



What's happening at Linn County (Or.) Parks Winter 2023-24

Linn County to manage more USFS campgrounds

Adding 400 more camping slips

ALBANY — Linn County Parks & Recreation will nearly double the number of camping spaces it manages in 2024, after acquiring management of some 400 spaces owned by the U.S. Forest Service in Linn and Marion counties.

That will make 1,000 camping spots managed by Linn County Parks.

Parks Director Stacey Whaley said Linn County submitted a 259-page bidding document and won out over three other applicants.

It is a good fit Whaley said. Linn County has managed seven primitive Forest Service campsites on the South Santiam River near Cascadia for the last 12 years.

Now, Linn County Parks staff will be working with camping sites from as far south as Olallie on the county border near the McKenzie River (south of Clear Lake Resort) to as far north as Breitenbush north of Detroit in Marion County. Three of the larger campgrounds are on the Detroit Reservoir. Cove Creek is similar to Sunnyside County Park in that it has amenities like a boat ramp and coin operated showers available. Hoover and Southshore also have boat ramps.

“The sites range in size from tent camping to RV’s (up to 30 feet) and group sites,” Whaley said.

Coldwater Cove on Clear Lake is another popular large campground with non-motorized water access. “We are excited to be able to offer camping again to our Clear



Cove Creek Campground. Photo courtesy U.S. Forest Service.

Lake guests and their families, in addition to the cabins and yurts at the Resort.”

We are looking forward to providing more access for horse lovers at Big Meadows Horse Camp, which features corrals and other horse-specific infrastructure. This is a great jump off point for those wanting to horse pack into the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness as well as just trail ride for the day.

Several of the campgrounds have up to 60 camping spaces each, although most are smaller.

“Most Forest Service campgrounds don’t have

power or showers,” Whaley said. “However, they do have potable water and vault toilets.”

The added campsites mean the Parks Department will need to shift work loads and add staff, Whaley said.

“We plan to move someone into a management role for the north area and add 25 seasonal staff,”

Whaley said. “We are looking for more campground hosts and caretakers. And, we will

USFS campgrounds ... See P. 2

Parks Department working around Green Peter drawdown

SWEET HOME — The drawdown of Green Peter Reservoir by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of a fish passage program, has created issues for Linn County Parks, ranging from boat ramps that are out of water to causing a boat-in camping plan to be put on hold, according to Parks Director Stacey Whaley.

The Corps of Engineers was ordered by a federal judge to enhance smolt passage at its dams in the Willamette Valley, following a lawsuit by environmental groups.

In response, the Corps has drawn down the water level at Green Peter Dam northeast of Sweet Home by about 250 feet.

The goal is to have fewer salmon smolt pass through power-generating turbines and therefore pass through a dam outlet in line with the new lower water level. Scientists hope this will lead to a greater survival rate of the salmon smolt.

But biologists did not expect the difference in water pressure to create “barotrauma” more commonly known as “the ends”

among scuba divers and lead to the death of thousands of kokanee and other fish species.

“We have had a lot of phone calls,” Whaley said. “People are very upset. They see this as sacrificing one fish for another.”

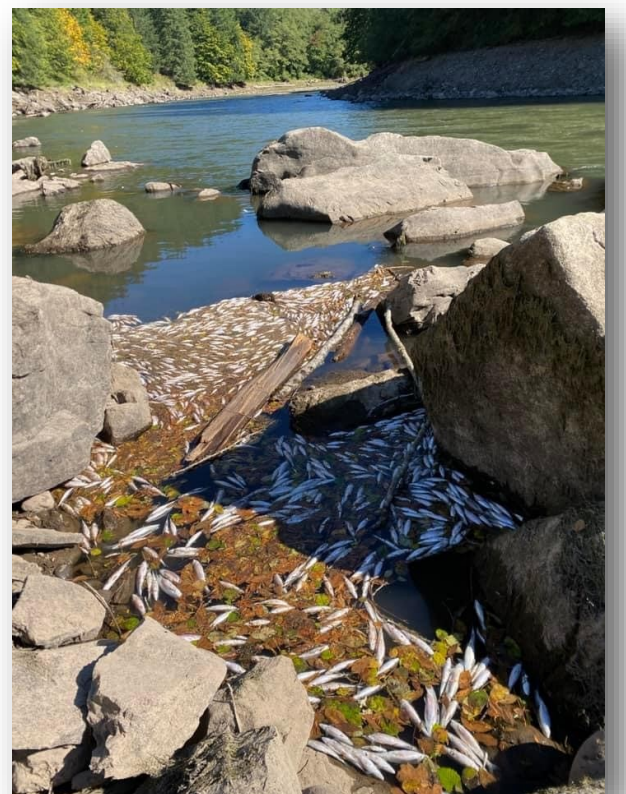
Whaley said that the water level began dropping sharply after Labor Day, making boat ramps at Thistle Creek and Whitcomb Creek inaccessible.

