



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin  
**Skiers and snowboarders enjoy fresh snow at Hoodoo Ski Area.**

## Ski areas

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McFarland said the holidays were busier than usual at Hoodoo, which has a base elevation of 4,668 feet.

“That could be attributed to better snow,” he said. “We were getting a few inches almost every day, and people were ready to get out and do something. We had really good, steady business all through Christmas, and lots of happy, excited faces.”

McFarland added that this season, and for about the last decade, Hoodoo has hosted an increasing number of skiers and snowboarders from Bend and Redmond. The ski area has typically drawn most of its guests from the Willamette Valley, but now it gets about as many snowriders from Central Oregon as it does from the valley population centers of Eugene and Salem.

“Our Central Oregon numbers have been going up quite a bit,” McFarland said. “We’re getting a lot more visitation from the Central Oregon addresses. The number has definitely skewed more toward the closer crowd as the Bend and Redmond populations have increased. It’s really gone up quite a bit in the last decade.”

Willamette Pass (base elevation 5,120 feet) still draws most of its skiers from the Eugene/Springfield area, but sees business from Central Oregon as well, according to owner Tim Wiper. Low snow years have hit the ski area hard. In the entire winter of 2017-18, it was open for only a few days in February. In the 2014-15 season, it was open only two days.

Unlike Mt. Bachelor ski area, Hoodoo and Willamette Pass do not have a parking reservation system to limit the number of guests due to COVID-19. McFarland said that Hoodoo was forced to turn about 100 cars away on Dec. 27 after the parking lot was full by 10 a.m.

“That’s typically the busiest day of the year nationwide in ski resorts,” McFarland said. “We’re guessing that won’t be a problem again. That was just one time in one month of being open.”



Mark Morical/Bulletin file photo

The back side of Willamette Pass features tree skiing and varied terrain.

Both Hoodoo and Willamette Pass have severely limited lodge access and stringent mask-wearing policies to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Willamettepass.com notes that “everyone must have a face covering and be prepared to wear it everywhere.” Lift tickets must also be purchased online ahead of time at willamettepass.com.

McFarland said that skiers and snowboarders have been understanding about the lack of lodge access, but a few guests have made issues of having to wear a mask.

“But really there’s nowhere

you need to be with your mask off, unless it’s in your car, eating,” McFarland said. With so much snow fallen this winter, it seems a face mask would be an easy thing for skiers and boarders to wear. And more snow is in the forecast over the next few days at both Willamette Pass and Hoodoo.

“This season, the snow has been phenomenal, and it keeps coming,” McFarland said. “It’s been great.”


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