



PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

BEST WOMEN'S MOUNTAIN BIKE ADVENTURE TEAM

Michelle Emmons has advice for women learning to mountain bike: “Stop apologizing,” she says. “You’re enjoying life, and you’re out on your bike. You don’t need to apologize every time you put your foot down on the trail.”

No Apologies!, a local “women’s mountain bike adventure team,” pedals freely to the blissed-out notion that women can embrace the outdoors and learn to mountain bike in the company of peers who encourage and support them. Learning to mountain bike is hard enough without fearing the judgment of your fellow bikers, and No Apologies! seeks to kick that “not good enough” notion to the curb.

The team started a few years ago and consists of

five women: Emmons, Stephanie “Zimzam” Zamora, Kerstin Holster, Sarah “Soso” Blount and Rheannon “Rua” Arvidson. Emmons is Eugene-based, but the other members are sprinkled throughout the Willamette Valley.

“There’s a lot of camaraderie in women’s groups when you’re with a group of women with skills and similar interests,” Emmons explains. “It inspires you and encourages you to think, ‘If she can do it, I can do it.’”

Emmons teaches mountain biking classes for REI, and she says she’s noticed that women tend to learn by processing and practicing a skill several times in order to figure it out. “If you want to try something out two or three times, it’s important to feel comfortable doing that and not having to feel like you’re holding the group up,” she adds.

In addition to hosting skill clinics and tours, No Apologies leads group rides throughout the Willamette

Valley, where women can practice their mountain biking skills in a safe, supportive environment.

Emmons says she enjoys taking fellow mountain bikers to Oakridge, Goodman Creek and Lorraine Valley. One of her favorites is Alsea Falls, a trail she describes as suited to every skill level.

“It offers that easy climb uphill, and it doesn’t matter if you’re an advanced rider or a beginner rider — you’re always coming down with a smile on your face,” she says.

No Apologies! also hosts trail maintenance work parties, giving back to the riding and hiking community by helping to preserve the quality of the trails they use.

“It all goes back to that essence of no apologies,” Emmons says. “You don’t have to apologize because we’re all doing it together.”

Check out No Apologies! at noapologiesmtb.com.

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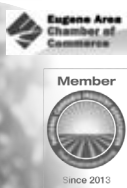
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