

Picturesque Skyline Trail Furnishes Recreation Area In Primitive Setting

PHOTOS AND STORY
By DICK BRIGGS

One mile high along the southern fringe of the Cascades extends what is most certainly one of the most picturesque and more accessible recreational areas along Oregon's famed Skyline Trail.

Less than an hour's driving distance from Klamath Falls or Medford, the region first impresses the visitor with its dense stands of conifers and the herds of curious black tail deer and occasional wary elk which move through the thick forests as stealthily as shadows.

Each summer thousands of

tourists converge into this wilderness containing some 30 principal lakes and more than 100 lesser lakes and ponds.

Extending some 35 miles north from Lake of the Woods, the region has been virtually unchanged since the coming of the white man, except for the establishment of a portion of the Skyline Trail which meanders some 35 miles along gently rolling terrain and beneath the sentinels of Pelican Butte (el: 8,026) to the southeast, Luther Mountain (el: 7,153) to the west, and Devils Peak (el: 7,382) to the north.

One of those who knows the area best is Clyde Wilhelm, entrepre-

neur of the Cascade Pack Trip enterprises, who provides horses and pack animals and serves as guide to those who would venture into the region for weekends or longer periods during the summer.

For those whose excursions are limited to one day or less, shorter trips are available through the Mountain Lakes Wild Area or in the vicinity of Lake of the Woods or Fourmile Lake.

As a parting gesture to the 1963 tourist season, Wilhelm departed on a final pack trip through the Cascade Lakes country during the middle of September to take a final look at his favorite country before it became locked up by the snows of winter.

Joining Wilhelm were Bobbe Taylor, a Klamath Union High School graduate and second year student of dental technology at Portland, and myself. Miss Taylor served as trail hand and camp cook, as she has done for two summers, and I went along as guest of the Cascade Pack Trails.

The itinerary called for our leaving Fourmile Lake on horseback and proceeding north along the Skyline Trail, past the Dwarf Lakes and Sky Lakes areas up over Devils Peak, and into the Seven Lakes Basin. Our course was then to turn east and descend along the Seven Lakes Trail to its starting point, where we were to meet Mrs. Wilhelm with a truck and pair of horse trailers and then return to Lake of the Woods.

But halfway along our route, fickle weather disrupted those plans with an unseasonable storm that lashed the Cascade ridge

with gale winds and driving rains. At the outset of the journey, clear skies and summery temperatures were no portent of the deluge and whistling winds that were soon to follow.

Wilhelm slipped smoothly upon his mount, Cindy, and I clambered aboard Calle. Next in the procession came Chub, the pack horse, with Bobbe following on a steed named Phoney. We skirted the east shore of Fourmile Lake for less than a mile and then ascended a rise before dropping into a basin that formed the beds of Woodpecker and Badger lakes.

Near the latter lake, Wilhelm leaned forward in his saddle to study the muddy outline of an oval depression at the edge of the trail. After a quick appraisal he announced that it was made by an elk, probably bound for the isolation of the Rogue River country to spend the fall.

The trail weaved through stands of giant evergreens and then crossed the upper end of a swampy meadow that rang with the throaty croaks of colonies of protesting toads.

A short ride beyond the meadow, Long Lake (el: 5,880) sparkled through a grove of trees, its placid surface unbroken by the schools of trout lurking beneath it. Multitudes of greenish leeches, some three inches in length, propelled themselves in the waters near the lake's weedy shores, providing substance for the lake's abundant fish life.

We continued north along the lake's west shore toward Island Lake (el: 5,906) and soon after emerged upon a campground sit-

