

Outdoors

WINTER FUN



A group of skiers stand in front of a mountain skyline at Ray Benson Sno-Park. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

Your guide to all the activities at the Santiam Pass sno-parks

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Winter is staying in Oregon's mountains.

As such, it's time for skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers and sledders to find powdery fun at Santiam Pass' collection of sno-parks.

A seasonal permit of \$25 will give you access to 11 different parks east of Salem, along with the miles of trails they provide access to.

Each park is different. Some, like McCoy, are havens for snowmobilers. Others, like Maxwell, cater to snowshoers looking for scenery. Santiam is the place for sledding, while Ray Benson can't be beat for cross-county skiing.

There is, in a nutshell, something for everyone.

Here's a short breakdown, ranked from lowest to highest elevation, of what each sno-park offers. The best way to navigate sno-parks' numerous trails is to stop at Detroit Ranger Station and pick up a Santiam Pass winter recreation map. Call ahead to check hours: (503) 854-3366.

(Always be prepared for winter conditions when driving in the mountains).

Maxwell Sno-Park

In a nutshell: A favorite for snowshoers and cross-country skiers, with 360-degree mountain views, two snow shelters and a wide collection of well-marked trails ranging in difficulty

Elevation: 3,700 feet
Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing

Trails: Seven trails totaling 22.8 miles

Difficulty: Easy to most difficult
Shelters: Mountain View Shelter (on Mountain View Loop) and South Maxwell Shelter (on South Maxwell Loop)
Amenities: Bathrooms
Usage: Medium to heavy

Directions: Drive east on Highway 22 for 81 miles (3 miles before Santiam Junction). Maxwell Sno-Park is on the left and has a narrow entrance to a large parking area hidden behind a stand of trees (across from Big Springs Sno-Park).

Big Springs Sno-Park

In a nutshell: Wooded snowshoe routes that lead all the way to Lava Lake, with snowmobile access to a 40-mile network of trails

Elevation: 3,700 feet
Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling

Trails: Five trails of 15.8 miles for skis/snowshoes; 40 miles of snowmobile trail access

Difficulty: Easy to most difficult
Shelters: None
Amenities: Bathrooms
Usage: Light

Directions: From Salem, take Highway 22 east for about 81 miles (3 miles before Santiam Junction). Big Springs is on right side of highway (just across from Maxwell Sno-Park).

Potato Hill Sno-Park

In a nutshell: Old-growth forest and panoramic views of Three Fingered Jack

and Mount Washington near the top of namesake hill, on a popular and fairly easy snowshoeing route

Elevation: 4,200 feet
Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing
Trails: Two trails totaling 6.2 miles
Difficulty: Easy to more difficult
Shelters: None
Amenities: None
Usage: Light

Directions: Take Highway 22 east 84 miles to the Highway 20/Highway 126 Santiam Junction. Continue east on Highway 20 another mile to parking area on right side of road.

Santiam Sno-Park

In a nutshell: Best-known for the "snow play" area, which includes a sledding/tubing hill popular with families. Also provides access to Pacific Crest Trail and the backcountry area around Three Fingered Jack.

Elevation: 4,800 feet
Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing, tubing

Trails: One trail of 1.2 miles that connects to the Pacific Crest Trail into the Mount Jefferson Wilderness. Not marked beyond wilderness boundary.

Difficulty: Easy
Shelters: None
Amenities: Bathrooms
Usage: Heavy, mostly among sledders.

Directions: Take Highway 22 east 84 miles to the Highway 20/Highway 126 Santiam Junction. Continue east on Highway 20 for another 5 miles, passing the turnoff to Hoodoo Ski Area, to the parking area on the left.

Ray Benson Sno-Park

In a nutshell: The largest and best-known sno-park on Santiam Pass, with views of the surrounding mountains and a large network of trails. The favorite destination of cross-county skiers.

