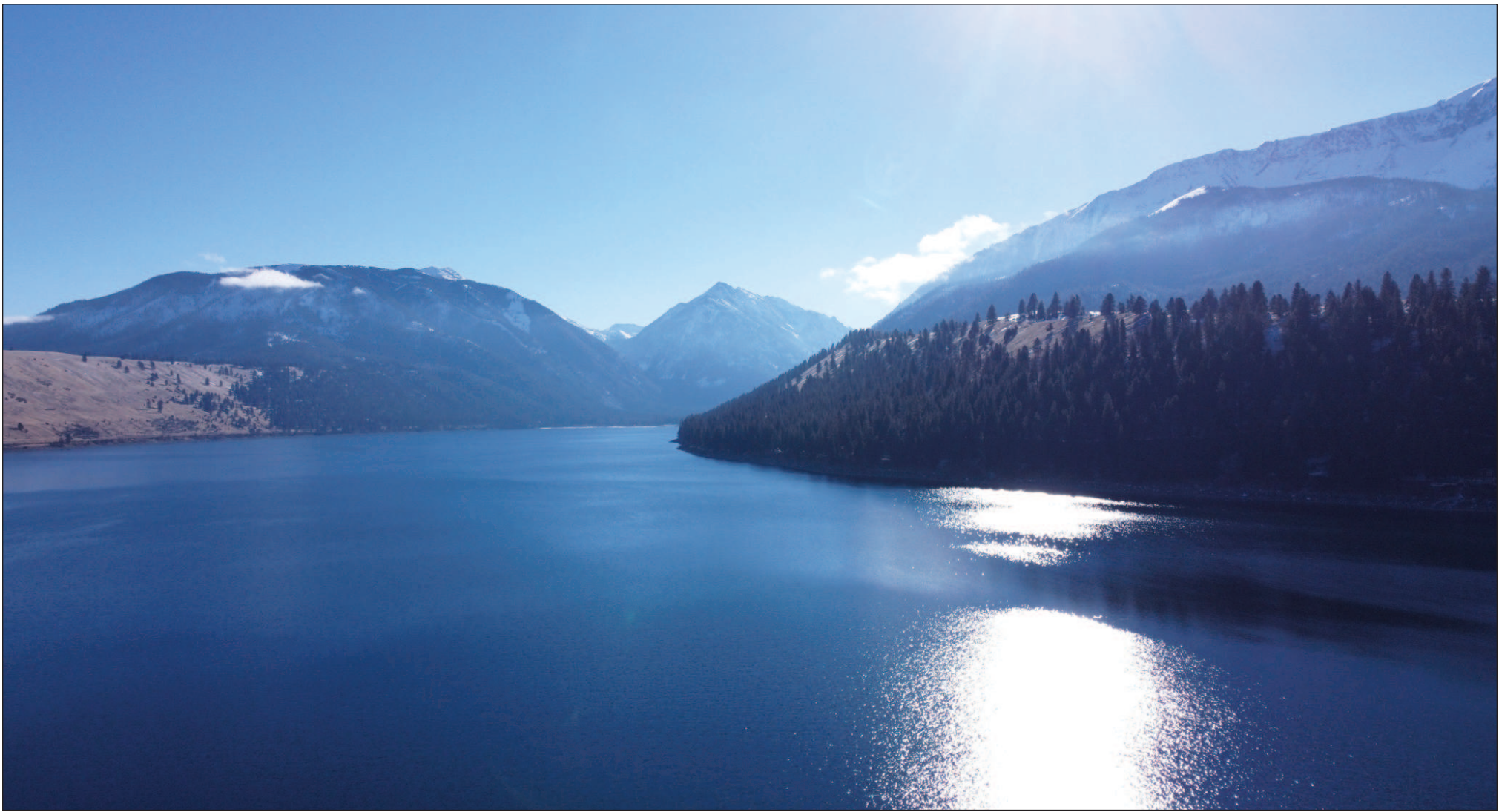




Looking south along Wallowa Lake, with Bonneville Mountain in the center. Photo was taken from a drone flying about 250 feet above the lake on Jan. 23. Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

Wallowa Wonders

■ Even when ice makes mountain trails treacherous, there’s plenty of places to stroll around Wallowa Lake

Wallowa Lake is difficult to take for granted. But I’ve managed to pull off that feat. Among Oregon’s myriad lakes, it seems to me that only one — Crater — surpasses Wallowa Lake in sheer magnificence. But the margin is meager. I give Crater Lake the slight edge mainly because its water can conjure multiple shades of blue, depending on the whims of wind and cloud, that I’ve never seen anywhere else. Although I’ve visited Crater Lake at least half a dozen times, the uniqueness of the spectacle stunned me each time; it was as though I had neither witnessed, nor even conceived of, such a scene. The two lakes have quite a lot in common. Both could — and indeed,



