



LOFTY PEAKS, LUSH LANDSCAPES GREET MOUNTAIN TRAVELERS— Grass Lake, largest of the network of lakes in the Seven Lakes Basin, offers travelers of the Skyline Trail a panoramic view of several Cascade summits, particularly Devil's Peak (el: 7,582) in the background. The basin is accessible by a mountain trail which starts in the vicinity of Seven Mile Marsh (closest community is Fort Klamath, about 10 miles east) and winds seven miles along a moderate slope to Grass Lake, largest in the seven-lake system.

Seven Lakes Basin Still Wilderness Land



DOWNED LOG A CONVENIENT BRIDGE — The annual runoff accompanied by infrequent rains turn parts of the basin into a quagmire during late June and early July, but some areas, such as along the eastern shoreline of Middle Lake, continue in their muddy state during most of the summer. Numerous springs following a meandering course to the lake cause the swampy nature of the terrain. A frazzled youngster keeps his feet dry by crossing a swampy area along a fallen log.

Mile-High Area Offers Stream, Lake Fishing

Photos and Story
By DICK BRIGGS

"... let us probe the secret places, let us seek what luck betide us; let us journey to a lonely land I know. There's a whisper on the night-wind, there's a star gleam to guide us and the Wild is calling, calling... let us go." "The Call of the Wild" by Robert Service

It was no secret place that we strode to glimpse the beauty of the high country and to test the mettle of Eastern brook trout; there are few such places. But if there is a land which still attracts the outdoorsman seeking the hintermost part of the wilderness, then surely the Seven Lakes Basin, source of the famed Middle Fork of the Rogue River that flows some 150 miles west to the sea, is such a haven. Accompanying me into the mile-high plateau early this summer was my 10-year-old son, Dale, who carried a 20-pound pack effortlessly along the gentle slopes leading into the high lakes.

The trail into the basin begins about six miles west of the Sevenmile Guard Station, near Fort Klamath. It leads through a grove of tall timber at an elevation of 5,400 feet and ascends about 700 feet before skirting the eastern shore of Grass Lake some seven miles farther on. Although uphill most of the way, the ascent is so gradual that one barely realizes he is climbing.

Outdoorsmen seeking to explore the basin this year should do so within the next few weeks, while the days remain balmy and the evenings are not too nippy. As special equipment, rain gear and shoe pacs are suggested, and for those expecting to tempt trout from the streams flowing into the Middle Fork of the Rogue hip boots are a necessity.

For those whose forte is stream or dry fly fishing, the outlet from Grass Lake provides an excellent source of trout, providing the angler is willing to vary his bait from worms to dry flies—but that comes later in the story.

Anglers intending to test their skills at any of the seven lakes, including Grass, North, Middle, Cliff, South, Alta or Ivern should bring a rubber boat with them or be prepared to construct a raft. Those fishing from far out

in the lake have considerably more success than others angling closer to shore.

To arrive at the start of the trail drive north from Klamath Falls to the Fort Klamath Hotel, Fort Klamath. Then turn left and proceed about five miles to the Sevenmile Guard Station. Continue about one-eighth miles past the guard station and turn right at the junction. This road leads to the start of the trail, which takes off where Sevenmile Creek intersects the end of the road.

The trail begins to climb almost immediately but a short distance from the road it descends into what earlier this summer had been a sump. U.S. Forest Service crews have since improved that part of the trail enabling sojourners to proceed along its course with dry feet.

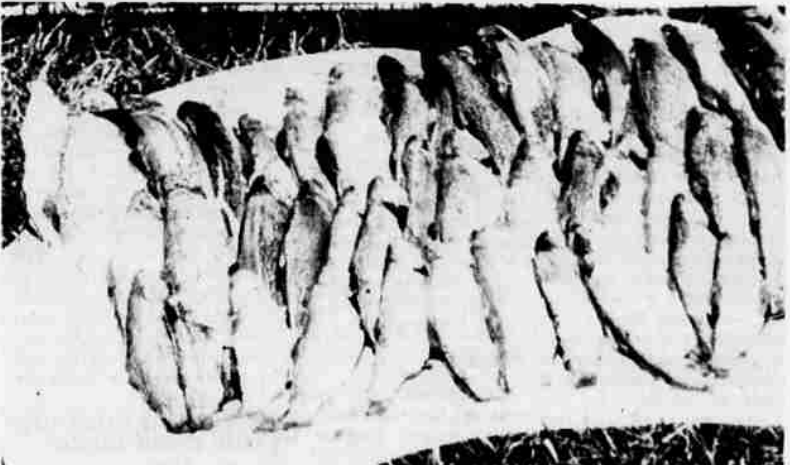
For the first several miles the trail meanders along gently rolling slopes before dropping into

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MYSTIC VEIL DRAPES LAKE IN GRAY — A thick mist ascends slowly as morning breaks sullenly in this view of Middle Lake, one of the largest mountain lakes in the

Rogue River National Forest. Well maintained trails and nearly level terrain are inducements to outdoorsmen preferring to travel on foot.