“The water level will be brought up in the spring,” Whaley said. “We don’t know how many years this project will go on.”

Whaley said she is working with the Oregon State Marine Board on the possibility of creating low-water boat ramps and they would not be accessible when the water level is at its lowest, as it currently is.

Commissioners ask judge to modify ruling

See Page 6



Dead fish washed up at Foster Reservoir near Sunnyside County Park.

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



Cove Creek Campground

Linn County adds campgrounds

From Page 1

need to add some vehicles such as trucks and carts for the campgrounds.” Since the campgrounds are primitive, both camp hosts and caretakers will need their own RVs to live on-site.



Cove Creek Campground

Of the new campgrounds, Marion Forks is open year-round. The move includes camping sites at Big Lake, a popular ATV area in the Cascades. There are challenges, Whaley admits.

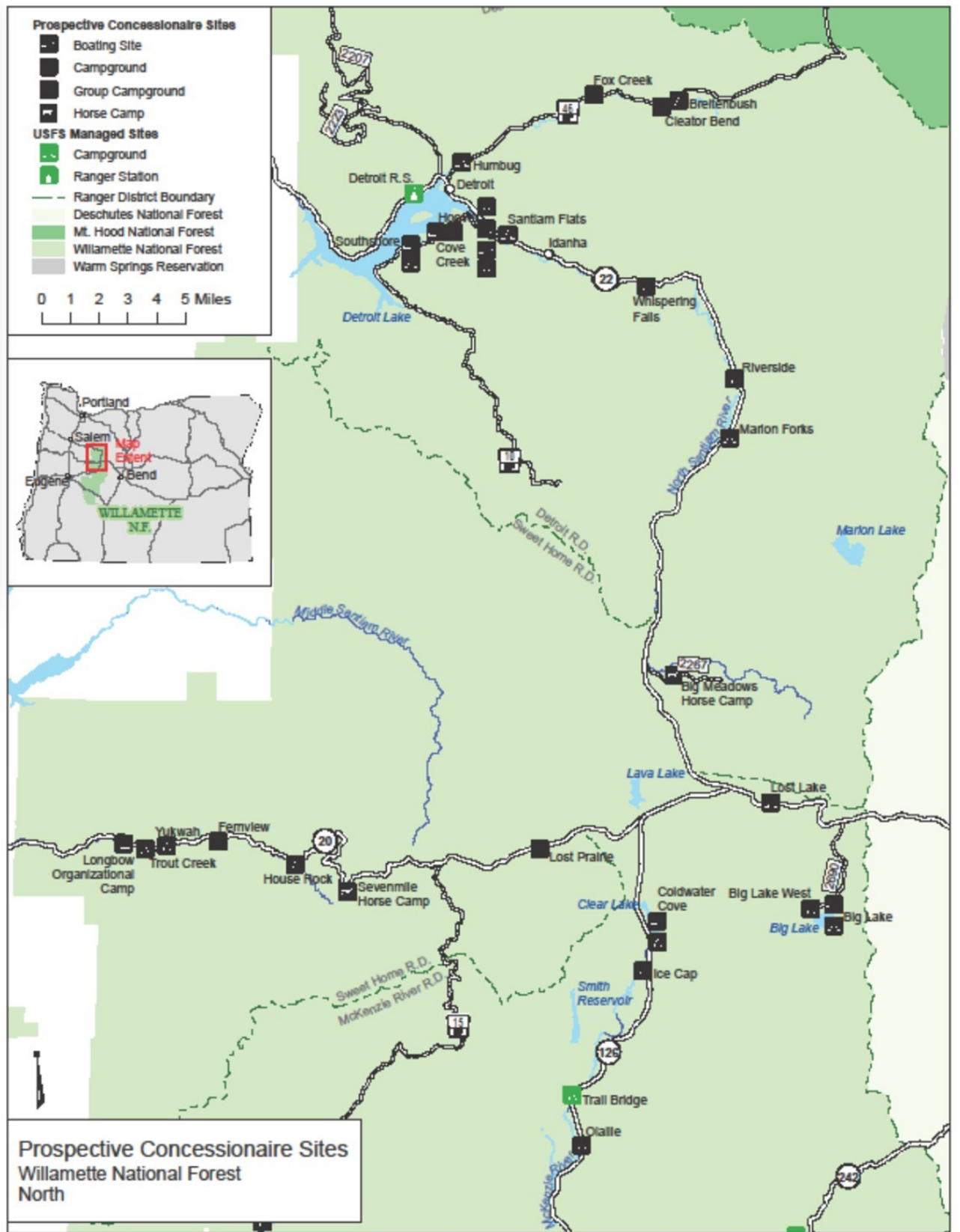
Some of the camping sites to the north are in or near areas damaged by the 2020 Labor Day fires. “This will be the first full season for some since the fires,” Whaley said. “They didn’t lose main buildings, but some ancillary buildings burned.” The public will need to use the federal government’s camping reservation program:

