



# Hood River News KALEIDOSCOPE

Wednesday, May 8, 2013 **B1**



## ‘Real is Right’

### Lost Lake Resort’s new management spruces up amenities while staying true to rustic experience

*Rooms, cabins renovated, sense of place and history remain*

By **ADAM LAPIERRE**  
News staff writer

For life-long valley locals and out-of-towners alike, Lost Lake is a magical place that gets better with each and every visit.

Fresh mountain air and marshmallows roasting on sticks, boats and blissful dogs splashing in the pristine water, crackling campfires, pancakes and eggs on griddles, crawdads hiding under rocks, trout tugging on the ends of rods, frogs in chorus at sunset, stars like diamonds, skyscraper trees layered in lazy green moss, naps in the shade, pine needles and flip-flops, wading aimlessly, drying-by- campfire, bugspray at breakfast, lemonade at lunch and drinks at dinner, afternoons spent unwinding beneath the unforgettable backdrop of Mount Hood: just a few lasting memories that await visitors of the rustic lakeside resort and campground.

With patches of snow still on the ground and lining roads and hillsides around the lake, the resort opened for limited camping this week and will continue to expand availability through the spring until all 127 sites are open. In addition to camping facilities, the resort’s lodge has six rooms and seven nearby cabins for guests to rent — all of which have undergone a major facelift since last season.

Improvements to rooms — and especially cabins — were long overdue, but to new resort management (see accompanying article for details) the goal was to add comfort while restoring original rustic charm of the facilities, not modernizing them.

“My philosophy is ‘real is right,’” co-owner Jason Taylor said. “For almost 80 years people have come to Lost Lake for a certain atmosphere and experience. We have an amazing lake in front of us, and we want to stay true to its history and the experience people come here for.”

The seven cabins were in “rough shape,” Taylor said, and needed quite a bit of work; one will be rebuilt entirely. When renovations on all of them are complete, they’ll look and feel like they were in their prime more than 50 years ago and will include a community fire pit overlooking a corner of the lake.

In the lodge, which has burned down and been rebuilt twice in its history, six rooms above the general store have been completely gutted and

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Photos by Adam Lapierre

**LOST LAKE RESORT** is open for the season and has undergone some major improvements to its facilities. Pictured are (top to bottom) a classic view of the lake and Mount Hood as seen on Sunday afternoon, resort co-owner Jason Taylor in front of the lodge, one of the lodge’s six rooms that was completely remodeled, a group fire pit and rental cabins next to the lake and lodge, bright red and white row boats after being refurbished, (left) the lodge’s long-time Sasquatch carving and (right) cabin No. 7, which sleeps up to nine.



*Owners take new approach to running historic business*

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**  
News editor

The futons are gone, but the view remains forever.

A six-figure renovation effort continues at Lost Lake Resort and campground, which reopened May 1 for campers, lodge and cabin guests, hikers and boaters.

This is the first full season for concession owners Jason Taylor and Derek DeBorde, who took over in August 2012 from former owners Roy and Barbara Hillmick.

Under an agreement with the United States Forest Service, which owns the land, the owners have the concession permit for Lost Lake and several other area campgrounds.

As DeBorde said in an Aug. 22, 2012 Hood River News article, “it’s a partnership with the Forest Service and we’re working with them on ideas to maintain the lake and all the other campgrounds and make improvements along the way.”

Many of the improvements are done or are in progress, as described by Adam Lapierre’s report on this page.

“It’s going super well,” Taylor said of the interior and exterior improvements, which also include an upgrade to the water system’s electrical equipment, and a planned replacement of the boat dock later this summer.

In the cabins and lodge, “Almost all of the old furnishings have been replaced.” Velvet paintings and a futon have been replaced by historic photos and king and queen beds with memory foam mattresses.

Outside, Taylor said hikers will see improvements “on every bridge and every railing” on the trail around the lake, extensive cutting of brush that impeded the trails, as well as better access to the six adjoining trails. These include the hidden gem known as Old Growth Trail, built by the Forest Service in the 1980s.

Via Facebook and other publicity methods, Taylor and DeBorde are doing more to publicize the trails that connect at Lost Lake, including the fact that the Pacific Crest Trail passes right through.

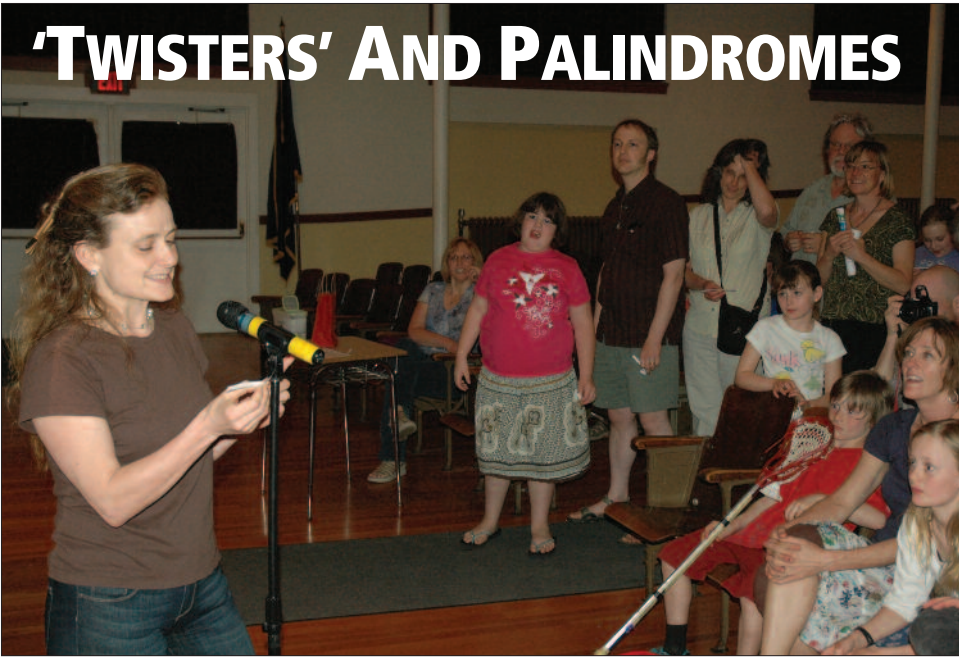
“We also spent a huge portion of the winter rebuilding picnic tables, with wood milled in Hood River,” Taylor said. “It’s not really glamorous but

