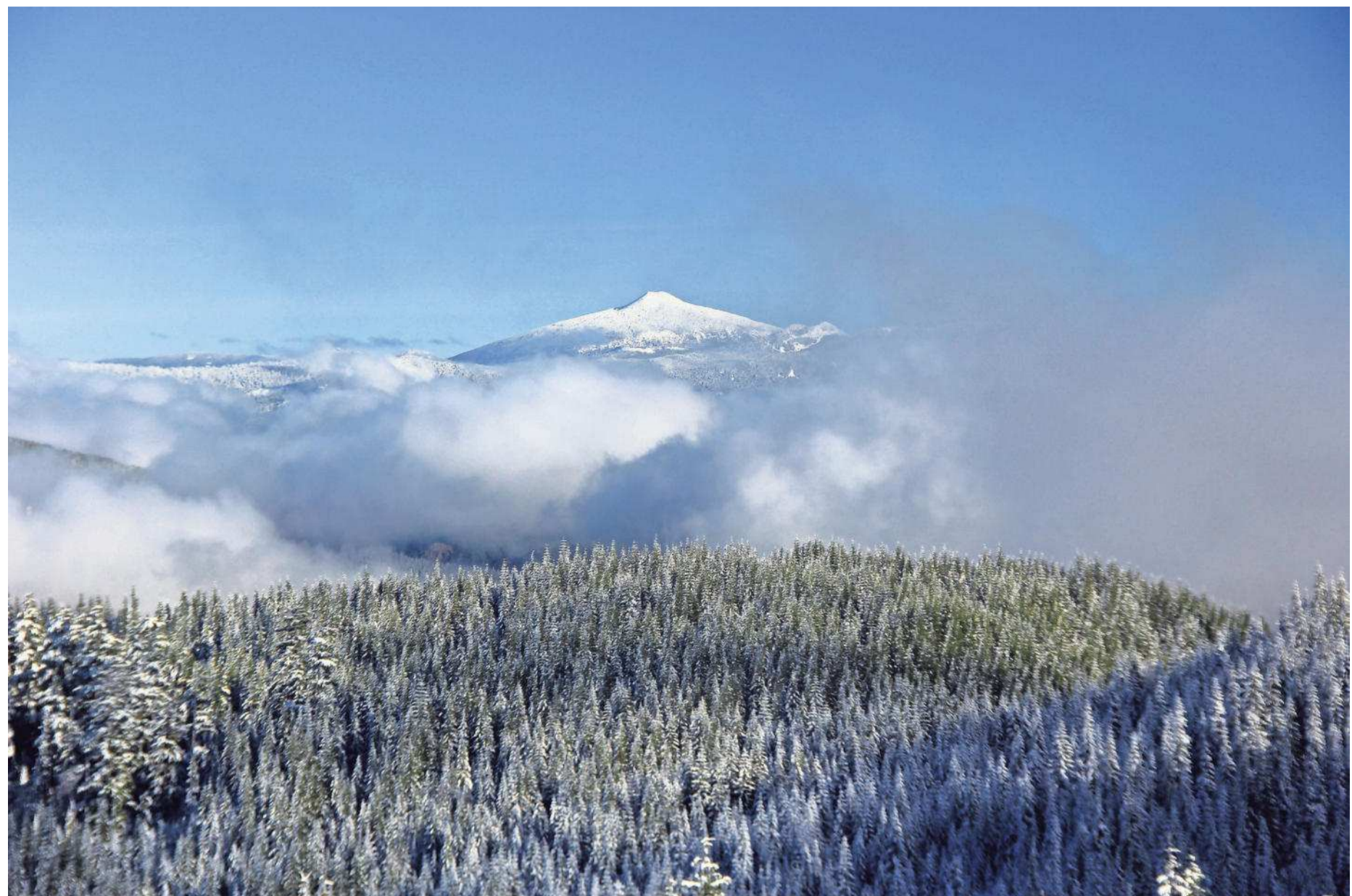


Life *in the* Valley

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PHOTOS BY ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

The views from the ridgeline in the higher elevations of Tumble Ridge Trail spread across the mountains in winter.

HIKE TO SNOW

Tumble Ridge Trail is an hour away, accessible year-round

ZACH URNESS
STATESMAN JOURNAL

Note: A version of this story originally was published in the Statesman Journal on Dec. 20, 2012.