www.recreation.gov to reserve spaces at the new campgrounds, Whaley said. And, the campground fees will be different than Linn County fees. The Linn County management contract is for five years with an option to renew for another five years.

Whaley said she and her staff have ideas to improve the campgrounds, including the possibility of adding yurts which are extremely popular at county sites. “Our first goal is getting the campgrounds clean and up and running at the same time in the spring,” Whaley said. “We are also thinking about adding interpretive programs and enrichment activities.”

Linn County will take care of routine maintenance and the Forest Service will be responsible for more long-term capital repairs.

“Linn County Parks have a reputation of quality experience and that is what we want for the Forest Service sites,” Whaley said.



Map showing U.S. Forest Service campgrounds that will be managed by the Linn County Parks & Recreation Department.

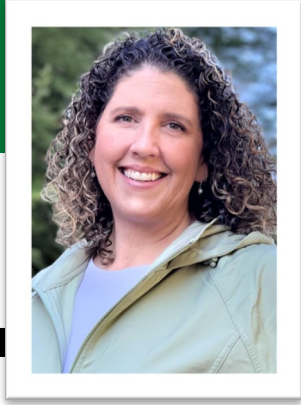


Big Lake Campground.

Photos courtesy U.S. Forest Service.

Stacey Whaley

Parks Director



Fall/Winter 2023

There has been a lot going on in Linn County Parks and Recreation this fall!

Expansion: We are happy to announce that even more Linn County recreation sites will be managed by the Linn County Parks Department starting next spring. All of the US Forest Service campgrounds in Linn County (and a few in Marion County up by Detroit) will be run by your parks department. This means that over 400 more quality campsites will be available to residents and visitors to our area. This includes sites such as Big Lake and Big Lake West, which are especially popular for ATV use; Hoover, Cove Creek and Southshore that all have lake frontage on Detroit Lake; Big Meadows Horse Camp; and Coldwater Cove on Clear Lake. Starting in 2024, LCPR will now be managing 27 Forest Service campgrounds, boat ramps, and day use sites.

We are Hiring! Starting after the holidays, we will begin recruiting for spring/summer seasonal employees to work at the various Linn County Parks sites, located in the Willamette Valley, Willamette National Forest, McKenzie Ranger District, and Detroit



Have you heard the news? Linn County Parks is hiring.
www.linnparks.co

Lake area. This includes Volunteer Camp Hosts, Caretakers, Seasonal Rangers, Cooks, Maintenance Helpers, Grounds Keepers, Cleaners and more. Spread the word! Visit our website at linnparks.com for more information on job opportunities.

Winter in the Parks: Yes, you can still utilize some of the parks in the winter! Sunnyside, Waterloo, and River Bend all have camping available year-round. Also, it is a great time to enjoy the lower winter rates for cabins and yurts at Clear Lake, River Bend, and Sunnyside. Are you a skier? Come stay at Clear Lake Resort, only 15 minutes from Hoodoo!

