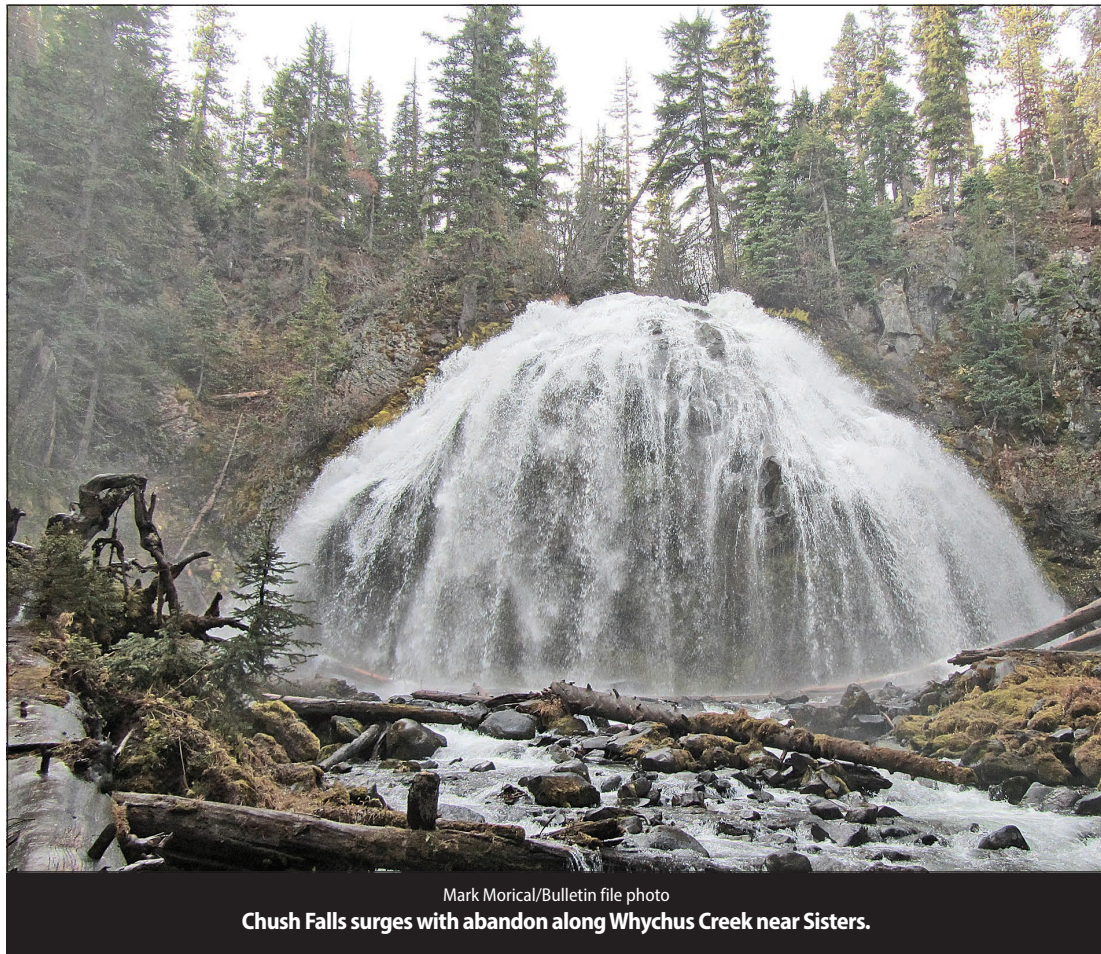




# CONDITIONS REPORT

## Trails, sno-parks, rivers near Sisters and state parks

Welcome to a new year Central Oregon! And what better way to celebrate 2021's arrival than to head outside and explore. Snow hit the higher elevations hard this week, and it looks like this weekend will be no different. So for all you snow bunnies, hit the slopes in areas near Sisters for some great fun in the powder. Many of the lower elevations are still accessible too for hiking over lighter snowfall or snowshoeing. But remember, conditions can change rapidly in the mountains. Always know you and your vehicle's limits before attempting to go up an unplowed road. For a full list of conditions updated regularly, please visit [centraloregonexplore.com](http://centraloregonexplore.com)



Mark Morical/Bulletin file photo  
Chush Falls surges with abandon along Whychus Creek near Sisters.

