

# Willamette Valley Paddling Destinations



## Alton Baker Canoe Canal ★★☆☆

Right next to the University of Oregon's Autzen Stadium sits Alton Baker Park. A key feature of the park is the Alton Baker Canoe Canal. While not a very long canal—only two miles long—the canal's location to downtown Eugene, lack of current, and no motorized boats makes the canal popular with paddlers. It's the ideal spot for those new to paddling to hone their skills or for those with young children to have a safe paddle.

And after you're done paddling, you can sit on the grass and enjoy a picnic and other park activities. The canal is also stocked with trout, so you can fish from your canoe or kayak.

[View a map of Alton Baker Park and Canoe Canal.](#)

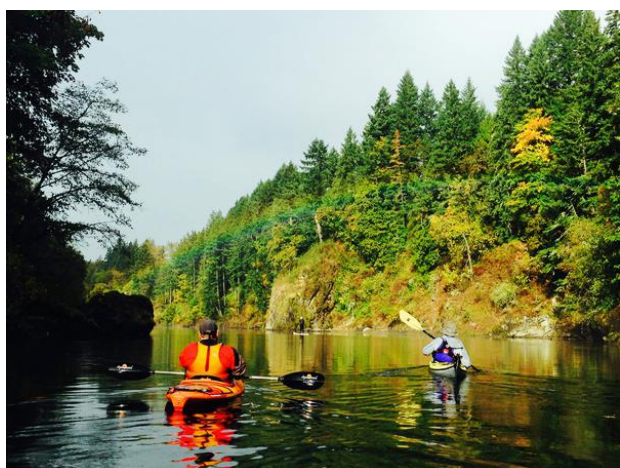


Photo by Connie

## Estacada Lake (River Mill Reservoir) ★★☆☆

Located within the city of Estacada at the foothills to the Cascade Range, sits Estacada Lake. The lake was formed by the damming of the Clackamas River. At just a little over 1.5-miles long and only 45 minutes from Portland, Estacada Lake is a favorite destination for paddlers who want to experience a more natural setting without having to drive for hours.

[Milo Mclver State Park](#) is a popular overnight camping destination situated on the edge of the lake. From the park, paddlers can have easy access to Estacada Lake or the more challenging water of the Clackamas River just on the other side of River Mill Dam at the north end of the lake. The park is open from mid-March to October 31 to coincide with trout season.

On the opposite side of the lake in Estacada sits [Timber Park](#), owned and maintained by Portland General Electric. There is a non-motorized boat ramp at the north end of the park near the dam.



## Silver Creek (Silverton) Reservoir ★★☆☆

Located just outside historic and picturesque Silverton lies Silverton Reservoir. The reservoir is a little over a half mile in length; however, you can extend the length of your paddle by paddling up Silver Creek.

Silverton Reservoir has a small boat ramp and two docks, along with a lovely park and some walking trails. There is a \$2 parking fee for cars, more for other vehicles.

If you're looking to do a long paddle, then Silverton Reservoir probably isn't for you. After a while, paddling up and down the reservoir just to get in a couple of miles can get rather boring. Traveling up Silver Creek does add some variety and can even provide some swift water early in the year. However, if you're new to paddling or you live close to Silverton or perhaps you want to perfect your paddling strokes, then you will find the reservoir to be an ideal location.

The lake is clean and clear and doesn't leave a ring on your boat, which makes it a perfect place to practice rescues and rolls.

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There isn't much in the way of wildlife, and the quietness is sometimes disrupted by the noise of ATVs coming from the farm along the western shore of the lake.

The lake is stocked with trout, and no motorized boats other than those with electric motors are allowed on the lake.

[Click here](#) to view a short video of the reservoir.



## Triangle Lake ★★☆☆

Located about 25 miles west of Junction City off of Oregon Route 36 on the way to Mapleton, 293-acre Triangle Lake is the perfect lake for those new to paddling to hone their paddling skills or those close to Eugene.

There is a public boat ramp and dock run by Lane County. A \$4 fee is charged for parking.

Powerboats are allowed on the lake, so paddle early in the morning to avoid the motorized boats.

The lake is home to kokanee and rainbow trout, largemouth bass, brown bullhead catfish, bluegill, and yellow perch.



## Willamette River Water Trail ★★★★★

The mainstream of the Willamette River is a major waterway flows 187 miles north from Eugene to Portland, Oregon. It was a main transportation route in Oregon's early history. Gone are the riverboats that once plied the river, replaced by powerboats and non-motorized craft. Private farmlands border much of the river, but the state of Oregon has set aside areas along the river for camping and as natural wildlife habitat. The river passes through several major Oregon cities: Eugene, Corvallis, Salem, and Portland.

Paddling trips can last a day or several days. Pitch a tent and sleep under the stars as you listen to the gentle sounds of the river lapping against the rocks and the honking of Canada geese. Toss a fishing line in and try your luck hooking a salmon or smallmouth bass. Explore Lukiamute State Natural Area and keep a look out for river otters, muskrat, deer, bald eagles, osprey, great blue herons, and numerous songbirds.

Willamette Riverkeepers has created a wonderful guide of the water trail that points out access points to the river and places to camp along the river.

[Click here](#) to access an interactive map of the water trail.

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## Yamhill River ★★

The Yamhill River flows for 11 miles to the Willamette River. The river is formed by the confluence of the South and North Yamhill Rivers three miles east of McMinnville. The narrow river slowly meanders slowly past farmlands and woods. Look for eagles during the trip.

The banks are somewhat steep, and lands surrounding the river are private, so there are no safe or legal places to land.

The river flows slowly enough that you can paddle it in both directions. Put in at the Dayton County boat ramp and paddle up to the Yamhill locks in Lafayette, then paddle downriver always, and return back to the boat ramp.

The best time to paddle the Yamhill River is in the spring and early summer. Later in the summer the water level gets low in spots and can make navigating somewhat tricky.

For a long 10-mile trip, put in at the boat ramp, paddle down the river until you reach the Willamette River, then paddle down the Willamette River until you reach Rogers Landing in Newberg.