Facilities: Over the fall and winter, our Parks staff work hard to maintain and improve the parks for next year too. Here are just a few of the projects currently happening:

- **Lewis Creek Park-** We are replacing the main restroom building and approximately 3000 feet of sidewalks throughout the park. Additionally, we are adding an ADA ramp into the swimming area for our guests with mobility challenges. These improvements were part of the public feedback we received on the Lewis Creek Master Plan several years ago.
- **Waterloo Park-** Over the summer, Parks staff installed a new flush restroom and parking area adjacent to the playground and disc golf course. This included installing septic tanks and drain field pipe. Over the winter, we will be demolishing the old restroom building that this replaced.
- **Clear Lake Resort-** Cabins at Clear Lake are slowly undergoing some “refreshing”. Over the winter, many are receiving fresh coats of

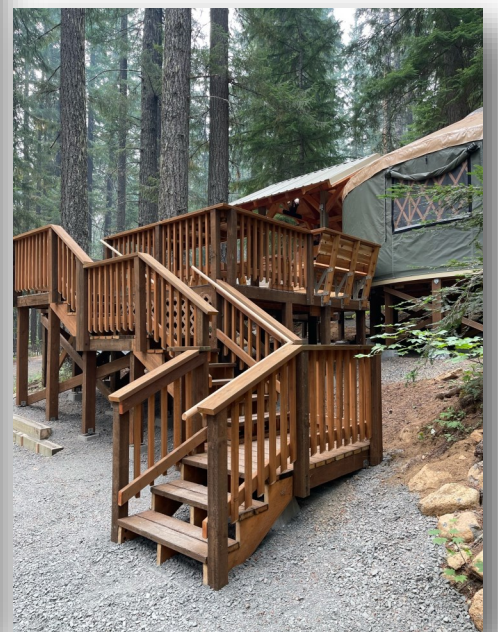


Linn County Parks & Recreation staff stay busy with maintenance projects year-round and especially in the winter months.

Above: Clear Lake Resort is open year-round, including boat rentals. Cabin upgrades are underway there.

Left: New restroom at Lewis Creek Park.

Below: Yurts are popular within the parks system and more are planned.



paint inside, as well as other upgrades to make your stay more pleasant. Upgrades vary depending upon the cabin, but include improved cooking areas, specific furniture replacement, and structural maintenance. Even the lodge is getting a facelift and a variety of new swag in the store. If you haven't already seen the two new yurts the staff completed last summer, you are missing out! The decks and amenities are top notch!

- **Freeway Lakes-** Several new picnic tables have been added to the site at Freeway Lakes, and the invasive Ludwigia plants choking the water have been treated. It is especially important to wash your boats after you put them in the water at any site so you can prevent transmitting invasive species such as Ludwigia to and from other waterways. Even a small amount can establish itself when given the opportunity, and these plants are extremely difficult to remove.

Water: The drawdown at Green Peter continues to affect operations all along the South Santiam and Foster Lake. While the lake is at its lowest point since the dam was built back in the 1960s,

the Army Corps plans to start refilling Green Peter starting approximately December 15. We are all hoping for a good water year so that the lake is ready for fun by next summer.

Reservations: The nine-month reservation window is currently in effect for all LCPR campgrounds. This means that you can book nine months in advance of the dates you want to go camping next summer at <http://linnparks.com>. Currently, you can reserve for next September or earlier in the summer. Don't wait- popular sites fill up fast!

Most of the Forest Service sites are on a six-month reservation window, however, group Forest Service camps are a 12-month window. Regular Forest Service sites can be reserved starting in December for next June at <http://Recreation.gov>. Linn County Parks now has gift cards! Get your family and friends the gift that fits everyone- the gift of an experience camping in one of our parks. Call the Parks office for details at 541-967-3917. We can't wait to see you at one of our many parks — Happy Camping!

Stacey Whaley, Director
Linn County Parks and Recreation



Linn County Parks has 16 yurts and plans are to add more of the popular facilities.

Yurts — they aren't just for nomads anymore!

An ancient form of housing is finding itself in high demand at Linn County campgrounds in recent years.

Yurts, which have kept people warm and dry for thousands of years, are a popular offering, according to Parks Director Stacey Whaley.

“We have 16 total yurts and we plan to add more,”

Whaley said. “They are popular year-round. They have been used in state parks for years and are popular there as well.”

Yurts originated in countries like Mongolia and Central Asia and were used by nomadic people who moved frequently. Traditionally, a yurt was a round tent, supported by lattice that was placed on ground that is covered by carpeting. A stove was placed in the center of the yurt.

Today’s modern yurts are a bit more sophisticated and permanent.

Linn County Parks staff members place them on wooden floors and surround them with wooden decks.

They are well-insulated and include heat and air conditioning. Some yurt sites include picnic tables and propane fire pits.

“Our yurts have windows and screens,” Whaley said.

“Our guys do a great job building them.”

There are two yurts at Clear Lake Resort and they are well-used, Whaley said.

