



Linn County Parks



NEWSLETTER

What's happening at Linn County (Or.) Parks

June 2022

Brian Carroll

*Parks
Director*



Projects,
projects, projects

Welcome to Linn County!

The Linn County Parks & Recreation staff is looking forward to the arrival of summer.

Our staff have been very busy over the course of the winter and spring making several improvements to the Linn County parks system.

Sunnyside C-loop Shower- Restroom Building Replacement

Parks staff are working with contractors to replace the shower-restroom building in the C-loop at Sunnyside County Park.

The original building was 48 years old and in rough shape.

We were hoping to have this project completed sooner, but unfortunately,

BRIAN CARROLL ... See P. 7



Skiers enjoy a day on the water at Foster Reservoir.

Corps of Engineers officials talk about summer water levels

By Scott Swanson

Of The New Era

SWEET HOME — The landscape for Linn County's two major recreational lakes, Foster and Green Peter, may be changing, thanks largely to a federal court ruling.

U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which operates the reservoirs, in September of 2021 to make changes at its dams in the Willamette Basin so that juvenile salmon and steelhead can pass through them more easily.

The ruling is the result of a lawsuit filed in 2021 by environmentalists who argued that the Corps should be more transparent about its dam operations and their impacts on salmon and steelhead smolts heading out to sea.

The fish are listed under the Endangered Species Act and, according to environmentalists who have sued the Corps on multiple occasions over the last decade to gain information about dam operations and the health of fish populations, dams on the Willamette River have blocked access to spawning grounds, which has contributed to population declines.

Water Levels ... See Page 2

To make campsite reservations visit www.linnparks.com or call 541-967-3917

Water levels

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Hernandez wrote that the actions were necessary because, “(a)s evinced by the listed species’ continuing decline, the Corps’ failure to provide adequate fish passage and mitigate water quality issues is causing substantial, irreparable harm to the salmonids.”

In response to the Hernandez’s injunction, the Corps has maintained lower lake levels through the spring in an attempt to improve the passage of young fish over the dams. Since last fall, when the Corp implemented its response to the injunction, Corps officials have been working to determine when juvenile fish leave the lakes, how they exit, what routes they take, passage rates and survival rates.

“There’s been lot of working through details,” said Tom Conning, Corps public affairs specialist for the Portland District, which oversees Foster and Green Peter dams as part of the Willamette Valley Project.

Other measures are aimed at improving water temperatures and levels of dissolved gas below the dams.

Also, Conning said, “we will use this to study downstream migration over the spillways, to inform future operations.”

A wet April and May have definitely brightened the outlook for Linn County’s two reservoirs, Erik Petersen, Willamette Valley Project operations project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said, though drought conditions in the southern Willamette Valley have Corps water managers are bracing for another challenging year with some of the 13 reservoirs it manages between Detroit and Hills Creek, south of Oakridge.

“Precipitation in the basin has not been great, at least in the south,” Petersen said in late April.

However, he said Foster Reservoir, which refills from Green Peter storage late every spring, “should look normal from late May until after Labor Day and, thanks to the voluminous spring precipitation, Green Peter lake levels should be higher than previously anticipated.

WATER LEVELS ... See Page 3



New restrooms/showers arrive at Sunnyside County Park

The new Sunnyside County Park C-loop shower/restroom has arrived and staff will be busy setting it up in coming weeks. A temporary building is in place for now. It replaces a building that was 48 years old. The new building was paid for through proceeds from the state’s RV licensing fee through Oregon State Parks.

Thanks for visiting Linn County Parks.

Water levels

From Page 2

Brian Carroll, Linn County Parks director, said that was encouraging news compared to what things looked like going into April, when it looked like Green Peter would be dropping below boat ramp levels during the summer.

“I thought it was actually really good news compared to what we had been anticipating,” he said. “A month ago, we thought we’d be lucky to keep the Whitcomb Creek Boat Ramp until the Fourth for July. Now it looks like it will be up all summer long, which is great news.”

The Willamette Valley Project reservoirs depend on spring and early summer rainfall to refill, and minimal precipitation is making it challenging to fill multiple reservoirs. In addition, the Corps did not begin to refill Fall Creek Reservoir until the middle of April, and it won’t begin refill of Cougar and Foster reservoirs until May to improve downstream passage conditions for juvenile salmon and comply with the court order.

Diminished water storage during the summer months means that reservoirs with more water may drop in elevation faster than normal as the Corps draws from them to meet downstream needs.

According to the Corps' predictions, the water levels in Green Peter are expected to be roughly at 1,000 feet above sea level, the gauge the agency uses to measure those, by mid-May and should stay there until early July, when the lake starts coming down – as it does every year as it fills Foster and provides for downstream communities' and irrigation needs. Water levels should stay above the 972-foot mark, which is the level at which Whitcomb Creek Boat Ramp can no longer be used, by early September, and should stay above the 922 limit for Thistle Creek Boat Ramp, farther to the west.

