

While away warm days at swimming holes

By Chester Allen | The Olympian • Published June 25, 2008



Deep Lake at Millersylvania State Park is one of many South Sound places where you can enjoy warm afternoons with swimming and sandy beaches. (Steven M. Herppich/The Olympian)

What: Summer swimming holes in South Sound.

To do: Summer — everyone knock on wood — seems to have finally arrived in South Sound, and that means hitting the swimming hole on warm afternoons. South Sound has a lot of natural swimming areas, but it's important to remember that most of them don't have lifeguards. Here are a few popular spots:

Deep Lake

Deep Lake at Millersylvania State Park has two nice, sandy swimming beaches. There are sandy shallows for little kids. Buoys mark the swimming areas, but there is no lifeguard, so parents should keep a close eye on the kids.

To get to Millersylvania, take Interstate 5 south to Exit 95. Follow the offramp as it curls around toward Maytown Road. Follow Maytown Road to Tilley Road. Turn left on Tilley Road. Turn into Millersylvania State Park at the sign.

Tenino Quarry Pool

The Tenino Quarry Pool — a gorgeous, deep pool nestled into the terraced hillside of an old sandstone quarry — opens for the summer July 4. The spring-fed pool has a shallow area for little kids, and a deep area with high and low diving boards.

The water is 90 to 100 feet deep at the diving area. There is a lifeguard, and all swimmers pay a small fee.

The pool is open from noon to 7 p.m.

To get to the pool, take Capitol Boulevard south — it becomes Old Highway 99 — to Tenino. In Tenino, the highway makes a T-intersection with Sussex Avenue, which also is state Route 507. Turn right on Sussex Avenue, then left onto Howard Street. Follow Howard Street to Park Avenue and Tenino City Park.

For more information, call 360-264-2368.

Kenneydell County Park

Kenneydell County Park, on Black Lake, is a popular swimming area. There is a swimming float; 1,000 feet of nice beach; and lots of company on warm, sunny days.

Kenneydell does not have a lifeguard, so don't swim alone, and parents should watch their children. Know your swimming skills and don't take risks. A college student lost his life at the swim area in 2004.

There is warm, shallow water right off the beach.

To get to Kenneydell, take Black Lake Boulevard to Black Lake-Belmore Road and turn left. Follow Black Lake-Belmore Road to 66th Avenue. Turn right onto 66th Avenue, which makes a sharp curve and becomes Fairview Road. The park entrance is shortly after the curve.

For more information, call Thurston County Parks and Recreation at 360-786-5595 or go to www.co.thurston.wa.us/parks.

Long Lake Park

Long Lake Park, in Lacey near the Thurston County Fairgrounds, is one of the most popular swimming holes in South Sound.

The park has 285 feet of beach on Long Lake. This beach gets lively on warm afternoons.

There is no lifeguard.

The park is at 2790 Carpenter Road S.E., Lacey.

For more information, call 360-491-0857 or go to www.ci.lacey.wa.us/parks.

Equipment: Don't forget the sunscreen, towels, drinks, snacks, sunglasses — and raingear. This is still Western Washington, after all.