



DAVID BLOOD PHOTO

# OUTDOORS Fishing

## IN GRANT COUNTY

Grant County contains miles of rivers, creeks and countless other bodies of water that offer avid anglers a multitude of casting options. You can try your luck with steelhead, trout, kokanee, bass and other species.

Special fishing regulations apply in some waterways, as the John Day Basin is home to protected and recovering fish species. State wildlife officials continue to increase the amount of fish stocked in Grant County ponds and lakes.

For regulations, check the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Northeast Zone for the waters in the John Day Drainage; in the southern part of the county the upper Malheur River system falls in the ODFW's Southeast zone. For further information, check the Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations booklet, available where sporting licenses are sold and online at [www.dfw.state.or.us](http://www.dfw.state.or.us).

## STREAM FISHING

Fishing for adipose fin-clipped steelhead is permitted during various seasons on various segments of the John Day River.

## LAKES AND PONDS

In 2014, ODFW crews stocked ponds and lakes with nearly 20,000 legal-sized rainbow trout, 12,500 fingerlings, and 2,700 trophy rainbows. In 2015 anglers had more than 3,000 trophy fish, plus 10,700 sub-legal fish and 21,600 legal keepers, introduced to the waterways.

For information on fishing the Forrest Conservation Area: Call 541-820-4521.



## Float trips provide a relaxing experience

If you're planning a trip to Grant County, you might want to consider a float trip on the John Day River.

It offers a real family excursion that will reacquaint you with the majestic beauty of nature, with a new panorama unfolding around each bend in the river.

There are sheer cliffs, rippling waters, smooth runs, some rapids, a variety of wildlife, historical and archeological sites and most important — an inner peace and serenity.

The John Day River was named for a fur trapper and hunter who arrived in the Oregon country in 1812. Lewis and Clark had named it The LePages in 1805 after one of their French boatsman.

For most of its length, the John Day River is simply water moving by gravity through Class 1 and Class 2 rapids and rifles.

Rapids should be scouted before "running." At high water, eddies can be turbulent, and at low water, rocks can present problems.

The river is ideally suited for the novice, but your party should include someone with experience in river running.

The high, semi-arid desert country can produce cold nights, or even cloudy, cold, windy days that can be contrasted with sunburn weather or wind-burn conditions.

River travelers should be prepared with light and heavy jackets — and plenty of suntan lotion.

Carry a shovel, life jackets, spare oars and one gallon of water per person per day.

Also include a wide-brimmed hat that can be tied down, sunglasses, chapstick and tennis shoes or old foot gear.

Pack camping equipment and personal gear in containers with some kind of handle. It makes them easier to carry to the campsite and then back to the craft.

A primary factor on the river is wind. In addition to the water depth and speed of the flow, if the wind blows, it's usually upstream and will come up in the afternoon, after 1:30-2 p.m.

Try to get on the river early and make your campsite location decision later in the day, depending on the weather.

There are plenty of primitive campsites along the bank for the length of the river trip.

The best time to run the John Day River is from March through June, depending on the weather and water level.

The recommended water level is a flow of between 2,000 and 6,000 cubic feet per second. Flow measurements may be checked in advance by calling the Grant County Watermaster at (541) 575-0119.

Rapids and campsite conditions can change due to changes in the water level. Normally, the trip will be made at between two to four miles per hour depending on the type of craft used. The John Day River, for the most part, is a gently flowing waterway.

The river has several access points, including a convenient river access park at Monument, at about the confluence of the North Fork of the John Day and its main stem.

For further information, contact either the Bureau of Land Management's Prineville office at (541) 447-4115 or the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division at (503) 378-6500. Information is also available through the Grant County Chamber of Commerce office at (541) 575-0547.