

RECREATION
REPORT

HUNTER
REPORTING
DEADLINE
EXTENDED

The deadline to report all 2018 big game and turkey tags has been extended until April 15, 2019, (from Jan. 31) to give hunters more time to report under ODFW's new licensing system.

GLITCH IN NEW
MYODFW APP
CORRECTED

A glitch in the new MyODFW app has been fixed and anglers/hunters who are out of cellphone range can now record their harvest online. Anglers can get the update through the Google Play store (Android) and the Apple app store.

LICENSING
SYSTEM OFFLINE
FOR SOME ON
SUNDAY

On Sunday, Jan. 13, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. the ODFW licensing system will be offline in order to install new security measures. This will only affect people who are buying a fishing or hunting license for the first time in over three years. This will not affect people who have a current hunting or fishing license or who have had one within the last three years. Hunters and anglers who already have an ODFW account (under the new or old licensing system) will be able to access the system to purchase documents, report hunts, tag their harvest, etc.

ICE FISHING

With several water bodies beginning to ice over, anglers need to be cautious. Take the following precautions: Use the "buddy system," wear a personal flotation device in case of thin ice, carry a throw-rope, and use a heavy metal staff to check for thin ice.

A SHORT(ISH) SNOWSHOE HIKE TO A VIEWPOINT NEAR BAKER CITY



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

The view from Indian Rock includes frozen Phillips Reservoir in the foreground, and Black Mountain.

SNOWSHOE With A View

Hikes should include a viewpoint.

As with most proclamations which feature that most vexing of words — should — this one envisions an eternally happy but theoretical world rather than the occasionally dismaying real one we actually inhabit.

I should, for instance, be able to play the acoustic guitar parts from “Stairway to Heaven.”

But my fingers disagree. Most hikers, I’d wager, prefer to be rewarded for their efforts with a fine vista — ideally one near the midpoint of the journey, a place where they can rest and munch a granola bar while absorbing the sublime scenery of the mountains.

Unfortunately this requires a confluence of topography, foliage and weather which can’t be relied on.

Even when your route brings you to an elevated perch, sometimes obstinate trees largely obscure your sightlines.

And because mountains are often cloaked in clouds, the absence of trees on a summit does not guarantee an unimpeded view either.

But just as I can’t resist the occasional urge to pick up my guitar and try to replicate Jimmy Page’s deft fretwork, often as not when I set out for a walk I’ll plot a course that includes at least one potential point where, if the fates allow, I might be able to have a look around.

This compulsion is more acute when I’m wearing snowshoes.



ON THE TRAIL

JAYSON JACOBY

The reason is twofold.

First, getting around on snowshoes is inherently more taxing,

physically, than when you don’t have a couple pounds of plastic or aluminum strapped to your boots.

The second, and very much related reason, is that the slightly awkward gait that snowshoes demand ensures a generally slower pace.

(Or a faceful of snow, if you are disdainful of physics.)

So I’m covering less ground but expending more energy — little wonder, then, that I want the subjective beauty of a view to go along with objective benefits of cardiovascular exercise.

The place I return to more often than any other to satisfy this demand — or at least to try — is Indian Rock.

It’s decidedly modest, as summits go.

Indeed it’s not truly a summit, in the way that, say, the top of Mount Hood is a summit.

Indian Rock is more aptly described as a promontory, a little thumb of rock that juts slightly above an unremarkable slope about a mile north of Phillips Reservoir.

Although the nob stands just 600 feet or so above the reservoir, in the Sumpter Valley about 17 miles southwest of Baker City, the view is extensive. Or can be.

The reservoir and its backdrop, the forested bulk of Black Mountain, dominate the southern skyline. The

Indian Rock Trail

- Just north of Phillips Reservoir, about 17 miles southwest of Baker City
- Drive Highway 7 toward Sumpter to its junction with Union Creek Road, No. 2225, between Mileposts 33 and 32
- Trail is a little longer than 1 mile, one way, with an elevation gain of about 400 feet

peaks of the Elkhorns stretch to the northwest horizon, with the range’s highest point, 9,106-foot Rock Creek Butte, forming from this angle a nearly perfect pyramid that is quite unlike its round-topped visage from most other vantage points.