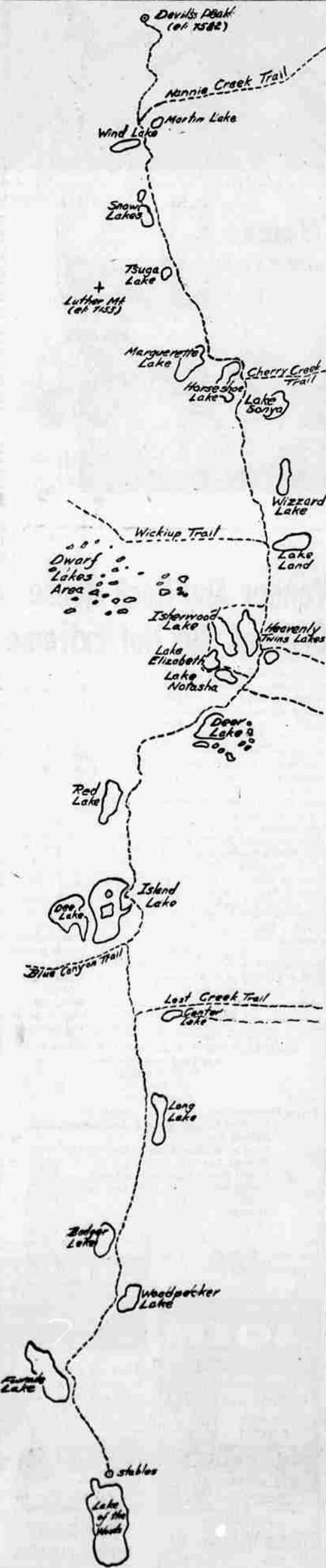


TRAPPER'S CABIN OFFERS SHELTER TO WAYFARERS — Partially obscured in a grove of evergreens, a deserted trapper's cabin near Horseshoe Lake offers shelter to equestrians and wayfarers traveling along the Skyline Trail through the wonderland of the High Cascade Lakes Area. More than 30 lakes, located along the wilderness trail

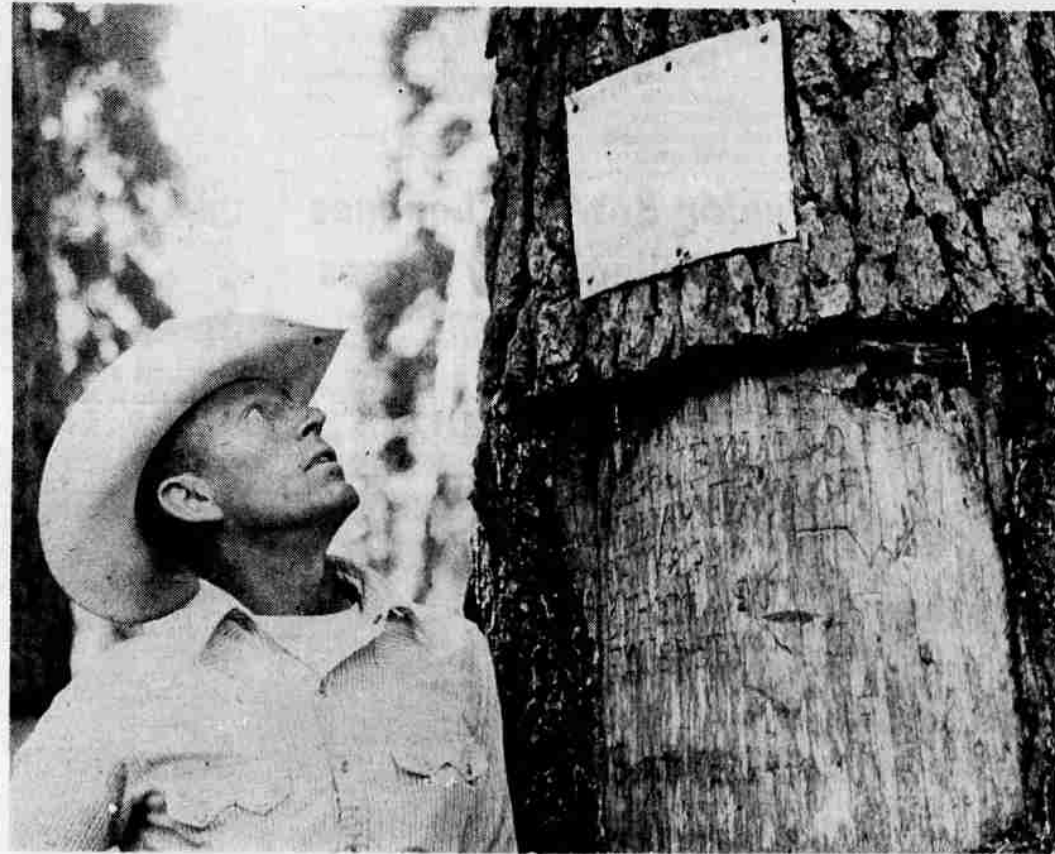
stretching some 35 miles from Fourmile Lake to the start of the Seven Lakes Basin trail, provides superlative angling to fly and spin fishermen, as well as spectacular subjects for photographers. Thousands of backpackers and horsemen vacation in the scenic high country annually.