“We will definitely add yurts, but we don’t know where yet,” Whaley said. “We would like to add one more at Clear Lake for sure.”

Linn County Parks yurts range in size from 16 to 24 feet.

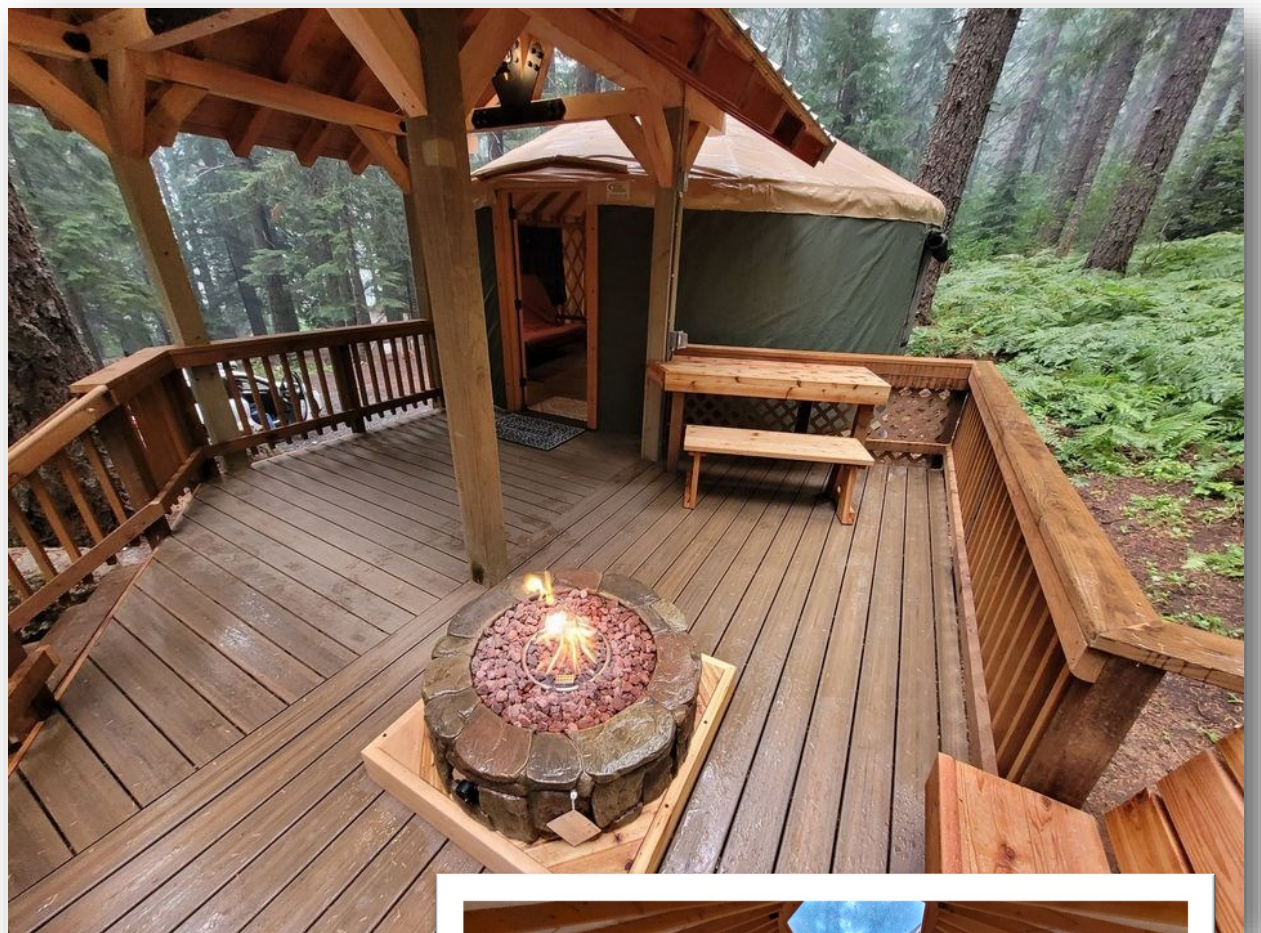
Former Parks Director Brian Carroll said yurts cost about half the price of a cabin to build, about \$20,000 or so.

Linn County buys its yurts from Pacific Yurts in Cottage Grove and parks staff build much of the furniture that goes into them.

Yurts include various sleeping amenities including bunk beds and futons.

