## Work on technical riding skills at rocky Radlands

## BY MARK MORICAL • The Bulletin

REDMOND — The wind whipped fiercely across the High Desert as I negotiated a seemingly endless series of flat rocks along the trail. Mountain biking in the wintertime in Central Oregon is not without its difficulty. Brisk temperatures, and icy, snowy and muddy terrain can make for grueling outings on the trails.

But at the Redmond Radlands, add a significant amount of technical lava rock to that list of challenges.

The Radlands include about 10 miles of looped singletrack trails in northeast Redmond. Lava rock is incorporated creatively into much of the singletrack, designed by volunteers with the Central Oregon Trail Alliance. The Radlands is the ideal place to develop technical riding skills on terrain that is quite different from most other bike trails in Central Oregon. It is also a perfect winter option when other trails near Bend are still mired in snow or ice.

On Tuesday, I made the drive from Bend to Redmond to explore the Radlands. I left early in the morning, in order to ride the trails while the dirt was still frozen and before muddy conditions might develop with a thaw. (Riding in mud is not just unenjoyable, it also can damage trails by leaving behind ruts.)

Starting from the trailhead at the High Desert Sports Complex, the trail was smooth and fast, cutting through sagebrush and old, twisted juniper trees. It took a while to reach the rocky sections of the trail, but once I did, they never seemed to end.

Much of the rock built into the singletrack at the Radlands is flat slab rock that is relatively easy to ride over. But some rock sections are particularly tricky, with the rocks jutting up sharply for long stretches.

Full-suspension bikes that can help to smooth out a ride are recommended at the Radlands.

Riding over rocky, technical terrain on a mountain bike usually is all about mind over matter. Those who have the confidence and make a quick decision to just go for it often will ride a challenging section without incident.

Hesitation can cause problems. At the Radlands trails, I focused on riding fast and continuously through

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the myriad rock gardens, using my momentum to carry me through the rugged terrain. Braking hard or stopping can be disastrous, as that can lead to a loss of balance or tipping over to crash onto the rocks.

Posted signs at the Radland rate the singletrack trails as "easy," "more difficult" or "most difficult." The area also holds many miles of doubletrack dirt roads to explore.

On the north end of the trail system, bikers have three loop options of varying skill levels. Duck 'n Cover is the most technical and rocky segment of the trail system, according to bendtrails.org.

On the south end of the Radlands, the Outer Loop provides more miles and fewer rocky sections.

I rode the Outer Loop once around, then tried the intermediate Bobber Loop (intermediate) and Duck 'n Cover. All told, I rode about 10 miles in 1 hour, 40 minutes, as the lava rock sections made for slow-going.

Aside from the technical riding challenges, the Radlands offer some underrated views.

Redmond is home to dramatic vistas of the Three Sisters to the west and Smith Rock State Park to the north. The flat, open expanse of the Radlands makes the most of these views, as the mountains are visible most anywhere in the network.

The variety of the trail features in the Radlands is pretty unique, from continuously rock-strewn trails to smooth, flowing high-desert singletrack. The area has little elevation change, so mountain bikers need not worry about hellacious climbs or teeth-chattering downhill sections.

The technical rock challenges are enough, and they make the Radlands a good destination for any mountain biker in the winter and spring.

Reporter: 541-383-0318, mmorical@bendbulletin.com

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## IF YOU GO

**Directions:** From Bend, take U.S. Highway 97 north to Redmond. Turn right on Oregon Highway 126/Evergreen Avenue. Turn left on Ninth Street. Turn right on Negus Way. Stay straight to go onto Maple Avenue. The High Desert Sports Complex and the Radlands trailhead are on the left.

**Length:** About 10 miles of singletrack bike trails, with several loop options. Plans call for 30 miles of trails eventually.

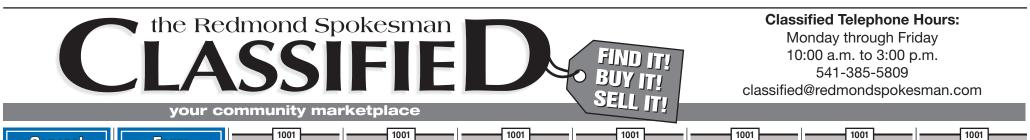
**Rating:** Technically intermediate to advanced; aerobically easy to intermediate.

**Trail features:** Trails range from easy to advanced. Many of the trails include technical riding over lava rock. Views include the Cascade Range and Smith Rock State Park.

> Bulletin file photos Mountain bikers ride in the Radlands trail network.

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900		vide testimony. The Redmond City	discriminate on the basis of disability	date of first publica- tion of this notice,	SW Taylor Street, Portland, OR 97205-	Legal Notice The undersigned has	Legal Notice IN THE CIRCUIT	rights may be af- fected by the pro-
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Want to Buy or Rent	Hay, Grain, Feed	Questions or con- cerns regarding this	ties. Anyone need- ing accommodation	ings may obtain ad- ditional information	lication of this notice, as stated below, or	by the Deschutes County Circuit Court	In the Matter of the Es-	the attorney for the co-personal repre-
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