### Free entrance to State Parks

Oregon State Parks will waive any parking or entrance fees to any paid site throughout the state on Jan. 1. While annual New Year's Day hikes have been cancelled at many parks, rangers have placed signs along favorite trails with area information and directions.

- **Round Lake Trailhead:** Open
- **Sisters Cow Camp:** Open
- **Sisters Mirror Trailhead:** Open
- **Sisters Tie Trailhead:** Open
- **Suttle Lake Day Use:** Open; patchy snow, ice and mud
- **Tam McArthur Rim Trailhead:** Open
- **Whychus Creek Overlook Trailhead:** Open
- **Whychus Portal (Lower**

**Whychus Trailhead:** Open  
**Willamette National Forest — Three Sisters Wilderness Area**

- **McKenzie River Trail:** Partially open
- **Tamolitch Blue Pool:** Open

### OREGON STATE PARKS

- **Cline Falls State Scenic Viewpoint:** Open; expect reduced services; restrooms are closed, portable toilet is on site; maintain social distancing and wear a mask
- **Cove Palisades State Park:** Open for day-use and lake access; all campgrounds and cabins are closed for the season
- **Fort Rock Cave:** Closed for 2020
- **Fort Rock State Natural Area:** Open; day-use hours 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; rock scrambling closed in southeast area to protect nesting falcons
- **Jasper Point:** Open; boat ramp closed due to low water conditions; camping is closed for the season
- **La Pine State Park:** Open, expect reduced services; winter day use hours are 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; meeting hall is closed
- **Peter Skene Ogden State Scenic Viewpoint:** Open
- **Pilot Butte State Scenic Viewpoint:** Open for limited daytime use; summit road is closed for the winter; east parking lot open 8 a.m.-6 p.m., restrooms open 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
- **Prineville Reservoir State Park:** Open; expect reduced services; cabins are closed

- **Smith Rock State Park:** Open — limited services; no camping.
- **Tumalo State Park:** Open; expect reduced services; group facilities are closed

### SKI AREAS AND SNOW PARKS

- **Updated 8 a.m. Dec. 31**
- **Hoodoo:** Open; 48.7 inch base all lifts operating
- **Mt. Bachelor:** Open; 62 inch base; Summit and First Rays lifts are closed
- **Willamette Pass:** 35 inches at lodge; rentals must be reserved online in advance

### Deschutes National Forest

- **Three Creek Sno-Park (Lower):** Open; 0-2 inches; poor conditions due to low snow; sno-park not plowed due to lack of funding
  - **Three Creek Sno-Park (Upper):** Open; 0-8 inches; poor conditions due to low snow, bare ground on ski and snowshoe trails
- Willamette National Forest**
- **Ikenick Sno-Park:** Open
  - **Little Nash Sno-Park:** Open
  - **Maxwell Sno-Park:** Open; Mountain View and South Maxwell shelters are closed
  - **Potato Hill Sno-Park:** Open
  - **Ray Benson Sno-Park:** Open
  - **Santiam Sno-Park:** Open

### CAMPING

### Deschutes National Forest

- **Allen Springs Campground:** Open
- **Camp Sherman Campground:** Open
- **Lava Camp Lake Campground:** Open
- **Lower Bridge Campground:** Open
- **Pine Rest Campground:**

- **Sisters Cow Camp Horse Camp:** Open; no campfires

### CYCLING

#### Fatbike and winter trails:

- **Ben's-MTB-Kent's:** Muddy
- **Wanoga — 3 PSI, Wanoga — Outer Loop:** Rideable snow
- **All other trails riding well**

#### Sisters trails

- **Lake Creek, Metolius-Windigo (Black Butte and 99 Lower) and Suttle Lake Loop:** Riding well; deadfall reported
- **Metolius-Windigo (99 Upper):** Deep snow
- **All other trails riding well**

