake's age is apparent given the amount of vegetation and deep layer of muck on the bottom, according to the Deschutes National Forest website.

With one U.S. Forest Service campground (Lava Lake Campground) and one RV park that includes full hookups run by the Lava Lake Resort, the lake is full of activity during the summer of happy anglers and families taking weekend trips to the lake.

Starting at the boat ramp near the Lava Lake Campground, a trail follows the eastern edge of the lake for about 2 miles where bank anglers can easily cast out from the shore. The trail itself is part of the Metolius-Windigo Trail, which runs 143 miles from Windigo Pass near Crescent Lake to Bear Valley Creek near the Metolius River.

Along that eastern edge, the shoreline is mostly lava rock piled and loosely strewn, making walking down to the shore tricky but not too difficult. The level of the lake is pretty low and so the rocky field is a bit bigger to traverse than average: Make sure you have sturdier shoes and take your time if you have balance issues.

The water is slightly off-color and more greenish than the typical blue, which may have been one of the reasons why we were completely skunked. What's more, it

seemed like all the folks fishing from boats were having the same luck, and by 1 p.m., the boat parking was empty. It's not like the fish weren't out either, as one seemed to like to taunt us by jumping out the water near us to catch the mosquitos and other winged insects hovering above the water.

When the fish are biting, however, the fishing can be very good here. Lava Lake is stocked regularly and, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife stocking schedule, was stocked this week with 1,250 legal-sized rainbow trout.

We tried our luck with the good old earthworm and PowerBait in a small inlet, but other tested methods that produce fish include spinners, flashers and even cheese. One point on the lake's shore, my dad made clear, is even referred to as Velveeta Point by old-timers and listed on some maps.

After three hours of sitting on the rocks, dodging half-dollar-sized spiders and losing a few lines to the submerged rocks below, another father and his young daughter walked to the point near us.

"Caught anything?" he asked.

"Rocks," I jokingly called back as they made their way to their perch a few hundred yards from us.

His daughter, no more than 5 years old, happily chattered away as her father cast his line out. I couldn't help but smile, wondering if their own tradition of swapping fish stories and casting lines along the shores of these Cascade Lakes would start here.

Soon though, with stomachs growling and skin burnt by the sun, my own father and I called it a day and headed the short half-mile walk back to our car and headed home fishless, but still smiling.

### Go fish

If you're looking to take your own dear old dad out for a day of fishing, here are some more lakes to try. May you have better luck than we did:

**Diamond Lake:** Rainbow trout, brook trout. Brown trout and tiger trout are catch and release only. Limit is five rainbows per day with one over 20 inches. If you catch a trout over 20 inches, go to the marina to be entered into a raffle.

**South Twin Lake:** Rainbow trout.

**Odell Lake:** Kokanee, lake trout and rainbow trout. Daily

limit is 25 kokanee per day in addition to daily trout limit. One lake trout per day, 24-inch minimum. Catch and release bull trout.

**Paulina Lake:** Kokanee, brown trout and rainbow trout.

**Fall River:** Rainbow trout and brown trout. Fly-fishing only with barbless hooks only.

**Metolius River:** Rainbow trout and bull trout. Catch and release only. Fly-fishing only upstream from Bridge 99.

**Crane Prairie:** Rainbow trout, brook trout, largemouth bass and kokanee. Wild rainbow trout must be released.

**Hosmer Lake:** Brook trout, rainbow trout and cutthroat trout. Fly-fishing only with barbless hooks only, with catch and release for all species.

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## TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE

### Top picks near Sisters

**Black Butte** — The snow has all melted from the cinder cone north of Sisters, and the 3.9-mile trail up to the top is in good shape. Hikers who decide to take the climb should note that it has a steady elevation gain of 1,538 feet with an average grade of about 17%, so go prepared. The views along the way and from the top are worth the extra effort though, with stunning views of the Cascades as you climb.

**Head of Jack Creek** — The 3.7-mile easy loop is a nice refrain from the busier trails in the area, with the cool, clear Jack Creek babbling along part of the way. Part trail and part U.S. Forest Service roads, it's great for a quick and easy trail run through the forest and to the headwaters. You can also choose to just do an out-and-back hike to the headwaters and back and not loop through the forest. Start from the Jack Creek Campground and hike the 1.2-mile trail to the spring and back for a leisurely stroll.

**Tamolitch Blue Pool** — OK, chances are you've either been on this one or have avoided it completely due to crowds. But if you are an early riser, have the chance to hike midweek or just have perfect timing, the 3.7-mile out and back trail along state Highway 126 is one of the most stunning in the state. Following along the McKenzie River and through old-growth forest the entire way, the trail leads to the brilliantly blue namesake where the river emerges from behind lava rock before continuing on its way. Hikers do swim in the pool, but the water is icy, and the trail to get down to the water is pretty rocky and can lead to a painful sprain if you misstep (this reporter knows from experience).

— Makenzie Whittle, The Bulletin



Bulletin file photo  
A hiker makes their way up the trail at Black Butte.



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