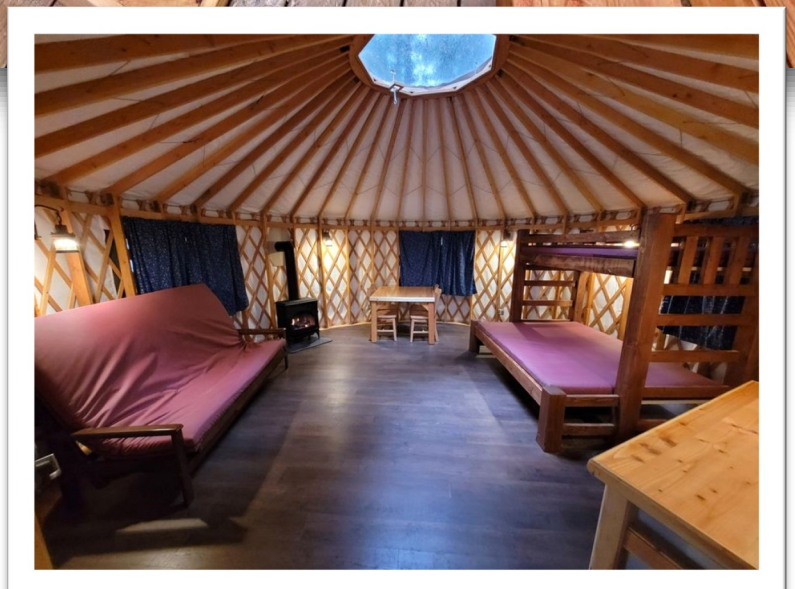
If power is available, there also is a microwave and small refrigerator.

“We are also looking at adding some ‘glamping’ style



It is easy to see why yurts are becoming so popular at Linn County Campgrounds.

tents,” Whaley said. “They are easier to set up and take down. There is a tent company right here in Albany.” Whaley said yurts and tents allow people to feel more “at nature” which may account for their popularity. Yurts rent for \$125 per night and sleep up to five people comfortably.





Tim Reith is a new ranger at Clear Lake Resort and Christy Pierce has gone from part-time floating ranger to fulltime floating ranger with the Linn County Parks & Recreation Department.

New jobs for a couple familiar parks staffers

WATERLOO — Linn County Parks guests may recognize Christy Pierce and Tim Reith, who had summer floating positions last summer.

But now, Pierce, 41, is a full-time floating ranger and Reith, 26, is a fulltime ranger at Clear Lake Resort.

Pierce has two summer seasons under her belt and when the fulltime position came open, she thought this was a good time to make a change.

“I really like the diversity of being a floating ranger,” Pierce said. “Every day is different and I get to work at every park at some time or another.”

Pierce grew up in Utah, Michigan, Indiana and North Carolina, but moved to Oregon with her family from Florida two years ago. Her husband designs video games for Sony in Bend, but works remotely from their

home in Albany. They have three sons, ages 19, 16 and 12.

Her career took a major shift from her job as a secretary at a law firm in Florida.

“I wanted to work outside and I really enjoy it,” she said. “Living in Oregon is all new to us, so as a family we are really enjoying exploring new places.”

The family enjoys hiking, fishing and boating.

“I do miss the warm ocean water in Florida,” Pierce said.

She said the best part of her job are the people she works with.

“That is one reason I decided to go fulltime,” she said.

Like his coworker, Reith grew up loving the outdoors. Since he grew up in Corvallis, he has explored the mid-valley for years.

“I grew up camping and hunting here with my family,” Reith said. “We didn’t take big vacations, but we

really enjoyed camping around here.”

Reith got his first experience as a parks employee in Jackson County and worked for Linn County for three months last year.

He is excited about his new role as one of the two rangers at Clear Lake Resort. Blake Nightengale is his cohort.

“Clear Lake is such a beautiful spot,” Reith said. “There is so much history there. The customers are very friendly.”

Reith said summer months are always very busy with customers, and in the winter, staff are busy renovating cabins.

Clear Lake is open for cabin and yurt rentals year-round and there are 15 boats available to rent as well.

Reith said the solitude of the lake can be a bit difficult for some staff members, but he enjoys it.

“I worked at Willow Lake in Jackson County and that was rural too,” Reith said.

Linn County Board of Commissioners



Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker

Comments, questions?

Do you have a comment or story idea for the Linn County Parks Newsletter? Please contact Editor Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer at 541-967-3825 or email apaul@co.linn.or.us.

