

Welcome!

Olive Lake Campground

History

Olive Lake is one of the few naturally occurring lakes in this part of the Blue Mountains. Around 1903, the owners of the Red Boy Mine decided to build a hydroelectric power plant to replace expensive steam power and thus improve profits. A crew began work in 1905 on a log-crib dam at the lake's outlet, which raised the lake level 35 feet. A second dam was constructed in a wet meadow above Olive Lake to create a secondary reservoir.

Crews then ran a pipeline constructed of wooden staves wrapped by steel coils eight miles to the Fremont Powerhouse. Here the water drove 2 large turbines to produce electricity for local miners and homesteads. Fremont Powerhouse operated until 1967. At the time of closure, the California-Pacific Utilities Company deeded the powerhouse, including the dam, over to the Forest Service.

The lake got its name from the wife of a local miner (or dam caretaker depending on the story). Olive was known for her generosity and any passerby would be invited to stay for a meal or even the night. Remains of a cabin can still be found down the old road at the back of campsite #10.

Local Attractions

The lake provides fishing, swimming, and boating opportunities; however personal watercraft (i.e. Skidoos) and water skiing are not permitted. A 2-mile long trail encircles the lake and is available for hiking. The trail can be accessed at the dam and along the lakeshore near campsite 26.

Nearby (8 miles east) is the Fremont Powerhouse complex. The powerhouse was constructed in 1905 to supply electricity to the many local mines.

Details

- Elevation 6,000 feet
- 22 single campsites, 4 tent only/walk-in sites, and 2 group sites
- 1 day use picnic site
- 7 vault toilets
- Boat ramp & 2 docks
- 2 mile hiking trail around lake
- No potable water or garbage service

Please Enjoy Your Stay!

North Fork John Day Ranger District
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www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/

