



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

From the western end of Phillips Reservoir you can barely see the water, as the reservoir has receded considerably during the hot, dry summer.

## PHILLIPS

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If nothing else, the Phillips network boasts a considerable distance — more than 15 miles in all — of the singletrack trails that mountain bikers tend to covet because the narrowness accentuates the feeling of speed.

The 6.6-mile (one-way) section that I rode on a recent blustery Sunday morning — from Mason Dam to the Southwest Shore Campground on the reservoir's south side — is designated as a State Scenic Trail by the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation.

The South Shore Trail, No. 1610, is similar to its counterpart on the north shore of the reservoir, Trail No. 1608.

But the southern trail is by far the more scenic choice because riders (and hikers and horseback riders; both trails are open to all those users) can look across the

reservoir to the Elkhorn Mountains, the higher summits of which loom almost 5,000 feet above.

Except “across the reservoir” perhaps isn't the most accurate way to describe the current views.

Phillips Reservoir was built in 1968 to store irrigation water for crops in the Baker Valley, and at the end of this summer of heat and drought, the reservoir has shrunk dramatically.

At about 9 percent full, the reservoir's western end — an area covering hundreds of acres — is basically a meadow, with the Powder River's channel meandering through patches of mud, grass and weeds.

In its comparatively puny state, the reservoir's water, rather than lapping rocks within a stone's throw of the trail as is the case when it's full, lies in some places hundreds of (horizontal) feet away.

This doesn't detract from the grandeur of the Elkhorns, though.

Another advantage to the South Shore trail is that it connects to

several spur trails that, though not all singletrack, include some steeper and more challenging sections.

These include the Deer Lick, Coyote Cove and Jeep Ride Spring trails (see map on Page 1B, and also online at [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3803610.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3803610.pdf)).

Although both the North Shore and South Shore trails are rated as “easy” due to their gentle grades, neither is parking lot flat.

The South Shore trail has several sections where a competent and daring rider can attain respectable speeds. Fortunately the trailside forests, mainly ponderosa pines with an occasional fir, are in no place dense, so riders should be able to see other trail users (not necessarily including chipmunks, of course) long before there's any threat of a collision.

The trail isn't so straight as to induce boredom, either.

As is typical with reservoirs, the Phillips shoreline is a series of

peninsulas that jut into the water like incisors, and between these are the narrow coves formed by the streams, most of them seasonal, that empty into the reservoir. The trail, by necessity, follows the contours of these geographic features, which adds both to the distance, and to the variety, of the ride.

The coves are some of the more thrilling sections, as the trail dips gradually before crossing the stream channel by way of an elbow-shaped curve.

Just east of Millers Lane Campground, about 5 miles from the trailhead at Mason Dam, the South Shore trail crosses a meadow on a wooden walkway built to avoid an area that can be quite swampy during the spring and early summer but is dry now.

Riders can connect the trails into a loop. If you start with the South Shore trail, from its end near Southwest Shore Campground ride the gravel road to paved Hudspeth Lane, then ride north on Hudspeth

to Highway 7.

Turn right on the highway. You can reach the North Shore trail either by carrying your bike cross-country from near the highway pullout that has an interpretive sign for the Sumpter Valley dredge trailings, or by riding east on the highway for about a mile to Mowich Loop picnic area, on the right (south) side of the highway.

At the opposite end of the reservoir, where the North Shore trail reaches the Mason Dam boat launch road, you can ride back to the highway and then east for a short distance before turning right onto Black Mountain Road, crossing Mason Dam and returning to the South Shore trailhead.

All of the non-motorized trails around and near Phillips Reservoir are open during winter for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Road access isn't as reliable, although Hudspeth Lane is plowed and, on occasion, so is the road leading to the Mason Dam boat launch.

### MOURNING DOVE

- Season started Sept. 1 and runs through Oct. 30
- Daily bag limit of 15 birds; possession limit of 45 birds

### DUCK AND MERGANSER

- Zone 2 — Baker, Union, Wallowa, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Wheeler, Crook, Lake, Jefferson, Deschutes, Klamath counties
- Oct. 6 through Nov. 25; Nov. 28 through Jan. 27, 2019
- Daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is seven.

Within the daily bag limit, you may not have more than: three scaup (during open season), two hen mallards, two pintail, two redheads, and two canvasbacks. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

### GOOSE

- East zone — Baker, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla, Grant, Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Wasco, Sherman, Hood River counties
- Oct. 13-28; Nov. 5-Jan. 27, 2019
- Daily and possession limits: Canada geese (4 and 12); white-fronted geese (10 and 30); white geese (6 and 18)

city and especially if you're older. There are a lot of options on the market. They offer actual fold-up chairs but another popular option are the padded swivel top 5-gallon buckets. Many have a canvas pouch around them to hold shells as well as inside. That about sums up the gear.

We don't have room to go into good dove recipes so I'm going to refer you to a cooking YouTube my brother did since he's a better cook than me anyway. <https://ronspomerout->

**PICK'N PATCH**  
**We will be OPENING on October 5th!**  
**Where:** Corner of Booth Lane and Lower Cove Road  
**When:** Friday and Saturday: 9am-6pm  
 Sunday: 10am-4pm  
 Monday-Thursday: By appointment  
**What you will find:** Small corn maze, several varieties of pumpkins and gourds, straw bales, corn stalks.  
 If you would like to schedule a school field trip or other event, please call the number listed below.  
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[farmkidsalregonwireless.net](http://farmkidsalregonwireless.net)  
 Please call 541-786-2421

## DOVES

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I've dove hunted in multiple states but probably my most unique spot to ever hunt doves was in Nebraska. The marijuana fields were great. They love the seeds. It grew wild there and there'd be 20-foot-wide by 100-yard patches in draws. There's be hundreds of doves feeding in them. It seemed to make them stupid and sometimes they'd fly right up and land in front of you waiting to be shot. Let that be a lesson for you.

### Decoys

Using decoys will definitely help you out. There are a few options for decoys. Mojo makes a decoy with rotating wings and a Dove A Flicker decoy. There are also plastic decoys that you can dip onto fence lines or tree branches. The ones I've seen are called Lucky Duck Clip-on Dove Decoys. Decoys will help.

So you're convinced. You're ready to jump in. So what gear do you need? It's really pretty simple. Due to the high speed shooting you'll want a

shell vest with a game pouch in back. On 90 percent of your dove hunts you'll be sitting in one spot so really the game pouch is used to carry boxes of shells. You'll want a vest with plenty of shell holding capacity on front and two lower pockets to fill with shells. There will be high speed shooting so you want easy access to your shells.

For a shotgun any style will work but you'll be happier with a semi auto. For decades as a kid I used a double barrel but if you have a semi auto you'll have plenty of opportunities to get off three shots, especially if you shoot like I do. Remember: you have to have a plug since you're limited to three shots.

### Ammo

I use Aquila low base 8's but many hunters use 7½'s. Luckily they're not hard to kill so low base shells work great. If not, due to all of the shooting your shoulder would be black and blue. As kids once my brother and I shot over a case of shells in two afternoons and that's when there were 20 boxes in a case.

A chair is almost a neces-

## Pistol shoot at Virtue Flat

The last US Pistol Shooters Association points match of the year is set for Sunday, Sept. 23, at the Powder River Sportsmen's Club Virtue Flat Range off Highway 86 one mile east of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

From Exit 302 in Baker City, drive east

on Highway 86

Sign-up will start at 8 a.m., and shooting will commence at 9 a.m. This is a six-stage shoot. Two are classifiers, any revolver or pistol 9 mm or larger. Expect to fire a total of 128 rounds, and bring at least 200.

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