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THE OUTDOORS

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## Cross-country skiing in the Ochocos

The shelter at Walton Lake Sno-park offers a cozy place to rest.

Bulletin file photo

BY MARK MORICAL • The Bulletin

**W**alton Lake Sno-park on the Big Summit District of the Ochoco National Forest has about 20 miles of nordic ski trails that radiate from the parking area. An array of trails include short, relatively flat paths for beginners to longer, steeper runs for more advanced skiers. The Corral Loop is an easy, 5-mile path that is mostly flat but offers a few moderate slopes. The Round Mountain Trail, which begins just west of the shelter at the sno-park, joins the Walton Lake to Round Mountain hiking trail. There is also a spacious shelter near the parking lot at Walton Lake Sno-park.

**Directions:** From Prineville, drive 16 miles east on U.S. Highway 26 to the junction of Forest Road 22. At the junction, keep right at a sign for Walton Lake. Travel on Forest Road 22 for 9 miles to the Ochoco Ranger Station. Just past the station, look for an intersection and take a left. Walton Lake Sno-park is about 9 miles up the road. A sno-park permit is required.

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### Outdoor pick of the week: Barnes Butte Recreation Area

The Barnes Butte Recreation Area is new and still being developed to its full potential, but it is still a nice place to spend a morning exploring. The 620 acres of land on the eastern edge of Prineville near the IronHorse subdivision includes the eponymous butte.

The Barnes Butte Trail climbs steadily 1.3 miles to the rocky summit, about a 550-foot gain in elevation. While the trail is well-maintained, the top can get a little steep and require slight scrambling — but nothing too technical.

Other trails surround the butte area: One winds alongside a canal and one climbs a smaller hill around a cow pasture. Both offer great views of the butte and the plateaus beyond Prineville as well as the Cascades.

All the trails are good for trail running, hiking, walking your dog and leisurely strolls depending on your preferred speed.

**Getting there:** In Prineville, travel east on NE Third Street (U.S. Highway 26) and turn left on NE Combs Flat Road. Continue straight, past Barnes Butte Elementary School and onto a dirt road until it ends at the old corral.

— Makenzie Whittle, *The Bulletin*



Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin

**Barnes Butte as seen from an unnamed trail in the Barnes Butte Recreation Area in Prineville.**

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