

Oregon Cascades Paddling Destinations



Clear Lake ★★★★★

Clear Lake is a spring-fed lake located on Hwy 126 just off of Hwy 20 as you're heading to Sisters, Oregon. The lake serves as the headwaters for the MacKenzie River. The water is crystal clear, which allows you to see the sunken forest that has been preserved by the lake's cold water. Lava formations line much of the eastern shore of the lake.

Clear Lake is a popular fishing location. Fishermen will find rainbow, brook, and red-banded trout.

Motorized boats are not allowed on the lake, making it an ideal paddling lake.

There are a few walk-in campsites at the Coldwater Cove campground, which fill up quickly during the summer weekends. Most sites, however, require a reservation, and the good sites, those close to the lake, are usually reserved by mid-spring.

Clear Lake Resort sits on the north end of the lake, and the store on site rents rowboats and stocks fishing supplies. There are cabins for rent and a restaurant at the resort.

A five-mile hiking trails encircles the lake.

[Click here](#) for more information about the resort. [Click here](#) for more information about Coldwater Cove campground.



Hosmer Lake ★★★★★

Hosmer Lake is situated on the eastern side of the Oregon Cascades just a short drive from Bend and Sunriver. It's one of the many lakes along the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway that are popular with paddlers. Hosmer is a long (approximately two miles), narrow lake where rush and wocus form a narrow passageway through the middle half of the lake. The spectacular views Hosmer provides of South Sister, Mt. Bachelor, and Broken Top (not too far off in the distance) make Hosmer one of the best lakes in Oregon to paddle.

The lake's clear water and fairly shallow depth provides paddlers and fishermen easy view of the rainbow and brook trout that call the lake home. Fishing is good on Hosmer Lake but is restricted to fly fishing.

Paddlers to Hosmer should bring along a camera or binoculars because the lake is a great place for wildlife viewing and photography. Visitors are sure to spot osprey, bald eagles, pied-billed grebes, yellow-headed and red-winged black birds, Canada geese, common mergansers, numerous species of dabbling ducks, and river otters.

Paddlers should arrive at the lake early because the parking lot fills up fast in the summer, and late comers to the lake could find

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themselves having to park several hundred yards from the primitive boat launch. No powerboats are allowed on Hosmer Lake.

There are numerous campgrounds in the area, Elk Lake Resort being the closest. Camping is also available at LaPine State Park off Highway 97. The state park and campground is approximately 30 minutes away and offers tent and RV sites along with rustic cabins, There are also showers available. More primitive camping is available at several of the other lakes in the area. Luxurious accommodations can be found at Sunriver Resort or Seventh Mountain Resort.

[Click here](#) to view a paddling video of Hosmer Lake.



Lost Lake ★★★★★

Situated on the northern flank of Mt. Hood, approximately two hours east of Portland, sits a lake with the most spectacular view of Mt. Hood, making it one of the most popular lakes in the Cascades. Lost Lake is popular with paddlers and fishermen. It's also a very popular with photographers—Lost Lake is the second most photographed lake next to Crater Lake and appears in several calendars.

[Lost Lake Resort](#) has a lodge, cabins, and two campgrounds. There is also a store at the lodge where you can rent kayaks, canoes, paddleboats, and rowboats. Visitors can also purchase fishing supplies and souvenirs in the store. Paddlers arriving at Lost Lake Resort, need to head to the South Day Use boat launch. There is an entrance fee to get into Lost Lake Resort. The resort is open from May 1 through mid-October.

Winds in the afternoon can be a problem on the lake, so paddlers should paddle early in the morning then spend the afternoon hiking one of the many trails around the lake. The Lake Trail takes hikers on a 3.2-mile hike around the entire lake. Benches along the lake allow hikers to rest while taking in beautiful views of the lake and Mt. Hood.

Paddlers can reach Lost Lake Resort from Portland one of two ways: Head east on I-84 to Hood River and then turn south on Hwy 35 to the town of Dee. Take Hwy 281 to Lost Lake Road and follow it to the Lost Lake Resort. A more scenic route but one that takes travelers over four miles of gravel road is to travel east on Hwy 26 until they come to Lolo Pass Road just east of Wemme. Head north on Lolo Pass Road and turn left onto Lost Lake Road.