Elevation: 4,800 feet
Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, mushing (sled dogs)

Trails: Eight trails totaling 67.7 miles, with snowshoeing/skiing (six), snowmobiling (three), mushing (one)

Difficulty: Easy to most difficult
Shelters: North Blowout Shelter and South Blowout Shelter

Amenities: Two restrooms, warming hut, orientation maps, staging area with snub posts for sled dogs
Usage: Heavy

Directions: Take Highway 22 east 84 miles to the Highway 20/Highway 126 Santiam Junction. Continue east on Highway 20 for another 5 miles. Turn right on Forest Road 2690, which is the entrance of Ray Benson Sno-Park and Hoodoo Ski Area. Continue past Hoodoo another half a mile into the Ray Benson parking lot.

Ikenick Sno-Park

One of the least-known snowshoe routes on Santiam Pass begins at a sno-park with a goofy name.

Ikenick Sno-Park, just off Highway 126, sits at the fairly low elevation of 3,200 feet. Because of that, it hasn't gotten much snow since 2011 and consequently hasn't had many visitors.

The Isaac Nickerson Loop is 4.4 miles and climbs 472 feet, passing multiple viewpoints of the Cascade Range and

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Computer trouble is conquered, kinda sorta



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

Sometimes, as the old saying goes, it's better to be lucky than good.

Case in point: The hard drive on my desktop computer expired on Sunday.

There were no warning death rattles, as was the case for a drive on a previous computer; no unexplained clicks or ticks; no expensive noises like your car or truck makes the week after the parts-and-labor warranty expires.

The screen just went dark. Mechanical CPR in the form of "disk repair initiated" sprang into action with a warning that the resuscitation efforts could take more than an hour.

Three hours later, I pulled the plug, both literally and figuratively.

Muerto, mort, tot, smert; it was dead as a beaver hat.

As a related aside, there comes a time

in your life, if you're paying attention, when you tend to view product warranties as similar to pre-printed death notices.

Just a heads-up for future reference. I digress.

Despite having a backup computer on which to write this, the dead box, let's call it "Hope Leslie Gonne," held a lot of fond, now faded, memories.

Among them the meticulous lists and charts of income sources and expenses that I have slaved over since Jan. 1 to take to Doug, my tax guy, or the massive folder in which I keep copies of columns and photos.

Worse for you, dear readers, is/was that all of the 2020 minus-tide tables laboriously edited over the course of several hours, days and weeks were toast.

Gonne, but not forgotten, because Hope (pardon the pun) springs eternal.

Thanks to previous technological paty melts, just before the holidays I purchased a ginormous external hard drive and plugged it into the computer.

It has this auto-backup function called Toolkit.

Which automatically was set to back up everything hourly, which seemed a bit excessive, not to mention the annoying on-screen reminders.

A month seemed, well, slightly risky. So I clicked on "weekly."

Hope against Hope, I plugged it into the backup computer.

It spooled up, and what do you know? All of the old columns and photos, the tax stuff, even the tide tables, popped up.

As I said, better to be lucky than good. So if you would like to have copies of the minus tides for 2020 for selected sites on the Central Oregon coast, email me at the address below.

The sites that I've selected so far are: Garibaldi on Tillamook Bay, Netarts slightly south and west of Tillamook, Taft on Siletz Bay just south of Lincoln City and Waldport on Alsea Bay.

I left out Newport, but will include a link to a web site where you can download a copy of the 2020 tables.

The delivery date has been pushed back slightly, because my backup computer is running Windows 7, updates for which are muerto as of Tuesday. So I've got to upgrade the operating system to Windows 10.

Keep your hand on your wallet

Or your purse on a strap across your chest, as the case may be, and regardless of your gender identification, re: wallet vs. purse.

The deadline to file initial legislative proposals for the 2020 session is midnight on Jan. 17.

And the opening ball-in scrum at the State Capitol starts on Feb. 3.

I'm going to be checking in with you occasionally about happenings about the outdoors stuff at the marble palace with the gold guy on the top during the session.

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