

April 17, 2021: 1.6 inches (water content in snow)



April 19, 2020: 1.8 inches



April 21, 2019: 9.5 inches



April 21, 2018: 0 inches



IF YOU GO...

From the railroad tracks in Haines:

- Drive west on Anthony Lakes Highway for 1.7 miles to the first major corner. Turn left onto Pocahontas Road, then stay right, after about two-tenths of a mile, on South Rock Creek Lane.

- Follow paved South Rock Creek Lane for about 3.7 miles, then continue into the mountains when the road turns to well-graded gravel.

- Continue on gravel for about 2 miles to a Forest Service sign for Killamacue trailhead and Rock Creek Lake trailhead. The road becomes a dirt track here, suitable for four-wheel drive, high-clearance vehicles. Snowdrifts likely will continue to block the road, at some point below Eilertson Meadow, for at least a few more weeks.

- From the Forest Service sign, the Killamacue Lake trailhead is 2 miles, and Eilertson Meadow 3.5 miles. The Snotel is just east of the meadow, on the south side of the road

- The Rock Creek Road is a public route. However, it passes through private land near the Killamacue Lake trailhead, and at Eilertson Meadow, so stick to the road. Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative owns the property at Eilertson Meadow, including the cabin at the meadow's eastern edge.

AN APRIL PILGRIMAGE

■ Replicating the photograph of a snow-measuring station in the Elkhorn Mountains for the fifth consecutive spring

The split-rail fence near Eilertson Meadow is my favorite enclosure.

Not that it's likely to impede anything that wants to get in.

The higher of the two rails is only three feet or so above the ground, a height that a deer or elk would scarcely notice.

The fence is the sort more typically used for decorative rather than protective purposes. Except this fence isn't in somebody's backyard. It's in a remote spot in the Elkhorn Mountains, a place that for much of the year is rarely visited by people.

Which is to say that it's sort of jarring to come across this structure, which would be appropriate in an upscale subdivision, in a spot far closer to wilderness than to suburbia.

My affinity for this fence, as with many types of affection, was fostered by familiarity.

The fence surrounds an automated snow-measuring station that I've hiked to, during the same week in April, for the past five years. My goal, beside getting out in the clean air and relishing the inimitable scent of sun-warmed pines, firs and spruces, is to



ON THE TRAIL
JAYSON JACOBY

replicate the photograph I took here on April 22, 2017, the purpose being to compare the snowpack. I'm fascinated by "repeat

photography" — using pictures, taken from the same spot, to illustrate changes over time. The technique typically catalogs periods measured in decades rather than years, but when the subject is not, say, a glacier, but rather snow that melts every spring, even a modest span yields interesting results.

This April the snowpack looked quite similar to the 2017 version. I was a bit surprised, though, that according to records from the measuring station, the water content in the snow in 2017 was almost twice as much as this year.

I don't know whether a couple of trees could account for the difference, but the scenes from those two years on this page suggest a possible factor.

In 2017, as the photo at right shows at the left side of the fence, were two trees. But by the next April the two trees, as seen in the 2018 photo, were gone.

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April 22, 2017: 3.1 inches



"Snotels," like this one near Eilertson Meadow, measure the water content in the snow by calculating the weight of the snow pressing on a "pillow" filled with an anti-freeze liquid.

Perusing pellet possibilities: air guns, part 3

As hunters, we all know that we have to experiment to find which ammo shoots the most accurately in our big game rifles, right? We check different manufacturers, grains of bullets, and designs. A while back I was setting up a Mossberg Patriot Revere .30-06. I mounted on a Riton RTS MOD 5 4-16x50 WIDE FOV scope. I planned on this setup to be a shooter.

But after testing several brands of ammo I still couldn't get the results that I wanted. Finally, after testing 13 different manufacturers and grains of bullets, I got what I wanted. We know this on our firearms but something that surprised me was that it is just as important to test various manufacturers,



BASE CAMP
TOM CLAYCOMB

shapes and weights of pellets if you want your air gun to shoot accurately.

Like I said in the first article in this four-part series (published in the March 27 issue), in the beginning I could not get better than a 1½-inch group at 15 yards. Finally I got some good air pellets. My group improved immensely, but my quest for accuracy was not yet complete.

With air guns we're hunting small game that have small kill zones so it's imperative that we get superb



Ron Spomer Outdoors/Contributed Photo

Pellets come in multiple shapes. Some are more proficient for hunting but the most accurate are the Diabolo shaped or dome-shaped Diabolo pellets.

accuracy out of our air guns. In my quest for accuracy, I then learned that which pellet you choose is as important as buying an accurate air rifle. You just cannot get a good

group with substandard pellets.

As an outdoor writer I get to test a lot of pellets. Luckily I met the JSB crew at the SHOT Show and everything fell in place. From what

I've tested, JSB hands down makes the most accurate pellets. Sig Sauer splits the 2/3 place with Crosman.

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