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Olallie Lake ★★★★★

Located in the foothills of Mt. Jefferson and providing a great view of the mountain, Olallie Lake is a beautiful place to paddle regardless of your paddling experience. The lake's shallow, clear water allows you to easily see the bottom. Olallie Lake is relatively small—it's a little less than four miles around the entire lake—but the water's clarity and view of Mt. Jefferson make the drive and paddle worth it.

Motorized boats are not allowed on the lake, nor is swimming because the lake serves as a source of drinking water and the lake is so shallow. No motorized boats mean paddlers can enjoy the serenity of the lake.

Into fishing? The lake has some good trout fishing. It's probably the main reason most visit the lake.

At the south end of the lake, paddlers can view the massive burn that took place in 2001.

Like all mountain lakes in Oregon, the best time to paddle the lake is in the morning before the afternoon winds pick up. They can get rather strong.

There is a resort with cabins for rent, and several campgrounds exist around the lake. Peninsula Campground is right on the lake. Both the campground and the resort afford nice views of Mt. Jefferson. The campground doesn't accept reservations—it's first come, first serve.

The drive to Olallie Lake requires driving over eight miles of gravel road. There are two ways to get to Olallie Lake: drive south on Oregon Skyline Rd. SE from Timothy Lake or drive south out of Estacada or north out of Detroit over Breitenbush Road SE. The latter road is better maintained than Oregon Skyline Road SE. Turn onto Forest Service Road 4690 and then onto Forest Service Road 4220.



Sparks Lake ★★★★★

Sparks Lake is 2.2 miles in length, but because the northern one-third of the lake is so shallow, only 1.3 miles of the lake can really be paddled. Sparks Lake provides up close views of South Sister, Broken Top, and Mt. Bachelor.

What makes Sparks an interesting lake to paddle, besides the surrounding scenery, is the numerous coves you can paddle. There are also many sandy beaches where you can safely land your boat and have a lunch and swim.

Visitors to Sparks Lake are likely to spot common goldeneyes, common mergansers, bald eagles, and you might even spot elk and deer feeding in the meadow at the north end of the lake.

Only fly fishing is allowed on the lake.

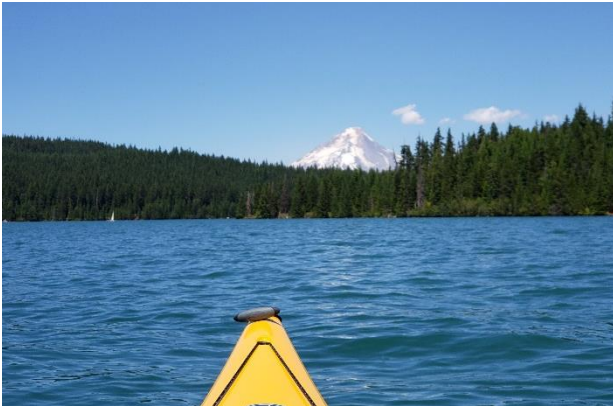
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Paddlers should arrive at the lake early because the parking lot fills up fast in the summer, and late comers to the lake could find themselves having to park several hundred yards from the boat launch.

No powerboats are not allowed on Sparks Lake, making the lake an ideal place to paddle.

The 1.6-mile dirt road to the boat ramp is poorly maintained, so caution should be exercised when driving to the lake.

Camping is available at the lake or at several of the campgrounds and resorts within an easy drive of the lake.



Timothy Lake ★★★★★

Timothy Lake is a 1,500-acre lake situated on the southwest flank of Mt. Hood. The two main ways to reach the lake are from Portland via Hwy 26 and Forest Service Road 42 or from Estacada via Hwy 224 and Forest Service Road 57.

The lake is managed by Portland General Electric. There are seven campgrounds with approximately 200 campsites surrounding the lake, three day use areas, and four boat launches. There is a \$5 day use fee.

Fishing and paddling are two popular activities on the lake. Boats are limited to 10 mph. It forms the headwaters of the Clackamas River. The lake has kokanee and rainbow trout. You're also like to see bald eagles and osprey and possibly deer and elk. Boaters have a nice view of Mt. Hood at various points along the north arm.