It has arrived. Snow is filling the Cascade Mountains, which means those who enjoy tramping through the white stuff are getting their cold-weather gear ready. The question is where to begin. Sno-parks on Santiam and Willamette passes are wonderful but require a long drive. Enter Tumble Ridge Trail, a path that begins right next to Detroit Lake and offers a multitude of excellent options for a quick escape into the snow, with one obvious drawback. First the good stuff.

Tumble Ridge trailhead is an hour's drive from Salem and accessible year-round because it begins off Highway 22 at 1,564 feet. No sno-park permit is required, and the low elevation start means you often begin on dry or soggy ground before climbing up into the snow.

The downside? The trail is steep, climbing at a lung-busting grade.

Luckily, there are three distinctly different options for hikers and snowshoers to consider.

A hike of 4.6 miles (round-trip) and 1,564 feet of climb will get you into the snowy woods and provide a stunning view of Detroit Lake.

For deep powder and ridgeline views across the mountains, the cost of admission is 7.4 miles and 2,641 feet of climb.

Finally, if you're seeking real adventure and don't mind navigating through the snow, Dome Rock can be reached with 11 miles and 3,270-feet of work.

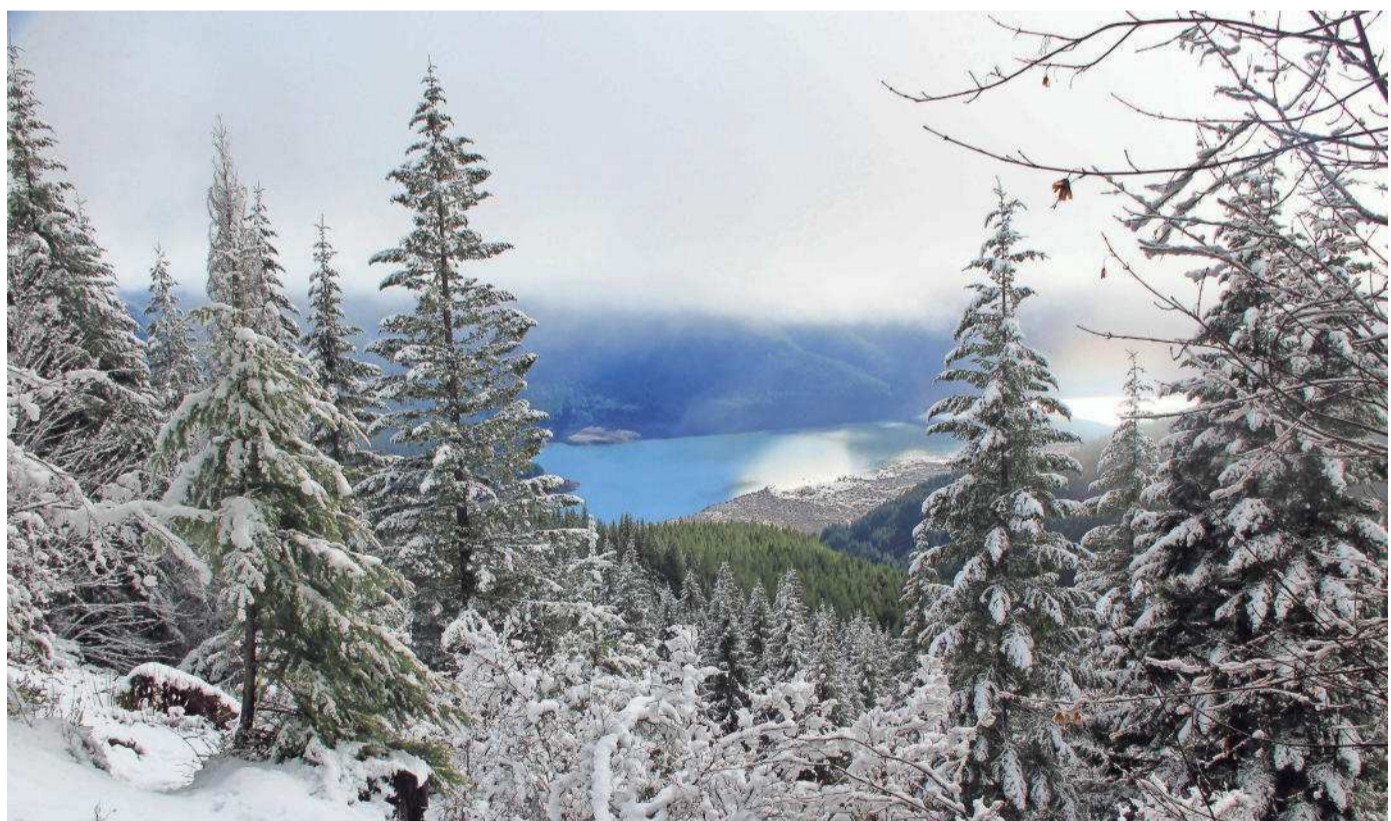
Just be warned: While the trail is fairly easy to follow in the beginning, the deeper the snow, the more difficult the route becomes.

