



PHOTO COURTESY BLACK BUTTE ECO BIKERS

Black Butte Eco Bikers engaged in the creative art portion of their summer explorations.

ECO BIKING: Youngsters got out into the woods this summer

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for the year. But one of her faithful volunteers, the father of one of her regular bikers, Matt Middlestetter, reached out and made some suggestions. Then a mom, another faithful follower of the bikers, got them all together to discuss the Oregon Health Authority's guidelines for summer day camps, and ideas began to flow.

And, according to Walden, this was the outcome:

"The kids have all been wonderful and the parents all very supportive as well. We wore masks and had hand sanitizer spray. We reduced the hours and split the group into two smaller groups every other week. The previous year we had discussed splitting the group up, so it was already in the plan for this season."

And away they went.

One week they had the younger group, "regular" program, and the next week was the group of older boys that Walden named "The Advanced JR Trail Masters Team."

Many of the older kids had outgrown the basic simplicity of the program to explore nature, learn about butterflies and noxious weeds, and visit the landfill transfer center to learn about the recycle programs.

Walden observed, "They had all become quite good at riding and were more interested in the art of mountain biking. They all nicknamed it Bike Camp. They loved the summer memories of riding bikes with friends and swimming at Suttle Lake and all the various art projects we had made at the lake. All kids love art! The kids' all-time favorite is making boats out of natural materials and then racing the boats in the creek."

Since Walden and her volunteers wanted to keep the kids riding and exploring into nature, it became clear that in the coming years they would be old enough to organize

rides with friends themselves. So they focused on teaching them how to read maps and understand trails to evaluate the routes before riding, along with enforcing the need for all the safety gear in their packs before heading out into the forest.

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Stampeding past obstacles...



PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

The Sisters Stampede went off over the Labor Day weekend, putting 208 dedicated mountain bikers on the Peterson Ridge Trails for an event postponed from its traditional Memorial Day slot. The event was a little less than half the size of the usual event, and cyclists had to contend with smoky conditions, but riders of a range of ages and skill levels still managed to get in some action on the trail, which has become a regional destination in the mountain biking community.

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