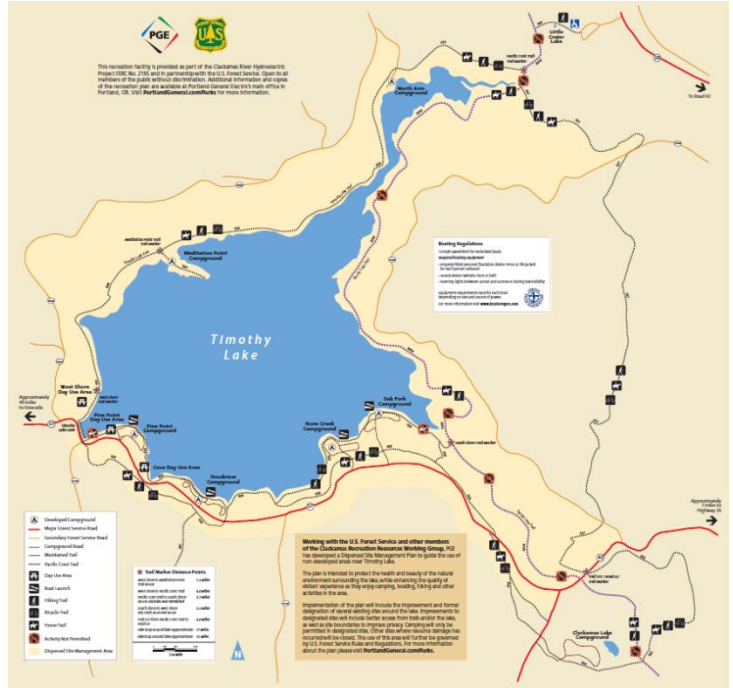
There is also a hiking/biking/equestrian trail that circles the lake.

Mosquitoes can be a serious problem in the summer months around the campsites.

Winds tend to pick up in the afternoon, as they're known to do up around Mt. Hood, and the water can become pretty choppy. The best time to paddle is in the morning and late afternoon.

View a [video of Timothy Lake here](#).

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(Click on the map to see a larger image.)



Trillium Lake ★★★★★

A spectacular view of Mt. Hood is one reason Trillium Lake is a popular paddling destination. The 65 acre lake lies seven and a half miles south of Mt. Hood. The lake is fairly shallow except in the middle, where the depth gets to about 21 feet. Wocus lines the northern bank.

There is a nice day-use area and established campground situated on the eastern shore of the lake. A primitive campground lies along the southern shore near the dam. Both fill up fast on the weekends. Most of the campsites at the established campground require reservations. By mid-May most of the sites are booked through the summer. [Click here](#) to view information about the campground.

Motorized boats are banned on the lake, making the lake ideal for paddling. On any summer weekend, you're likely to see numerous canoes, kayaks, and SUPs plying the water.

Fishing is also very popular on the lake.

There is a daily \$5 fee that is waived if you are camping at the lake.

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Waldo Lake ★★★★★

When paddlers talk about paddling in Oregon, one destination always comes up as a must paddle—Waldo Lake. The lake lies at a 5,414-foot elevation. At over 10 square miles and a shoreline dotted with coves and small islands, there are plenty of interesting spots along Waldo Lake to tantalize every paddler.

The deepest point on the lake is 420 feet with an average depth of 128 feet. Paddlers can see down 100 feet on a calm day. Once away from the shore, the water turns indigo blue. Like Crater Lake, the water is ultra oligotrophic. There are few nutrients in the water to sustain a large fish population, though there are some trout to be caught. Most visitors, however, come to paddle and not to fish.

The shoreline is rocky, and some of the rocks, especially on the east bank of the lake, can extend some distance from shore. The eastern bank of the lake tends to be shallower farther out.

Winds can be unpredictable on Waldo Lake. One moment the water can be like glass, the next minute there are whitecaps on the lake. Usually, the morning is the best time to paddle, but there are times when the winds blow in the morning and subside in the afternoon.

From the northern section of Waldo Lake, paddlers can catch breathtaking views of South and North Sisters, Broken Top, and Mt. Bachelor in the north, and Diamond Peak and Mt. Yorlan in the south. The Waldo Burn that occurred in 1996 is also visible.

There are three established campgrounds at Waldo Lake, two in the north section and one in the south. The [North Waldo Campground](#) tends to be the most popular and has the fewest mosquitos. The other campground in the north section of Waldo Lake is the smaller Islet Campground. [Shadow Bay Campground](#) lies in the southern half of the lake. Mosquitos can be real problem at any of the campgrounds from June through mid- August, but especially at Shadow Bay. There are also remote campsites along the shore of the lake, but these campsites might be closed during parts of the year depending on fire restrictions.

A trail extends around the entire perimeter of the lake. The trail is popular with both hikers and mountain bike riders. There is also a trail to Betty Lake.

[Click here](#) to view a video of Waldo Lake.