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Trees of Ancient Juniper Trail stand the test of time

BY DAVID JASPER
The Bulletin

You don't have to go to the Badlands in order to see strange, twisting and even sinister-looking western juniper trees, but they are here in abundance.

Last week, I took a drive out to the Oregon Badlands Wilderness, a sprawling, nearly 30,000-acre wilderness chockablock with interesting lava rock formations located just 15 miles east of Bend.

And as interesting as those features are, my "destination" was the trees along the Ancient Juniper Trail, an easy, 3.1-mile loop trail that shares a parking lot — and for one stretch, merges with — the popular Flatiron Rock Trailhead. There, I met up with a friend longtime Bulletin readers may remember as "Map Guy," from his adventures with former Bulletin outdoor writer Jim Witty, who died in 2008.

Truth be told, we hadn't hiked together in at least five years, but much like the ancient junipers we saw on our hike, time had been kind to Map Guy, though, like the junipers we took in, we'd both weathered a bit.

See *Juniper* / B10



Submitted photo

A juniper tree finds a little height assist along the Ancient Juniper Trail east of Bend.

Views from the buttes

The Cline Buttes near Redmond are a dynamic winter mountain biking area

The Three Sisters as viewed from the west side of Cline Buttes.



Mark Morical/Bulletin file photo

BY MARK MORICAL
The Bulletin

Cyclists willing to brave cold temperatures can still find premium mountain biking trails in Central Oregon, even in the depths of winter.

Sprawling High Desert views, thrilling terrain and quality wintertime dirt make Cline Buttes west of Redmond a popular destination for mountain bikers. Miles and miles of user-built trails line the juniper-filled slopes in the area.

The myriad trails on Cline Buttes, including a narrow singletrack path that wraps around the buttes and a few downhill trails that start from the top of the highest butte, are part of the Bureau of Land Management's 32,000-acre Cline Buttes Recreation Area.

The singletrack that circles around the buttes for a 10-mile out-and-back ride is my favorite route in the area.

The trailhead on the south side of Cline Buttes is located just off Cline Falls Highway between Tumalo and Eagle Crest Resort and across the highway from the Maston trail system, also part of the recreation area.

On Tuesday, I started out rolling through juniper trees and sagebrush as the singletrack trail became steeper along the south butte. The trail was completely frozen, and parts of the trail were blanketed in frost. It was 28 degrees when I started out, but my body warmed quickly as I climbed.

I turned left onto a rocky road, then picked up the singletrack again to the right after climbing a few hundred yards.

The singletrack narrowed to almost 10 inches in spots, and to my right was a fairly treacherous drop-off. Redmond, Smith Rock State Park and the snow-covered Ochoco Mountains sprawled out to the east, and soon I turned west as I wrapped around the north butte.

See *Buttes* / B9

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