ON THE TRAIL
JAYSON JACOBY

both do — serve as geologic classrooms. The lesson at Crater Lake is volcanology. It formed in the igneous cradle created by the eruption of 12,000-foot Mount Mazama about 7,700 years ago. Wallowa Lake, meanwhile, could star in any lecture about glaciology. The lake lies in the trench gouged by a glacier that flowed from the high Wallows from around 40,000 to 17,000 years ago. That glacier dragged rocks and soil along its edges, and it pushed the same sort of debris ahead of its snout, like a dog pushing a ball with its nose. When the ice melted it left behind ridges of this unsorted material that mark

the glacier’s margins, features known as moraines. The miles-long, smoothly sculpted moraines that rise above the lake’s west and east shores are among the finest examples anywhere of lateral moraines. At the lake’s northern edge, on the outskirts of Joseph, the highway was cut through the mounds that make up the terminal moraine — the glacier’s farthest downvalley advance. Driving through the terminal moraine and suddenly seeing Wallowa Lake isn’t quite so dramatic as walking to the rim of Crater Lake. The difference is largely a matter of scale. Crater Lake’s rim is a thousand feet or more above the water, a vantage point that accentuates the lake’s vastness. At Wallowa Lake, by contrast, the highway is only 100

feet or so above the water. It’s still a stirring sight. The lake stretches 5 miles to the south and a mile across, the pyramid of Bonneville Mountain at its head, and Chief Joseph Mountain commanding the southwestern skyline. Every time I have this experience I wonder why I don’t have it more often. I suspect there’s an element of irrationality in my relatively infrequent visits to this jewel among Oregon’s crown of natural treasures.

See Wallowa / Page 2B

Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald
Frozen Knight’s Pond, with the high Wallows in the background. The pond is part of the Iwetemlaykin State Heritage Site just north of Wallowa Lake.



Resolving to spend more time outdoors in 2021

OK, I don’t want to say that hunting and fishing have eternal consequences, but since most people are going to break their New Year’s resolutions let’s at least make some temporary outdoor New Year’s resolutions! Here’s why I say this and am writing this article. I meet a million people every year who tell me they used to hunt a lot as a kid, used to fish a lot until they had kids, used to elk hunt a lot until their buddies moved/died and on and on the list goes. Or it may be as simple as you just moved to Oregon and don’t know where to hunt/fish. But whatever the scenario, let’s make plans to get you back in the outdoors. I’m a believer that if something is the right thing to do, then do it right now. So with that said, let’s get started.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH

- **ICE FISHING:** Ice fishing is relatively inexpensive. Buy an auger, a few ice fishing rods, jigs, bait,



BASE CAMP
TOM CLAYCOMB

hole scooper and you’re good to go. As you get more into it, you’ll want a gas auger.

- **SNOWSHOEING:** Great way to get up in the mountains and hike around. There are groomed trails or you can go hit the trails in your elk hunting haunts. And for sure throw in the fixings to build a fire and heat up some hot chocolate.
- **VARMINT HUNTING:** Winter varmint hunting is great fun. Buy a FoxPro electronic call. You’ll also want some Montana Decoys.
- **STAY HOME AND COMPLAIN ABOUT THE COLD:** Not an option.

APRIL/MAY/JUNE (Seasons start and stop during these three months, check the regs).

- **TURKEY HUNTING:** You’ll want to get a good call like a 4-Play

Turkey Call, Montana Decoys and HEVI-Shot turkey loads.

- **BEAR HUNTING:** I love bear hunting. To get a big bruiser it’s best to put in for one of the draws.
- **MUSHROOM HUNTING:** If you ask why I listed mushroom hunting then you’ve never eaten a morel. They’re the best fungi in the world, second only to the truffle in England.

JULY/AUGUST (Finally summer has hit in the mountains)

- **BACKPACKING:** What’s cooler than backpacking? You’re in the coolest country that God ever made, fishing/hiking and having a blast.
- **FLY-FISHING:** I know, many of you fly fish year-round but now you can get up in the high country. I can’t get there until after July 4.
- **HUCKLEBERRIES/THIMBLE BERRIES:** Wild berries are the best, whether you’re eating them as fast as you pick them, making jam or homemade ice

cream. You just can’t go wrong if a huckleberry is involved!

- **RAFTING:** I’ve still got to line up a three- to five-day backcountry fly-fishing rafting trip. My buddies catch a million fish.
- **FOUR-WHEELING:** There are 50,000,000 trails. Four-wheeling is a blast. But be careful. I’ve flipped a four-wheeler a couple of times and it never turned out to be a pleasant experience!

SEPTEMBER

- **BOW HUNTING:** Actually bow hunting opens the end of August but anymore I wait until the second or third week of September when it gets cool and the elk start bugling.
- **GROUSE HUNTING:** Grouse hunting is a good excuse to get up in the mountains and scout for elk/deer before season.
- **BACKCOUNTRY FLY-FISHING:** I’m a big bow hunter but the past five to eight years I find myself more and more fly-fishing in the backcountry until the first of

September. Everyone else is hunting and I have the rivers to myself. Water levels have dropped, fish are congregated and I drill them. What more can you ask for?

- **ANTELOPE HUNTING:** I love antelope hunting. They’re a cool animal.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER (Showtime!!! Big game season is in full swing. This is why you live in Oregon)

- **DEER, ELK, BEAR, BIG HORN, GOAT, BEAR ... HUNTING:** You name it. It is showtime and Oregon is at her finest and is shining in all of her splendor!
- **WATERFOWL HUNTING:** Many hunters live for waterfowl hunting. It can provide high-speed fun shooting. I am way out of room but there are more activities to offer than I’ve listed above. Sorry if I didn’t get to list your favorite activity. I didn’t even get to talk about putting in for drawings. We’re overblessed.