Those heading for higher elevations should be dressed appropriately, have a good map or GPS, and the skill to navigate in conditions that can turn harsh in an instant.

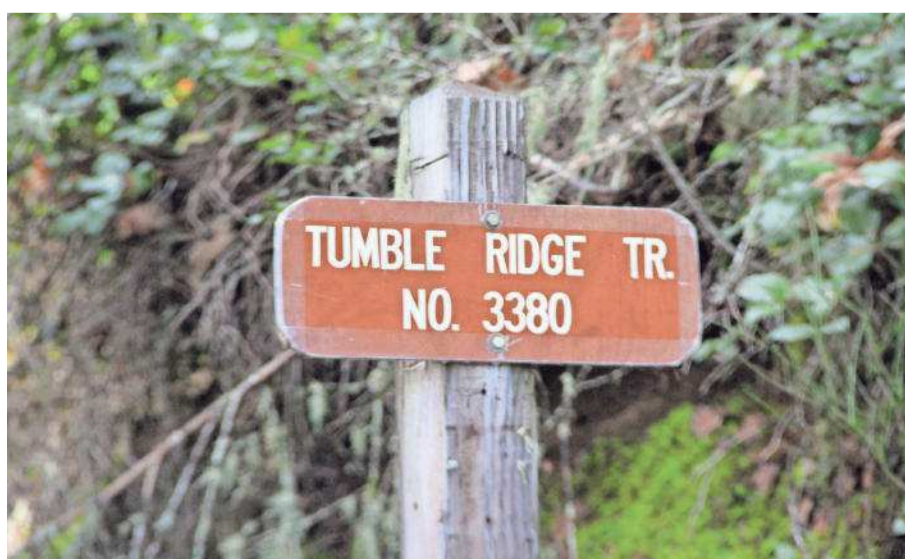
Trail breakdown

The trail begins peacefully. From the pullout on Highway 22, the trail follows an old gated road along Tumble Creek for 0.4 miles until a sign on the right ushers in the steepest section of trail.

Switchbacks bring you up the mountain, through a wooded landscape that eventually starts filling with snow. The view of Detroit Lake is a highlight, and at the 3-mile mark, there's an open



The view of Detroit Lake seen from Tumble Ridge Trail during winter is outstanding.



This sign is at the trailhead of Tumble Ridge Trail.

clear-cut with some nice views. The next landmark is an old road with a sign, and just beyond is the ridgeline with views in every direction.

There are plenty of rewards beyond this point — Needle Rock, Dome Rock and Tumble Lake — but those exploring this snowy area do so at their own risk.

Zach Urness has been an outdoors writer, photographer and videographer in Oregon for eight years. He is the author of the book "Hiking Southern Oregon" and can be reached at zurness@StatesmanJournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

If you go

Location: Detroit

Driving directions: From Salem, follow Highway 22 east toward Detroit. Past mile marker 48, on the far side of the bridge over Tumble Creek, turn left into a small turnout parking area. The trail begins on an old road, around a green gate.

Distance from Salem: About one hour

Adventure: Hike/snowshoe/ski

Winter breakdown: The first 2 miles and 1,000 feet are typically clear of snow, except during low-elevation winter storms. Above that, snow begins to get heavier as the elevation increases.

Trailhead elevation: 1,564 feet

Trail options/difficulty: Detroit Lake overlook, 4.6 miles round trip, 1,564 feet climb (moderately difficult); ridgeline view, 7.4 miles, 2,641 feet (difficult); Dome Rock, 11 miles, 3,270 feet (very difficult)

Maps/Contact: Detroit ranger station, (503) 854-3366

Fees: None

Kids: Not unless they enjoy difficult trails in snow

Dogs: Must be under voice command