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Wild winter brings CROWDS

Etiquette is crucial at Central Oregon's packed sno-parks this season

BY MARK MORICAL • The Bulletin

A combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, an ample snowpack and limited parking at Mt. Bachelor ski area has created a crush of crowds at Central Oregon sno-parks this winter.



TRAILS



Outdoor enthusiasts prepare to head out on the trails at Virginia Meissner Sno-park on Saturday.

Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

"The outdoors around here has always been cherished, but now more than ever, it's intensely loved, and it creates extreme peak use, congestion and overflow situations that can tend to surprise people," said Scott McBride, recreation manager for the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest. "If you show up at a peak day at a peak time, you can certainly count on peak crowds, and potentially nowhere to park at multiple sites."

Outdoor enthusiasts looking to cross-country ski, snowshoe, snowmobile, fatbike or sled would be wise to follow the parking rules, avoid peak times and adhere to proper etiquette when using the groomed trails that emanate from the sno-parks.

Wanoga, Virginia Meissner and Dutchman Flat sno-parks west of Bend off Century Drive have all been extremely busy, McBride said, as has 10-Mile Sno-park east of La Pine in the Newberry National Volcanic Monument.

See **Etiquette** / B10

Busy forest means busy shops

BY BRIAN RATHBONE
The Bulletin

Winter outdoor activities are more popular than ever this year in Central Oregon. Other than skiing, snowshoeing and cross-country are hot this year.

At Skjersaa's, it has not been uncommon for gear rentals for the two activities to sell out from time to time.

Recreation has increased through-

out the recent summer and winter months in national forests in both Oregon and Washington — particularly in the Deschutes, Mount Hood, Gifford Pinchot and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie forests, according to Jean Nelson-Dean of the Deschutes National Forest.

More people heading to the forests has made for a busier winter at some local outdoor rental shops keeping up

with the demand for outdoor activities.

"Some of the things that I've noticed this year is that individual sports have become more popular," said Amanda Brinduse, who has worked at 4 Seasons Recreational Outfitters in Sunriver for 13 years.

"Because we can do things individually, bike rentals were popular last year over the summer, bike sales were really

popular, and it carried into the winter seasons," she added. "Lot of people over winter break with their families for ski rentals and cross-country ski rentals."

At Skjersaa on the east side of Bend, Marshall Holmes says that there are hundreds of people coming through the shop's doors — more so than in previous winters — each day.

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