

TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE

Lakes and rivers to cool off in this weekend

Deschutes River — No, you don't have to limit yourself to the crowded section of the river at the Old Mill District. As fun as that area is it can look like a freeway on Thanksgiving for how crammed with floaties the water can be. So find another section. The upper section of the river near Sunriver meanders nicely for kayaking and swimming, though both should be done with caution as the water can be very cold and deep. Just make sure to exit at the take-out before Benham Falls.

Little Cultus Lake — The little brother to the brilliant blue lake popular for boating, Little Cultus is great for kayaking or just splashing around. The 175 acre lake maxes out at 60 feet deep in the middle with gently sloping shorelines great for wading. Also a nice fishing spot for rainbow trout, it's much quieter than its sibling but much more primitive in terms of services.

Steelhead Falls — Popular for cliff jumpers, the 20 foot waterfall near Crooked River Ranch offers some cool waters to swim in amongst the High Desert that surrounds it. The short half-mile trail down descends rapidly into the canyon with picturesque geologic formations. The trail is dry and dusty and can have rattlesnakes hiding under rocks, so watch your step and bring extra water. The river will feel that much sweeter after the hike down.

— Makenzie Whittle, *The Bulletin*

Travis Fuller does a flip off a rocky outcropping near Steelhead Falls in 2017.
Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file



Mark Morical/The Bulletin

Hiking trails line both banks of the Metolius River. Many of the trails are closed to bikes, but there are other biking options in the area.

Metolius

Continued from B1

In many places, trails line both banks of the river, cutting through meadows, pines, firs, bushes and colorful wildflowers.

Hikers can walk trails all the way from the head of the Metolius on the river's south end to Candle Creek Campground to the north. Trail signs are posted at most campgrounds, and an official trailhead is at Canyon Creek Campground.

The trails cut through about 10 campgrounds along the river, making the Metolius an ideal camping/hiking/fishing destination.

Mason and I hiked downstream from Pine Rest for a few miles, past the Gorge campground, where the river narrows into a canyon and flows mightily through the pristine forest. There, the Metolius alternates between surging white rapids and deep, blue pools.

The Metolius can easily be considered a hiking destination as well as a fly-fishing destination.

Biking

Because many of the trails that line the Metolius are open only to pedestrians, cyclists need to get a little creative to find their routes.

But the area is a gravel rider's paradise, with countless gravel and dirt roads that branch out west from the river toward the Cascade Range.

For those seeking more of a mountain biking adventure, there is the 11-mile Lower Butte Loop and the 13-mile Upper Butte Loop around Black Butte, as well as the 12-mile Green Ridge trail, which runs along the ridgeline just east of the Metolius.

A tamer trail, and one that

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Mason and I decided on, is the Camp Sherman trail. This is an easy, flat trail that runs for a few miles through the tiny, quaint town of Camp Sherman and connects to paved Forest Road 14.

From Pine Rest campground, we road paved roads along the river into Camp Sherman, then connected to the trail. We turned around when we reached Road 14,

making for a 10-mile, out-and-back ride. We rode early in the morning to avoid the heat.

As temperatures are expected to reach the high 90s this weekend, the cold, clear water of the Metolius and the shady forest that surrounds it provide the perfect respite from the scorching conditions.

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Trail closures west of Bend

As of June 16 the following trails are closed from Mondays to 3 p.m. Fridays (except for federal holidays) due to timber harvesting and forest restoration work:

- Lower Whoops
- Pine Drops
- EXT
- Storm King from the junction with Forest Road 4615 and the junction with Phil's Trail
- Phil's Trail between the junction with EXT and it's western terminus at the junction with Pine Drops

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