At Foster, according to current estimates, water levels should stay high enough all summer to keep the boat ramps at Calkins Park (631 feet), Gedney Creek (619 feet) and Sunnyside Campground (613) usable.



Winter fun at Clear Lake

Sawyer and LJ Jurica, sons of John Jurica of the Linn County Road Department, enjoy a family day at Clear Lake Resort in the winter. Clear Lake is opening for camping and fishing year-round.

The public can check the Portland District's “teacup diagrams” before heading out to recreate. These diagrams show water elevations for Corps-managed reservoirs. Willamette River Basin teacup diagram: www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nwp/teacup/willamette or pweb.crohms.org/nwp/teacup/willamette.

How things will look in the future will depend on the results of the Corps' research efforts, which should clarify some questions regarding the behavior and survival rates for young fish, and any future federal rulings.

This isn't just a current issue, Carroll noted. The county has extensive plans to develop more camping facilities on Green Peter, and if draw-downs continue, without the precipitation the area received this year, there could be challenges for visitors trying to access the lakes.

“We have a lot of plans to invest in projects up there,” Carroll said. “But we

certainly have to take a practical approach with taxpayer funds. We have to be careful not to spend too soon.”

Green Peter and Foster are certainly not the only lakes impacted. The Corps' Willamette Valley Project operates 13 dams in the Willamette River basin, which provide flood risk management, power generation, water quality improvement, irrigation, fish and wildlife habitat and recreation. All are under the injunction, some more severely impacted than even Foster and Green Peter, Carroll noted.

“People are going to be looking to get into the water,” he said. “We will be doing the best we can to facilitate that access.”

Come work for Linn County Parks ...

Seasonal rangers enjoy variety in their

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

WATERLOO — When Ali Garrett was growing up in Sweet Home, her family enjoyed camping at Cascadia State Park, where she and her twin sister explored old growth Douglas fir trees and hiking trails.

“We would see park rangers and we thought that would be a great job,” Garrett said.

Garrett now has what she considers her “perfect job” as a seasonal Park Ranger with Linn County Parks.

“I love this job,” Garrett, 48, said. “It can be hard work at times, but at the end of the day, I feel awesome. It’s the best job I have ever had.”

Garrett and fellow seasonal ranger Derek Allen, 26, are beginning their second summers with Linn County Park & Recreation.

Garrett spent last summer working in guest services — cleaning things — and worked at Waterloo, Lewis Creek and Sunnyside parks.

“I used to work running a lawn maintenance crew at Sunshine Industries and I really enjoyed being outdoors,” Garrett said.

This summer, Garrett will be a seasonal ranger working primarily at River Bend County Park east of Sweet Home.

“I will assist full-time Ranger Kade Puliam with a variety of things,” she said. “I will do everything from clean restrooms to mow grass and take care of our trails.”

A major difference between working in guest services and her new job is that she

SEASONAL RANGERS ... See P. 5



Seasonal Rangers Derek Allen and Ali Garrett say the great variety of their daily work schedules makes their jobs interesting. Allen is a roving ranger and will work in all of the parks and Garrett works primarily at River Bend County Park.

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Yurts in place at Whitcomb Creek

Two of the new 20-foot yurts that parks staff have constructed at the new Whitcomb Creek County Park Yurt Village. They will soon be available to the public.

Linn County Parks jobs ... *From Page 4*

will now also be responsible for answering lots of questions from guests as well as making sure they follow park rules.

Allen has a degree in Outdoor Recreation from Oregon State and didn't think he was going to be able to work for Linn County this summer because his National Guard Unit based in Dallas, Oregon, was serving in the Afghan relocation camps in Indiana.

"We were supposed to be there until December, but we came home after six months," he said. "I had kept in contact with Adam Brenneman and he said they

needed help."

Allen said he also enjoys his job because of the great variety of duties he is required to perform in a typical day.

For example, one day he was burning a wood pile at Waterloo County Park and the next day he was helping Adam take water samples at the U.S. Forest Service campsites.

"You have to like interacting with people — even when they might be a bit upset — be able think on your feet to

solve problems and perhaps most importantly, be able to switch from one project to another quickly and repeatedly as needs change."

Allen said the great variety of duties makes "the days go by very quickly and you feel like you accomplished something."

Linn County Parks & Recreation has several summer jobs open. Job applications can be found online at <https://linnparks.com/general-info/jobs-volunteer/>.



Native Encampments return to

Linn County Parks

July 29-31 at Sunnyside County Park

August 26-28 at Cascadia State Park



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Brian Carroll ... From Page 1

weather and contracting delays pushed the project later than we had hoped.

Due to the delay, we will have a temporary shower building available for C-loop campers to use along with additional chemical toilets during the Memorial Day weekend and early June. Please be patient as we make these necessary improvements. We hope to have the new building fully functional by mid-June.

Whitcomb Creek County Park Yurt Village

The parks staff is putting the finishing touches on four new 20 foot yurts at Whitcomb Creek County Park.

The new yurts are in the old group camp area (see map) and feature two standard yurts and two premium yurts. The premium yurts have small deck areas with propane-fueled fire-rings and a view of Green Peter Reservoir.