### FISHING

- **Updated at 8 a.m. Dec. 31**
- **Middle Deschutes (Benham Falls to Lake Billy Chinook):** 4,330 cfs; brown trout, rainbow trout; water is higher and clarity is good with decent trout fishing; open year-round for trout, artificial lures and lures only; no limit on brown trout
- **Metolius River:** 1,400 cfs; bull trout, rainbow trout; consistent fishing reported; fly fishing only upstream of Bridge 99, artificial lures and flies permitted below; catch and release only; public access to Wizard Falls Hatchery remains closed; river is closed to fishing above Allingham Bridge until May 22, 2021
- **McKenzie River (at Clear Lake):** 617 cfs
- **McKenzie River (near Belknap Springs):** 1,210 cfs; rainbow and coastal cutthroat trout; current hatches — blue winged olive, midge, sculpin; river access may be limited due to the Holiday Farm Fire.
- **Lake Billy Chinook:** Bull, brown and rainbow trout, kokanee, smallmouth bass; Metolius arm is closed until spring, no recent reports for rest of lake

### EVENTS

#### Daily tours

- **Lava Cave Tours:** A guided tour of a local lava tube exploring the geologic and human history as well as the ecology of the cave; 9 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.; \$65 to \$90; Wanderlust Tours, 61535 S. Highway 97, Bend; [go.evnt.com/713740-0](http://go.evnt.com/713740-0) or 541-389-8359.
- **Daily Snowshoe Tours:** A naturalist-guided tour through areas around Mt. Bachelor. Snowshoes and hot cocoa provided; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 1:30-5:30 p.m.; \$65 to \$90; Wanderlust Tours, 61535 S. Highway 97, Bend; [go.evnt.com/713722-0](http://go.evnt.com/713722-0) or 541-389-8359.
- **Shoes, Brews & Views Snowshoe Tour:** Snowshoe to a spot in the Deschutes National Forest and sip some locally crafted beers or root beer for those under 21; 1:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.; \$65 to \$95; Wanderlust Tours, 61535 S. Highway 97, Bend; [go.evnt.com/713728-1](http://go.evnt.com/713728-1) or 541-389-8359.
- **Bonfire Snowshoe Tours:** A naturalist-guided tour near Mt. Bachelor out to a small bonfire where snowshoes will be treated to hot libations and a dessert; 7-11 p.m.; \$110; Wanderlust Tours, 61535 S. Highway 97, Bend; [go.evnt.com/713736-0](http://go.evnt.com/713736-0) or 541-389-8359.
- **Moonlight & Starlight Snowshoes Tours:** A guided tour on snowshoes in the Cascade Lakes area under the stars; 7-11 p.m.; \$95; Wanderlust Tours, 61535 S. Highway 97, Bend; [go.evnt.com/713732-0](http://go.evnt.com/713732-0) or 541-389-8359.

#### Ice skating rink hours

- **The Pavilion:** Public skating by reservation only. Open skating session times vary, see website for details; \$12 adults, \$11 older adults (60-79) and students, \$10 youth and honored citizens (80 plus), children under 3 with a paying adult are free, \$3 discount if you bring your own skates, \$6 per person for special sessions; 1001 SW Bradbury Drive, Bend; [bendparksandrec.org/facility/the-pavilion](http://bendparksandrec.org/facility/the-pavilion) or 541-389-7588.
- **Seventh Mountain Resort:** Reservations required. Open skating sessions run 1 hour and 20 minutes every two hours 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; \$15 adults, \$12 children 7 to 18, \$5 children 6 and under, \$5 discount for bringing your own skates; Seventh Mountain Resort Ice Rink, 18575 SW Century Drive, Bend; [seventhmountainriverco.com/ice-skating](http://seventhmountainriverco.com/ice-skating) or 877-765-1501.
- **Sunriver Village:** Reservations required for all skaters. Open skating sessions run 1 hour and 15 minutes every two hours 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; \$15 adults, \$11 children 5 to 12, \$3 discount if you have your own skates; Sunriver Village Ice Rink, 57100 Beaver Drive, Sunriver; [sunriverice-skating.com](http://sunriverice-skating.com) or 541-593-5948.

