

RECREATION
REPORT

**Varmint shoot
Sunday at Virtue
Flat Range**

BAKER CITY — A steel varmint shoot is set for Sunday, July 21 at the Powder River Sportsmen's Club's Virtue Flat Range about six miles east of Baker City. The event starts at 10 a.m., and the entry fee is \$10. Proceeds go to the Sportsmen's Club for targets and other expenses.

Any centerfire rifle, with any type of sights and rests, are legal. Please, no steel core or jacket bullets.

The course of fire:

- 5 shots, 200 meters at steel squirrel (2x5)

- 5 shots, 300 meters at steel rabbit (3x6)

- 5 shots, 385 meters at steel chuck (5 3/4x11 1/2)

- 5 shots, 500 yards at steel coyote (16x25)

There is a time limit of five minutes for each 5-shot stage.

Another steel varmint shoot is scheduled for Aug. 18 at the Virtue Flat Range.

**Cyanobacteria
advisory
issued for part
of Brownlee
Reservoir**

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality has issued a health advisory for a section of Brownlee Reservoir after water samples showed high concentrations of cyanobacteria, which can be harmful to people, pets and livestock.

The advisory is for the reservoir from Canyon Creek, just south of Swede's Landing on the Oregon side of the reservoir, north to Brownlee Dam.

Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, can cause rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing and wheezing. More severe symptoms possible in people who ingest water with high levels of cyanobacteria include damage to the liver and nervous system. People with liver or kidney damage are at a higher risk from cyanobacteria.

The Department of Environmental Quality recommends people avoid swimming or wading in the affected section of the reservoir, and to not drink or cook with water with a visible algae bloom. Blooms vary in appearance but they can resemble mats, spilled paint or soap scum, and have a foul odor.

People should wash their hands after touching water, and any fish caught in the reservoir should be cleaned and washed well in uncontaminated water.

Sharing the trails



THE NEXT RIDE
MAVIS HARTZ

Oregon has caught mountain bike fever and the trails are wonderful. Nothing makes a day splendid like getting out into nature and having a wonderful exploration with your friends, family, pets or solo. In this article I will be visiting a few points of etiquette that help ensure everyone has a great experience.

First, most, but not all, trails in Eastern Oregon are made for multiple user groups to enjoy. This means it is imperative that voyagers do their homework and know where they can and cannot go. In addressing mountain bikes specifically, the biggest local limiting factor is the federal Wilderness Act.

In 1891, Congress addressed the concern of a handful of business and land owners in the Los Angeles area about the destruction of the ecosystem surrounding their water sources. The result was the Land Revision Act of 1891 that created the National Forest System. National forests make up 8.5% of the United States, the majority of which is west of the Mississippi River. The designated lands are controlled by the Forest Service with the task of allowing responsible recreation, grazing, conservation and extraction industries to thrive without permanently damaging the area. Later, after the "Lift Oregon Out of the Mud" campaign and the successful development of our current road system, the idea of preserved roadless areas and vistas became desirable. The federal Wilderness Act of 1964 allowed Congress to designate areas to be roadless with restricted use. One of the main restrictions is aimed at mechanized travel. The definition of this includes wagons, wheelbarrows, hang gliders and bicycles.

The neighboring areas with trails to tempt the most staunch rule followers are the Eagle Caps, Hells Canyon, the Strawberry Mountains, Wenaha-Tucannon, North Fork of the Umatilla and the North Fork of the John Day Wildernesses. The Forest Service has many maps, physical and online, that show where the wilderness boundaries, which equate to a grand total of 4% of our beautiful state, begin and end. Many of the designations are linked to waterways and species preservation. The North Fork of the John Day Wilderness, on the west side of the Elkhorn Mountains near Anthony and Grande Ronde lakes, has the unique privilege of being the only undammed major river basin in the state and is key to the anadromous fish population.

Another current point of contention is the electric assist bicycle. This new category is the number one growing section of cycling worldwide. The rules and regulations surrounding said transportation are changing quickly and at this point are rather unpredictable and confusing. E-bikes are currently split into three categories. Category I pertains to bikes that only go when the rider is pedaling and the assist can only help until the speed of 20 mph is reached. After that speed is attained, it is up to the rider, or gravity, to add the extra speed. Category II contains a throttle, so the rider doesn't need to pedal to move, but it is also governed at 20 mph. Category III is made more for commuting and is completely pedelec, no throttle, but is governed at 28 mph.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission just released a statement allowing electric assist bikes on paths wider than eight feet, like the Columbia River Gorge Trail, but leaving plenty of room for provincial adjustments. Federally, e-bikes are considered vehicles and are prohibited anywhere that does not allow for motorized travel, in essence treating them like motorcycles. This makes a large number of classic trails on federal land, like Phil's Trails in Bend, off limits. If I were to make a prediction, it would be that electric assist bikes that fall into



Ryan Brennecke /The (Bend) Bulletin

Mountain bikers riding singletrack near Wanoga Sno-park in Central Oregon.



