

STA helps establish snowshoe trail

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

In spite of the increasing popularity of snowshoeing in Central Oregon, the Sisters area has never had a dedicated snowshoe trail. Until now. The Peak View Snowshoe Trail is now official and connects the Upper Three Creek SnoPark with the Jefferson View Shelter.

In a cooperative project, the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA), the Central Oregon Nordic Club (CONC), and the Deschutes National Forest have collaborated to bring this new trail into existence within the boundaries of the Three Creek Winter Recreation Complex.

STA volunteer Patrick Eckford has been one of those active in the development of the new trail and observed, "User conflict between snowshoers and skiers has been growing, and this led to the idea of providing some separate dedicated routes. It was Bob Timmer of CONC who led the effort to get this trail approved."

Amy Racki, Forest Service recreation team leader for the Sisters Ranger District, presented some of the history behind the project as outlined by Timmer in the original proposal. Specifically, it was noted that the Upper Three Creek SnoPark was developed to support Nordic skiing and snowmobiling. However, snowshoeing caught on as a recreational activity in the early 1990s; and, for years, snowshoers have shared the trails with Nordic skiers.

The goals of the new trail are to alleviate congestion between skiers and snowshoers from the SnoPark to the shelter, to provide more expansive views of the Cascades via the snowshoe route, and to provide a slightly shorter snowshoe



PHOTO PROVIDED

STA volunteers recently completed a new, dedicated snowshoe trail to the Jefferson View Shelter south of the Upper Three Creek SnoPark.

route to the shelter.

Historically, as the number of snowshoers increased, dedicated snowshoe trails were created to the south, first at the Meissner SnoPark, outside of Bend, and later at the Swampy, Dutchman and Edison SnoParks. In those areas, the dedicated snowshoe trails became very popular and greatly reduced trail conflicts. The Peak View Snowshoe Trail now becomes the first such dedicated trail in the Sisters area.

This new recreational opportunity did not just happen overnight. "For quite a few years now," Eckford said, "individual STA members have unofficially been helping with maintenance of the Nordic trails system. Starting in the 2017-18 season, STA officially signed a Volunteer Service Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to be the official adopters of record and have since been working on various projects, including opening up the unmaintained Snow Creek Trail (320 trees removed), periodically clearing the main loop trails of downed trees and debris, replacing assurance

markers and signage, planting PVC snow poles ... and maintaining and repairing the Jefferson View Shelter."

The new trail is approximately 1.75 miles long and reaches the Jefferson View Shelter on a route that bisects the paths of the existing ski trails. Construction was just finished last week through the hard work of a 14-member volunteer crew. The route is described as "easy-to-moderate, with wonderful mountain views." It is expected that it will relieve some of the traffic on the heavily used Nordic trails. Trail markers were installed thanks to a grant from the Deschutes Trails Coalition.

Eckford is quite enthusiastic about the new trail and the effort that went into creating it. "The collaboration between the Forest Service, Central Oregon Nordic Club, and the Sisters Trails Alliance has been excellent and serves as a great example of what can be accomplished in the budget-strapped environment the Forest Service operates in these days."

Now, the only thing still needed is some snow.

Sagen reigns...



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

The completed carving of the god of chainsaws looms at Sisters Rental, carved by Skip Armstrong.

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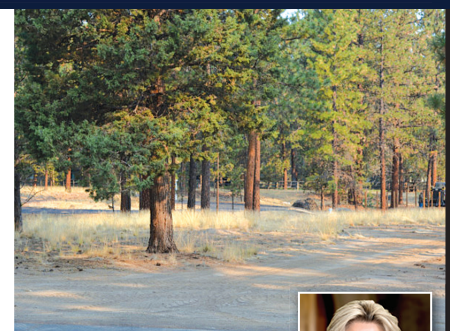
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