We hope to have the yurts completed by the end of June.

We will announce when the yurts are available on our website, via email and through social media.

Upper Whitcomb Boat-in Campsites

Our department, through an agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers, has opened five reservable boat-in campsites at the Upper Whitcomb Creek Boat-in site.

A new vault restroom was constructed on site and five reservable campsite designated with picnic tables and fire-rings. Campers will need to boat-in to these sites and tie up to the shoreline overnight. Parking for the boat-in campsite is available by permit at the main Whitcomb Creek County boat trailer parking area.

All campers using the Upper Whitcomb Boat-in campsites must reserve the sites in advance and post and overnight parking permit in their vehicles parked at the Whitcomb Creek Boat Ramp Parking area.

Rocky Top Bridge Group Camp is available for reservations

The Rocky Top Bridge Group Camp also saw several improvements over the course of the winter. The parking area was freshly leveled and rocked and a potable water well was drilled this spring. The well will have a hand pump to provide drinking water. Additional

improvements including a picnic shelter are planned for the near future.

Whether you are coming to Linn County for hiking, fishing, water sports, or just sitting around the campfire, we hope your stay is relaxing and pleasurable. While you are here, please take advantage of all the wonderful recreational opportunities and the many friendly business services available in Linn County.



Lock it or lose it

Nobody wants to be a victim of crime, but if you leave your purse, computer, tools or other valuable items in your auto, you're increasing the risk that you will become a theft-from-vehicle victim.

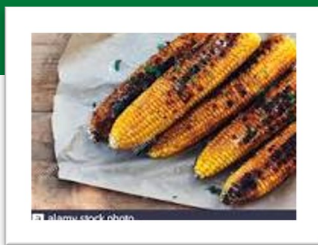


Lebanon Police report that approximately 60 percent of all thefts from vehicles are the result of people leaving their car doors unlocked or leaving items of value in the car where would-be thieves can easily spot them. The message- if thieves can see it, they will steal it.

Here are a few crime prevention tips to help keep us from becoming the victim of a burglary or theft:

- Remember to always secure your car doors when parking your vehicle, even for just a few minutes. It takes just a matter of seconds to enter an unsecured vehicle.
- Do not leave valuables, such as purses, cell phones, packages, etc. in plain view inside your vehicle. Secure them in a glove box, center console, or even better in the trunk. Thieves will search other vehicles that are easier targets if they do not see anything of value in your car.
- Park in well lighted areas at night. Light is an enemy of thieves.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked at night. Many burglaries to garages occur with doors left wide open. An open garage door is an invitation to a thief to take anything in sight.

Campfire Cookin'



Grilled corn on the cob

Courtesy Delish

When the weather gets warm, grilled corn on the cob is basically mandatory.

The sweetness and crunch that comes with amazing summer corn complemented by a bit of smoky char, what could be better? But before you can get to that first bite, you have to pick out the best possible ears of corn. Here's what you need to know when you're shopping.

How To Buy The Best Corn:

When buying corn on the cob, the easiest way to find the best ears is to peel back the husks a bit to peek at the kernels. However, you definitely can't fully shuck 20 ears of corn at the grocery store when you plan to buy five. To find the best ears of corn, start by eye:

Look for ears with tight green husks and golden brown, slightly sticky tassels (that's the hairy bit up top). This indicates a fresher, sweeter, juicier corn.

Avoid brownish crackly husks and dry or black tassels—this is usually a sign that the corn is going past its prime and has started to dry up a bit.

Feel the ear for plump kernels, skipping those with holes where kernels didn't grow.

But, of course, the only way to really know is to take some home and throw 'em on the grill.

Husk or No Husk?

If you want, you can grill corn with the husks still on: This will help trap some of the moisture and give you a half-steamed, half-grilled cooking process. But first, peel back the husk to expose the corn without detaching them completely and remove as much of the silk as you can.

Season the corn with salt and pepper, plus a slick of butter or oil, then pull the husks back over the corn and plop them on the grill. This will protect the corn kernels from the hot iron grills and help them steam a bit while they're grilling, making them even more tender.

On the other hand, if you want to go from grill to mouth as quickly as possible, go ahead and shuck the corn completely before throwing them on the heat. Brush on the butter and seasoning after they're fully cooked to ensure the butter doesn't just melt straight off into the grill.

Now you're ready to dive in — pass the salt!

For more amazing recipe ideas, check out our 40+ easy corn recipes to make this summer. Think caprese corn salad, bacon corn pasta, and jalapeño popper creamed corn.

Also, should you want to freeze your corn, make sure to check out our guide on how to do so. Hint: You're going to want to shave off the kernels first.

Ingredients

- 4 ears corn, shucked
- Butter, for serving
- Kosher salt

Cooking directions

- Preheat grill to high and heat for 10 minutes. (Alternatively, preheat grill pan to high.) Add corn and cook, turning often, until charred all over, about 10 minutes.
- Spread butter over warm corn and season with salt.