Photo by Mavis Hartz

The alpine area near Hoffer Lakes in the Elkhorns is not designated wilderness, so some trails are open to bicycles.

Category I will eventually be allowed and considered bicycles. The other two categories will probably be regarded more like motorbikes. Luckily for us, the Union County Commissioners and the MERA Advisory Board have been very inclusive, and e-bikes are allowed in the Mount Emily Recreation Area.

Having ascertained that your chosen trail allows your mode of travel, the necessary supplies are next on the list. When adventuring it is important to always carry what you need to take care of any planned or unplanned events. This should include plenty of water, snacks, flat repair equipment, basic medical gear, a garbage bag and any supplies needed for defecation. The most sought after and appreciated areas of recreation and camping are facing a crisis in the name of sanitation and yuck factor. In high use areas the age-old cry of, "Pack it in, Pack it out" also refers to both yours and your puppy's deposits and toilet paper. To learn about this amazingly advanced and diverse subject, I suggest referencing Kathleen Meyer's book, "How to S**t in the Woods: An Environmentally Sound Approach to a Lost Art."

Finally, it is time to begin an adventure. Remember to notify a responsible individual with, where you are going, when you should be back and a possible route selection. At the very least if going solo, leave a note on the kitchen table for searchers to find and have a place to begin searching should you not return as planned. When recreating and experiencing trails the general rules are simple, be nice and leave the place better than you found it.

Whatever mode of transportation the other clients have selected for the day, barring mountain bikes in the wilderness and motorized travel on non-motorized trails, it is their choice to make for their own reasons and they are out to relish the experience just like you. When meeting others, smile and use your common sense. If they are traveling faster than you, take a break and let them pass. If you meet them on the trail and it is easier for you to get out of the way due to numbers or location, please do so.

Technically, right of way follows these guidelines: All users yield to horses or other stock. If possible, talk to the animal, wait on the downside

of the trail, as to not look like a scary bear and if you have a motor, turn it off. Mountain bikers yield to everyone and if they are going up the hill, have the right away over another bike, assuming the other person can stop and get out of the way. Hikers and runners should yield to horses and others traveling at a faster pace coming up behind them.

If furry friends are part of your traveling group consider that not all people love to be greeted by your pet and might have severe allergies, or mental trauma, in relation to them. Dogs should be kept leashed or under control at all times, even if you are just loading up and getting ready to ride or chatting about what a good time you had. When all is said and done, treat everyone as you would like to be treated. A smile and a polite, "We have three more riders behind us and a dog," will go a long way toward enhancing everyone's experience.

Lastly, who maintains and pays for these areas? Much of the land used for recreation is owned federally, by the state, privately or by public entities like Union County. It is up to the user to make sure they are respecting the expectations and values of the areas they are utilizing. Most publicly owned areas have a paid manager to oversee a larger plan for maintenance and expansion but the rest is habitually left up to volunteers.

In Eastern Oregon, most of the trails in the wilderness are cleared by the regional chapter of the Back Country Horsemen and other civic-minded users. Trails like the Umatilla Rim, that allow motorized vehicles, commonly have a group such as Eastern Oregon ATV that cut logs out of the trail every spring. Multi-use mountain bike, horse and cross-country running systems, like MERA or PATRA, are adopted by organizations such as the Blue Mountain Singletrack Club. Most members of these organizations are frequent users of the area, often are retired and love the outdoors.

I encourage all consumers to think about how to give back. In a perfect world, for every few hours of enjoyment patrons would donate time or money to improve the system they are benefitting from. For those traveling, this occurs through patronizing the local businesses and letting it known that the systems are a draw. Regionally, join a work party, clip back some foliage, remove the sticks and rocks from the trail or donate money to keep your treasured spot wonderful.

We are lucky to live in a part of the world that allows the idea of wilderness and the savoring of everyday life to be an important part of our lives. To show appreciation and encourage more areas like those you find wonderful, be sure to follow the handful of reasonable rules to not deplete the dedication and goodwill of those around you. Please be aware of the rules surrounding any area you visit, leave it better than when you arrived, smile and help when you can.