#### Saturday 1/2

- **Spey Casting:** An on-water spey casting workshop will be held. Bring your own rod or use a demo. Boots and waders suggested, coffee provided; 8-9:30 a.m.; Farewell Bend Park, 1000 SW Reed Market Road, Bend; [go.evnt.com/723253-0](http://go.evnt.com/723253-0) or 541-678-5633.
- **CORK Saturday Long Run:** A 5- to 10-mile group run will be held. Limited to 25 participants and each runner must maintain social distance while running. Subject to change, check Facebook page for updates; 9-11 a.m.; Thump Roastery, 549 NW York Drive, Bend; [go.evnt.com/723283-0](http://go.evnt.com/723283-0)

#### Tuesday 1/5

- **Beginning Fly Tying Class:** Novice anglers can learn the basics of tying flies in this 2-hour class. Register at the fly shop; 6-8 p.m.; \$80; Confluence Fly Shop, 375 SW Powerhouse Drive, Bend; [go.evnt.com/723266-0](http://go.evnt.com/723266-0) or 541-678-5633.

#### Wednesday 1/6

- **Intermediate Fly Fishing Class:** Take your fly-tying knowledge further with this intermediate skilled class. All materials provided. Register at the fly shop; 6-8 p.m.; \$80; Confluence Fly Shop, 375 SW Powerhouse Drive, Bend; [go.evnt.com/723266-0](http://go.evnt.com/723266-0) or 541-678-5633.

### HIKING AND DAY USE SITES

NOTE: Many of the trails along seasonally closed highways and forest service roads remain open, but can only be accessed by hike, snowshoe, cross country ski or snowmobile due to accumulating snowfall. See Forest websites for more details and restrictions.

### Deschutes National Forest

- **Bear Valley Trailhead:** Open
- **Black Butte Trailhead:** Open
- **Black Crater Trailhead:**

- **Open**
- **Canyon Creek Trailhead:** Open
- **Chush Falls:** Open
- **Cold Springs Day Use:** Open
- **Head of Jack Creek Trailhead:** Open
- **Head of the Metolius:** Open; snow free and clear
- **Jefferson Lake:** Open
- **Lake Creek Trail:** Open; patchy snow, ice and mud
- **Lower Black Butte Trailhead:** Open
- **Lower Bridge Day Use:** Open
- **Lower Canyon Creek (West Metolius Trailhead):** Open
- **Park Meadow:** Open; moderate deadfall on tie trail to Tam Rim
- **Pole Creek Trailhead:** Open
- **Rockpile Lake:** Open

## TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE

**Metolius River** — Winter fishing on the Metolius may require bit more grit and warm layers, but the fly-fishing only section from Allingham Bridge to Bridge 99 has some of the best seasonal angling in the area. Bull trout whoppers make their runs from Lake Billy Chinook up the river in pursuit of the kokanee runs and are great fighters if they wind up on the end of your line. But you'll have to release them if you do — the only fish that can make it into your creel are hatchery rainbow, kokanee and mountain whitefish.

**Ray Benson Sno-park** — Just beyond the hustle and bustle of the Hoodoo Ski Area is a smaller sno-park with stunning views and an easy 5.8 mile loop for snowshoers and Nordic skiers to enjoy a bit of solitude among the trees. On bluebird days you can see perfect views of Mt. Washington, Hayrick Butte and more. This is one snow area where you can also bring along your dogs to play with you for a day in the snow.

**Three Creek Lake Trail** — Closer to Sisters, the winter trail is located at end of Forest Service Road 16 at Upper Three Creek Sno-Park. From there, a 6.5-mile snowmobile, snowshoe or cross country ski trip is in store over the steadily moderate trail. But the views of the Three Sisters, Three Creek Lake with Tam McArthur Rim above it are worth it on clear days.

— Makenzie Whittle, *The Bulletin*

#### Fire restrictions

Fire danger is currently listed as Moderate in both the Deschutes National Forest and Ochoco National Forest. Fire danger is listed as Low in the Willamette National Forest. As of Oct. 14, the Industrial Fire Precaution Level has been lowered to a Level 1 for the Deschutes and Ochoco national forests and the Prineville District — Bureau of Land Management.

#### Columbia Park access closure

As of July 22, Deschutes River access is closed due to safety concerns and to prevent further erosion to the river bank. The access point will be closed until further notice. For more information, visit [bendparksandrec.org](http://bendparksandrec.org).