The prominent mountain to the west is Mount Ireland, the apex of a subrange of the Elkhorns between Sumpter and Granite.

Although on a stormy day you probably won’t be able to see the Elkhorns or Mount Ireland, unless it’s a rare day with dense fog you should be able to see the reservoir below and a section of Sumpter Valley.

Indian Rock’s other attraction is its accessibility.

A trail of a little more than a mile leads to the top, and the path is relatively easy to follow even when the snow depth exceeds 2 feet.

The terrain is gentle enough, though, that you can also eschew the trail and just hike northeast from the junction of Highway 7 and the Union

Creek Road, No. 2225. Or take the trail to the top and then bear southwest on the way down.

It’s an ideal trip for a beginning, or even first-time, snowshoer.

I’ve hiked to Indian Rock in all seasons but winter is my favorite. The snow, of course, transforms the landscape, which without its white mantle is a rather dour mix of grass, second-growth ponderosa pines and junipers.

But I also appreciate winter for the absence of ticks. The bloodsucking arachnids absolutely festoon the trail-side bitterbrush and other shrubbery during the spring and summer.

To get to Indian Rock, drive Highway 7 south and west from Baker City for about 15 miles, heading toward Sumpter.

Between Mileposts 33 and 32 (the numbers go down as you continue toward Sumpter), look for the Union Creek road on the right side of the highway.

Depending on the amount of snow (and your vehicle’s capability, and your aversion to getting stuck), you might be able to drive to the trail itself, which starts a few hundred yards north of the highway, on the right side of Union Creek Road.

But typically during most of the winter ODOT’s snowplows leave a formidable berm of snow that blocks the road. There’s usually room for a few vehicles to park safely off the highway, though.

The entire hike is on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, and no parking pass is required.

Cure cabin fever with a trip to an outdoors show

After all the hunting seasons are closed, what’s a guy to do? Set around and drink lattes and get fat? No! The show season is nearly upon us, so get out and hit some of the outdoor shows.

I like going to outdoor shows for a lot of reasons, besides the obvious reason that it’s usually cold and the weather is miserable by then and I’m bored stiff. Here’s a few other reasons that I enjoy them.

SEMINARS

I love hitting the shows and attending the seminars. Every seminar that I’ve ever been to I’ve learned something. And the bigger the show, usually



BASE CAMP

TOM CLAYCOMB

the better the speakers. Although I must throw out a disclaimer. Sometimes at smaller shows you’ll have a gung-ho young local guy and he’ll share everything that he knows and not hold back like some of the older dogs do.

And of course, I like conducting seminars at the shows. January will be a busy month for me. The first week I had four seminars at the SCI Convention in Reno, the next week two seminars at the DSC Convention & Expo in Dallas and then the last week five seminars at the SHOT

Show in Vegas. So I’ll be swamped.

NEW GEAR

If you are in need of new gear, hit the shows. Many times manufacturers will have booths set up and be offering show specials. Plus, you’ll see a lot of new gear not offered in the big box stores. I see a lot of creative hunters/fishermen who invented new little knick-knacks and are trying to make a go of it. You’ll see gear you’ve never seen before.

A buddy told me that to get your product into Cabela’s, you have to let them list it on their internet sales for two years. Then if it does good, they’ll offer it in the store. Gee, you could



Tom Claycomb photo

Media Day at the range at the SHOT Show is awesome. You get to test out all of the new guns and ammo.

have a great product and go broke before you ever got to put it in front of a customer. That’s where shows have helped jump-start many struggling little companies.

GEAR

Then in addition to all

the new products discussed above, there’ll also be a lot of booths with old gear. By old I don’t mean old but what you will find in the stores. There may be show specials. For instance, if you’re in the market for a backpack this may be a

good spot to find one.

But please — look around. People drive me nuts with their impulsive shopping habits. I remember one year I had eight seminars at a show.

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