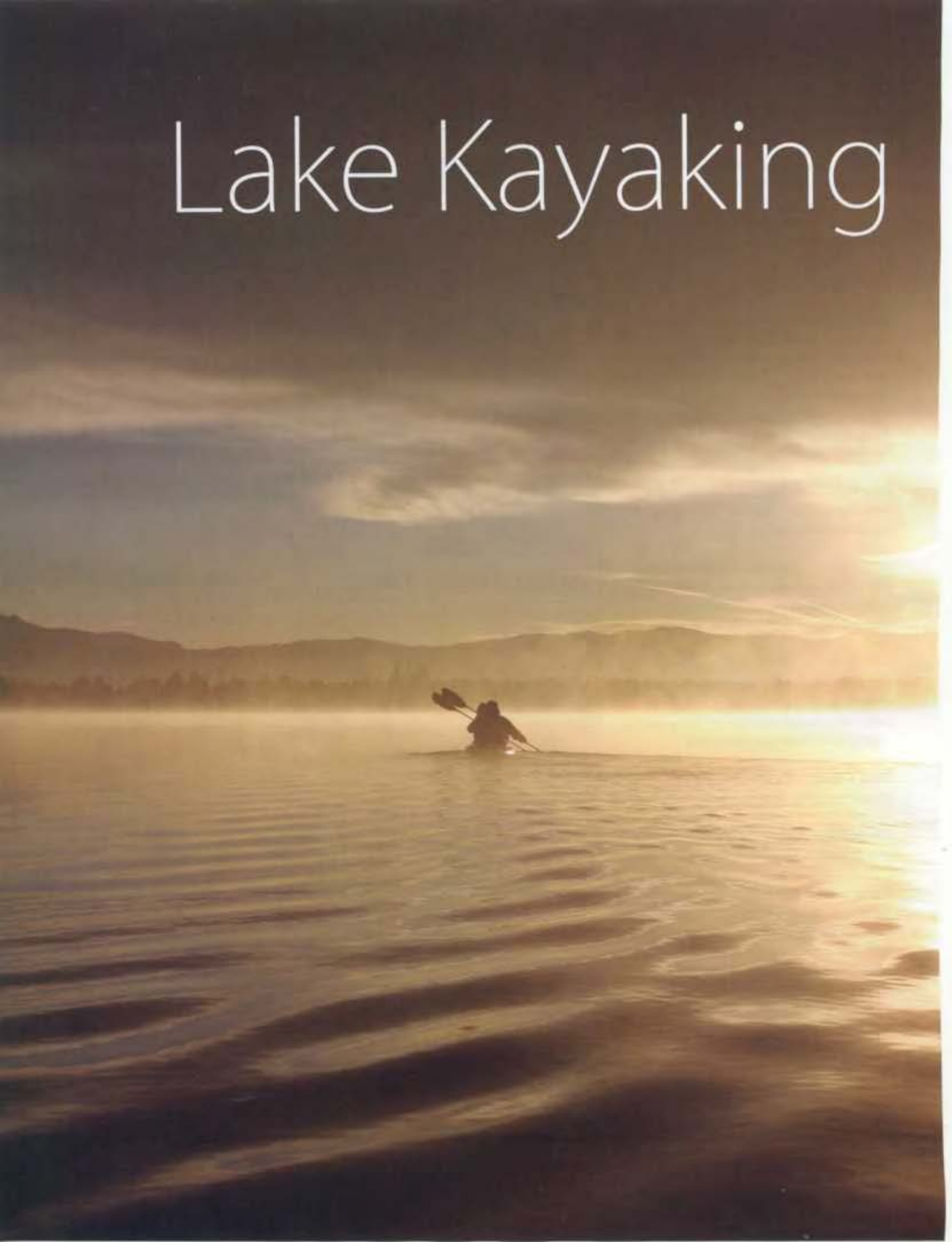


Lake Kayaking



Paddling the *tranquil* waters of Lake Cascade & Little Payette Lake



Text By Steve Stuebner

Photos By Sherri Harkin of Tamarack Resort

On a spring day in May, my friend Wendy and I launched our Mad River Explorer canoe in the North Fork arm of Cascade Lake, just downstream from Tamarack Falls Bridge. Just minutes after we launched, we saw a golden eagle perched in a tall ponderosa pine on the lake shore.

It should have been an immature bald eagle,

we thought, but the bird's coloration indicated it was a mature golden eagle. Having spent several years with Idaho's great champion for birds of prey, Morley Nelson, I knew the difference. But what was that golden eagle doing by the lakeshore? It certainly wasn't going to dive for fish. Golden eagles go after rabbits, marmots, and lots of ground-based game.



Seconds later, we hear the tell-tale sound of sandhill cranes flying overhead, with their prehistoric sounding croaky call.

“...there are interesting things to see along the shoreline
-from wildlife to trophy homes.”

In a matter of minutes, as we looked around, Wendy excitedly spouted the names of a variety of duck species as she spied through the binoculars. “Oh, there’s a pair of American widgeons,” she says. “Look over there, I can see several pairs of Northern Shovelers and cinnamon teal!”

“Check out the Tundra swans over there on the right shoreline,” I chime in.

Seconds later, we hear the tell-tale sound of sandhill cranes flying overhead, with their prehistoric sounding croaky call. Red-tailed hawks fly over the top of the pine trees, looking for an unsuspecting vole in the fields beyond. Bald eagles and ospreys patrol the shoreline for fish. And of course, western grebes—one of the most common species in the lake, pop up to the surface of the water and dive frequently for a meal.

Keep looking for birds, and you’ll see an amazing diversity of species. The upper forks of Lake Cascade and the shoreline of the main lake can be a true bonanza for birding in the spring, summer and fall. The upper forks of the lake are particularly well-suited for



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paddling canoes or lake kayaks because they are relatively sheltered from the wind, and there are interesting things to see along the shoreline—from wildlife to trophy homes.

Little Payette Lake in McCall is another fine destination for still-water paddling in canoes or kayaks. Big Payette Lake can be a cool place for canoes and kayaks in the late evening hours or early morning, but during the day, the lake is much too busy with motorboats and jet skis. Little Payette Lake has a number of interesting nooks and crannies, and it has its share of wildlife, particularly ospreys. Wendy and I saw numerous osprey nests the last time we paddled across Little Payette Lake, including some that were occupied with young. We also found a private beach in one of the hidden coves on the east shoreline, a perfect place for swimming.

You don't have to have your own canoe or kayak to enjoy these two still-water paddling destinations. Tamarack Resort provides guided



lake kayaking trips from its waterfront base of operations at Poison Creek Campground and Boat Launch. And this year, folks can rent kayaks, as well as sail boats and pontoon boats. Tamarack's lake kayak trips are particularly geared toward wildlife interpretation and basic paddling instruction.

For more information, please call Tamarack Guest Services, 208-325-1005.

CANOE RENTAL

People can rent canoes or kayaks from:

- The Water's Edge RV Park in Cascade, 382-3120.
- Gravity Sports in McCall, 634-8530.
- Cheap Thrills in McCall, 634-7472.
- Tamarack Resort, 325-1000.



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