Linn County Parks attacking invasive plants

ALBANY — Linn County Parks has fired the first volley in the war against invasive plant called Ludwigia, which is choking off Freeway Lakes and John Neal ponds.

Ludwigia, also called primrose willow and water primrose, is a genus of about 82 species of aquatic plants that can take over entire waterways and choke out oxygen needed by fish species.

Parks Director Stacey Whaley said the plant is popular in household aquariums and becomes a problem when people dump the aquarium water out and parts of the plants eventually make their way into streams or ponds.

“It is very inhospitable to fish,” Whaley said. “It pulls the oxygen out of the water as it decays.”

Whaley said the waterways are being chemically treated, but adds this will be a multi-year effort.

“We may have to use mechanical methods as well, but we will see how this works out,” Whaley said. “The City of Albany removed it at Waverly Lake.”

The plant is prolific, Whaley said. It



Freeway Lakes south of Albany is one of the key areas Linn County Parks has targeted for Ludwigia control measures.

can grow from just fragments. Most species are native to South America although other species are native to California, Arizona, New

Mexico, Texas and Louisiana. In addition to depleting oxygen levels, dense stands of Ludwigia

can reduce water quality and tangled mats of stems can reduce water flow in irrigation channels and drainage ditches.

Commissioners ask judge to modify order

ALBANY — Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker unanimously agreed Tuesday morning that the county should take legal action to modify U.S. District Court Judge Marco Hernandez’s order that has led to a significant drawdown of the water level in Green Peter Reservoir.

That action has resulted in increased turbidity — suspended materials (silt) — in water in the Santiam River.

The board’s action follows a Monday evening meeting at Sweet Home City Hall at which an overflow crowd voiced displeasure with actions taken by the Army Corps of Engineers in response to the judge’s order.

That ruling is based on a lawsuit brought by the Northwest Environmental Defense Center, WildEarth Guardians and the Native Fish Society, seeking improved survival rates for endangered fish species. The goal of lowering the water level below the normal winter pool water level, is to allow young fish to migrate into the river without passing through power turbines.

The water level in the summer is about 1,010 feet. Average this time of year is 920 and Tuesday, the water level was 781 feet. Officials said the water level will begin going up again on Dec. 16.

Commissioners Nyquist and Sprenger attended the Sweet Home meeting.

Nyquist said the issue reminds him of the Northern Spotted Owl battles of 30 years ago.

He said the community of Sweet Home has been “stunned” by not only the water level reduction in Green Peter Reservoir,



Photo of Green Peter Reservoir taken from Thistle Creek boat ramp.

but the mud-like “turbidity” in the river.

Sweet Home has a relatively new water plant — about 10 years old — and has won several awards for the city’s quality water. City staff said that despite the increased turbidity, they have been able to produce drinking water that is well

within the Department of Environmental Quality’s safety parameters. However, that has not come without a cost. Staff have to clean the water plant’s three sand filters more often and this will decrease their useful lifespans. Commissioner Tucker said the Corps of Engineers staff are following the

judge’s order and other Willamette Valley project dams at Lookout Point, Cougar and Fall Creek are undergoing similar drawdowns.

In addition to the water quality issues, the drawdowns may be associated with private wells drying up, Tucker noted.

“We live on the Santiam River and I am concerned that a gravel bar where fish spawn may now be so covered in mud that it will affect them, unless that mud is flushed away,” Tucker said.

Commissioner Sprenger said she is “ticked off” about the situation, especially since rural communities were encouraged by the government after the Northern Spotted Owl era to “reinvent themselves” and that meant tourism around area reservoirs.

She said the situation is an example of “the colliding of two worlds, the rural-urban divide.”

Chairman Nyquist said he believes the federal judge needs more balanced information about what is happening at the ground level.

“This is a reasonable and responsible thing for us to do,” Nyquist said. “We need to acquire legal counsel to present facts, a more balanced set of facts and ask the judge to modify his order.”

Sweet Home City Manager Kelcey Young attended Tuesday’s board meeting and said “this is a devastating time for us.”

She added that families are worried about what their children are drinking and small businesses are seeing a loss of income because people aren’t using the reservoirs for recreation.

The commissioners agreed time is of the essence in this matter and instructed staff to take immediate action.

Meet Karrie King, the voice of Linn County parks

By Alex Paul
Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Like a radio broadcaster, Linn County Parks employee Karrie King is known far and wide by her voice alone. For 22 years, King has helped people make reservations at Linn County Parks — thousands and thousands of them and for many years, mostly by telephone.