Features

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1963

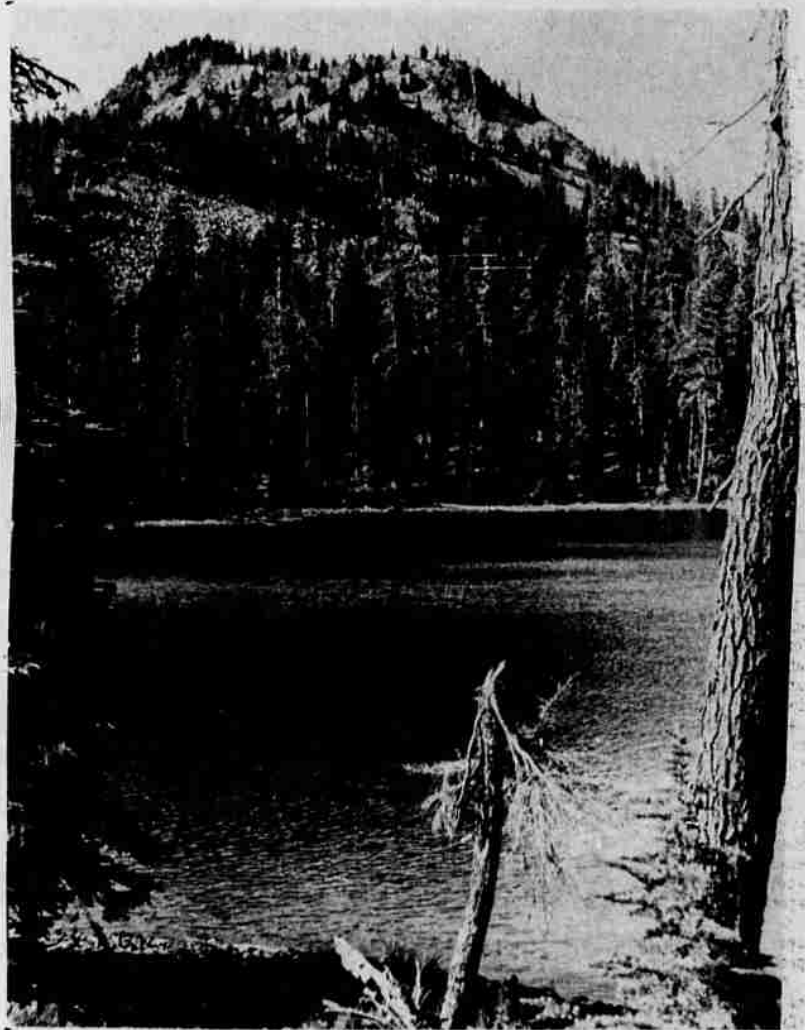


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CONGRESSMEN PASSED HERE IN 1888 — Clyde Wilhelm, professional trail guide, observes a weathered blaze on a tree near Island Lake which records that a congressional committee passed that point on Sept. 13, 1888. Among the names of the five committeemen cited on the

blaze is that of F. W. Isherwood, whose memory has been perpetuated by a lake named in his honor. The historic tree grows in the campground at the south end of the lake.



MT. LUTHER SHOWS A GENTLE FACE — A fresh breeze sends a ripple across Horseshoe Lake, marring the reflection of blunt topped Mt. Luther (el: 7,153), peaceful appearing giant of the southern Cascades.



CAMPFIRE CONCLUDES EVENTFUL RIDE — Camp cook Bobbe Taylor, a dental technician student at Portland, reflects the glow of a late evening campfire near Wind Lake. Bobbe, a Klamath Union High School graduate, has tended horses and served as trail cook for the Cascade pack trains during the past two summers.

Feature



TREES FLOURISH IN ISLAND LAKE — Lofty evergreens thrive on tiny spits of earth dotting Island Lake, a popular camping site and productive waters for trout fish-

men. Swirls in the left foreground betray the presence of rising Eastern Brook Trout.