ROGUE RIVER CATCH — This catch of rainbow and brook trout attests to the superlative angling and fly fishing available to anglers willing to follow the tributary of the Rogue River which begins its westward journey at Grass Lake. The best angling is in prospect beginning about one-quarter mile downstream from the lake, at the base of a waterfall and gascades.

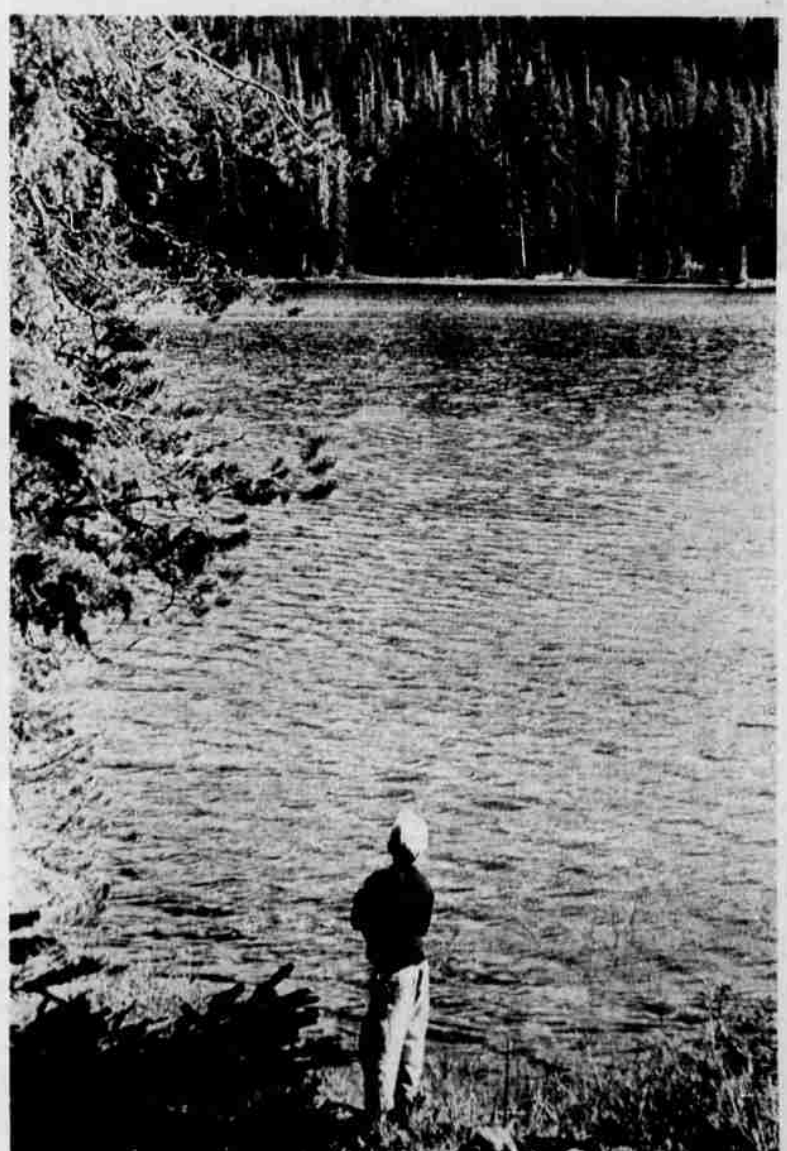


ERIE FOG ENCLOSES MIDDLE LAKE — An unusual early morning fog obscures the steep slopes and cliffs that rise from near the shoreline of Middle Lake, one of the more

productive fishing waters in the Seven Lakes Basin. Its outlet drains into Grass Lake, one mile to the northeast.



EASY TRAIL FOR BURDENED CAMPER — A wide clearing through an entanglement of brush and timber makes hiking easier for a burdened camper on his seven-mile trek into the Seven Lakes Basin. Later this summer, trail maintenance crews of the Winema National Forest reduced the grade on certain parts of the trail, making it still easier for campers to negotiate the trip starting from near the Seven Mile Guard Station.



PRIMEVAL SETTING — A youthful camper looks out upon Cliff Lake, one of the more principal lakes in the Seven Lakes Basin, from the shoreline north of Devils Peak (el: 7,600). Other prominent lakes include Alta, Grass and Middle.