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Bruce Ludwig, center at right, won the third annual Tongue Twister Tournament for Hood River SMART on April 26. With him are runners- up Rachel Harry and Michael Schock. At top right, Marti Kantola tries a tongue twister, while others wait their turns, in the “open mic” portion of the event, at Hood River Middle School. The benefit raised about \$1,900 for the literacy program that serves children grades K-3. Above, Portland comic Mark Saltveit talked about palindromes – phrases that read the same way backwards and forwards — and read several he wrote for the occasion, including “Al left ram, SMART fella”. For 2012 champion Kim Vogel, Saltveit wrote this palindrome: “Hot sin ode! Hero glare, Vogel? A leg over Al Gore, hedonist? Oh!”



Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea



## LOST

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remodeled. Each room will have a theme based on local history and, other than upgrades like linen service and ten-inch memory foam mattresses, were designed to give guests the quaint lakeside feel of decades past.

“The demand here is in-

credible because of this incredible lake we have here; that’s really what this whole place is about,” Taylor said. “In terms of lodging, there is a big demand for people who don’t want to set up a tent and camp. Rooms and cabins have been available for a long time, but the product wasn’t always great.”

Contrary to the campground, which is run on a first-come-first-served basis, lodge rooms and cabins are

booked by reservation either online or over the phone. The new owners have made various other improvements to the resort’s facilities, including salvaging and restoring the fleet of old wooden rowboats that had faded over time. The boats, dating back to the 1950s, Taylor guesses, have been repainted the same shiny red and white and are ready for another summer of fun on the lake.

### Campground openings:

Nottingham – May 1  
Sherwood – May 1  
8 Mile – May 1  
Lower 8 Mile – May 1  
Knebal Spring – May 1  
Pebble Ford – May 1  
Laurance Lake – May 17  
Blake Lake – June 1  
Cloud Cap – June 14  
Rainy Lake – June 1  
Tilly Jane – June 14  
Wahtum Lake – June 1

## LAKE

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people will notice the improvement. Most of the old tables we had to discard.”

Right now Lost Lake Lodge and Campground employs seven people; that will increase to about 15 in mid-summer.

Among the friendly faces you can expect to see are campground hosts – a first at Lost Lake – and manager Trent Weseman.

“Trent is an incredible manager,” Taylor said. “He knows everybody in all of Hood River and Parkdale. We couldn’t do it without him.”

Taylor and DeBorde are seeing the impacts of their efforts to expand awareness of the facility via social media.

“We went from 1,200 to 9,700 (Facebook) views, and it happened in the past 60-70 days,” Taylor said.

Other changes this summer include selling barbecue meals at the lodge, and the installation of tent-like structures known as “yomes” for overnight use, both in July and August, when the facility is at its most popular.

At this point a year ago the lodge and cabins had around a dozen reservations – this week they have 120.

“We’re telling people ‘it’s beautiful here and we’re making all these changes, so check out what we’re doing,’” Taylor said.

“There are so many people here (in the county) and Portland who didn’t know Lost Lake exists,” said Taylor, who adds photos and videos to Facebook every day, including his “Lost Lake in one minute” video, which received 400 likes in its first 24 hours.

“It’s such an amazingly gorgeous place and it just sells itself if you let people know the jewel that is here,” said Taylor, who with DeBorde own or operate several farms in the Dee area, just down the road from the lake.

“Lost Lake is an investment for me, but the idea that permeates all of my businesses, is that the greatest businesses you can be in have these incredible assets, and this is one the public owns, but there is nothing I have to build: this is the most breathtaking place in the world.”

■  
To reach Lost Lake, take Dee Highway south out of Hood River and turn on Lost Lake Road and travel 10 miles. The trip usually takes approximately 45 minutes.

## Timing is everything

### If stroke strikes, call 911.

**Think FAST**

**Face** Face look uneven?  
Ask the person to smile.

**Arm** One arm numb or drifting down?  
Ask the person to raise both arms.

**Speech** Slurred or jumbled speech?  
Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence.

**Time** If any of these signs occur, even briefly:  
Get help immediately. Call 911!

To view a FAST video, scan the QR code with a smartphone.

May is American Stroke Month. Learn about stroke prevention and the importance of getting help FAST at [www.providenceFAST.org](http://www.providenceFAST.org).