QUOTABLE

“I can make reservations for people just from their names on an email. I know which campground they want, when and for how many people.”

— Karrie King

“I can make reservations for people just from their names on an email,” King said. “I know which campground they want, when and for how many people.” It helps that King has a distinctive voice, an infectious laugh and an energy that oozes through the phone lines.

“I love, love, love my job,” King said. And it shows. A mid-valley native, King graduated from West Albany High School in 1987 and worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant for six years and spent a brief stint at Oak Creek Correctional, before her mother Marlene — who worked at the Road Department — told her about an opening with county parks. “Brian (Carroll) had been here about two years,” King said. “I’ve gotten to see so many parks created or updated.” She said the only reservations made in those early years were for Waterloo and Sunnyside campgrounds. Since then, the county has added River Bend and Cascadia parks, Clear Lake Resort and remodeled John Neal and Whitcomb Creek. The county also manages six rustic Forest Service campgrounds on the South Santiam River near Cascadia.

And in 2024, Linn County will begin managing another 400 camping spots owned by the U.S. Forest Service in Linn and Marion counties. King said some people come to the office window on the second floor of the Road Department building on Ferry Street, but most reservations are made by phone — although now they are made on-line. She said about 70% of reservations are made on-line and 30% by phone or in person.

“I’ve had people recognize me at Fred Meyer by my voice,” King said with a laugh. Through those brief conversations, King has developed a second family. She has shared stories about birthdays, weddings and yes, even deaths of loved ones as well.

“I can make reservations for



Karrie King says she has made many friends over the last 24 years in her work making reservations for families at the Linn County Parks & Recreation Department — many of whom she has never met.

“July and August used to be our really heavy months because people could make reservations a year in advance,” King said. “So, they would make a reservation while they were camping. Now, we take reservations nine months in advance, so it eases that congestion in July and August and moves the busy time into October and November, which is a bit more manageable.” King said a big part of her job is knowing a lot of information about every campground. “How big are the slips, what amenities are there, that kind of thing,” King said. “I will have to learn a lot about the new Forest Service campgrounds. I start by asking people what type of camping they like. Tent? RV? Motorhome?” Linn County has something for everyone, King said. From rustic tent sites to group camping with room for motorhomes. “Whatever people like, we have something for them,” King said.

In addition to making reservations for others, King and her family are parks users.



“We like Whitcomb Creek a lot,” King said. King and her husband, Kevin, have two sons, Kaine, 30, and Kole, 24. When she isn’t working, King enjoys spending time playing with cars — a 1956 Chevy, 1978 and 1979 Trans Am Firebirds, 1970 drag racing truck and her Dodge Challenger SRT daily driver. She and Kevin are members of the American Street Masters car club.



On-line parks reservations

Linn County Campgrounds: www.linnparks.com

Forest Service Campgrounds: www.recreation.gov



Campfire-grilled pineapple upside down cake

Courtesy Lyda Jones Burnette
Country Living Magazine

Who says that camping has to mean roughing it? This five-ingredient campfire-grilled pineapple upside-down cake goes way beyond charred marshmallows for an impressively-memorable classic dessert. The secret is to get an already-prepared poundcake. Grilled pineapples and an easy-to-make glaze come together quickly — and then whole deal gets well caramelized, either over hot coals or on the grill. Grandma would be proud — and so would Grandpa!

YIELDS:

8 serving(s)

PREP TIME: 20 mins **TOTAL TIME:** 40 mins

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 2 tbsp. light brown sugar
- 3 slices fresh pineapple
- 3 stemless maraschino cherries
- 1 (12-ounce) store-bought pound cake

Step 1

Heat a campfire or grill to medium-high. Lightly grease an 18- by 18-inch piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Place butter pieces in a single layer on foil, to fit pound cake dimensions. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly over butter. Fit pineapple in a straight line over center and place a cherry in center of each piece. Turn pound cake upside down on pineapple. Bring aluminum foil together, folding to seal tightly.

Step 2

Grill, pineapple side down, rotating occasionally, until caramelized and you hear brown sugar and butter sizzling, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 10 minutes.

Step 3

Carefully unwrap cake. Let cool for at least 10 minutes before slicing.



Native Encampments 2024

Linn County Parks

- **June 28-30:** *Roaring River Park*
- **July 19-21:** *Waterloo County Park*
- **August 23-25:** *Cascadia County Park*

FREE and open to the public!

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