

# Cruising the crust: Bend has many options for fatbikes

BY EMMY ANDREWS

For The Bulletin

Central Oregonians love to bike, and they love snow. And the sport of fatbiking allows them to combine those loves by riding on snow.



TRAILS

Fatbiking involves riding a bike with tires 3.8- to 5-inches wide, much wider than tires on other bikes. The wide tires make it possible to ride in areas where a normal bike would be difficult or impossible to ride, such as the beach or on packed snow.

Central Oregon Trail Alliance has a permit from the Deschutes National Forest to groom 9 miles of trails for fatbike riding. The trails are located at the east end of the Wanoga Sno-park across from the sledding hill. Depending on how much snow we have, they are groomed from Dec. 1 to Feb. 28 each year.

Wanoga Sno-park has three loop trails fat bikers can ride. The shortest loop is about a mile long and is shared with snowshoers and skiers. There are also 3- and 6-mile loops that are primarily for bikers. Trail maps can be found online at bendtrails.org. Be sure to follow the signs, since there



Bulletin file photo

Gary Meyer rides his fat bike on the singletrack trails he grooms near Wanoga Sno-park.

are also some trails that are for snowshoers and skiers only.

Central Oregon Trail Alliance volunteers groom the fat bike trails at Wanoga using snowmobiles that pull special grooming implements. The result is singletrack through the snow! Grooming reports are available on the Facebook

page Central Oregon Fat-bikes.

The packed snow surface is relatively fragile and it's important to know the etiquette of fat bike riding to keep it fun for all. First, it's important to ride when the ground is frozen. Riding early in the morning is ideal as temperatures will be lower and you can beat

the crowds to the sno-park. On a typical Bend day, where temperatures rise to 40 or higher, it is best to finish your ride by noon, or even earlier on especially warm days.

Second, it is important to ride with very low air pressure in your tires. Ideal air pressure is around 3 pounds per square inch. Tire pressure changes

with elevation, so be sure to bring along a pressure gauge and a pump so you can fine-tune your tire pressure to the conditions.

Fat biking when the ground is soft or with too much air in your tires will leave ruts in the trail. These ruts can make you and subsequent riders swerve and fall and are difficult for the groomers to repair.

If you'd like to try fatbiking, most of the bike shops in Bend rent and sell fatbikes. Plan ahead since fatbikes are popular this time of year. In fact, Central Oregon Trail Alliance estimates that 25 to 70 people ride the Wanoga fatbike trails each day.

If you want to explore more riding options, fatbikes are allowed on groomed snowmo-

bile routes and most snowshoe trails. There are hundreds of miles of groomed snowmobile routes in the area. Maps of these can be found on the Deschutes National Forest's website.

Grooming reports for snowmobile routes are available on the Facebook page Moon Country Snowbusters.

Fatbikes are not allowed on Mt. Bachelor's Common Corridor or on trails groomed for Nordic skiing, such as those at Meissner, Swampy Lakes or Edison sno-parks.

And on rare days, when the top layer of snow freezes into a smooth crust, crust cruising is guaranteed fun. Enjoy the trails!

■ *Emmy Andrews is the executive director of the Central Oregon Trail Alliance.*

## Ground

Continued from B1

Hole-in-the-Ground is located about 30 miles southeast of La Pine off Highway 31 and takes a little over an hour to reach from Bend. My daughter Lilly and I departed shortly before 10 a.m., minutes after she alerted me to the fact that she had a video conferencing appointment at 2 p.m. for which she needed to be home. Meanwhile, the car still needed gas, and I still wanted a drive-thru coffee. We threw in extra jackets and gloves, plenty of water and, I realized after we were rolling, zero snacks.

As we motored south at the north end of the speed limit, the weather did not look promising. Baleful clouds glowered low in the sky around and beyond Lava Butte. But the adage about the weather and waiting 5 minutes held true once we were heading east on Highway 31, where the sun made quick work of melting ice on the pavement.

Though there are websites that will get you there, we brought along our decade-old copy of "Bend, Overall," Scott Cook's indispensable guidebook to nearly 100 hikes and outings two hours or less from

### If You Go

**Getting there:** From Bend, head south on U.S. Highway 97 through La Pine and turn left onto state Highway 31, heading southeast for 22 miles. Turn left at sign to Hole-in-the-Ground. After three miles and turn right at FS 3130. Proceed about a mile. Veer left toward the crater rim.

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate

**Cost:** No passes required

**Contact:** 541-383-5300

Bend. Right down to the mile markers and distances between forest roads, his directions haven't let me down yet.

Interestingly, Hole-in-the-Ground, Big Hole and Fort Rock formed in similar ways, when volcanic eruptions encountered groundwater. Cook spells it out pretty succinctly:

"The Hole formed by the rising magma encountering an underground aquifer, resulting in a huge explosion that blew rock and ash into a perfect circle around the vent, called a tuff ring. ... To contrast, Fort Rock formed similarly, but its magma came up underneath

(the) surface of an Ice-Age lake that once filled this basin 12,000 years ago to a depth of 200 feet. Fort Rock's explosion also built up a 300- to 500-foot tuff ring, but under water."

Last week wasn't our first time visiting Hole-in-the-Ground. Our family visited one cold and snowy morning 10 years ago this March, when Lilly and her sisters were big enough to do the one-hour-or-so walk to the bottom of the crater. At the time, those kinds of hikes often felt like slogs with kids. Lilly was 8 then. At 18, she can outpace me when she wants.

Though a very lumpy road circles the crater rim, a good bang for your buck is to head down the south rim trail and come back up the steeper path directly below the treed parking area on the west rim ("parking area" is a generous term for what you'll encounter). However, since we took that path the last time we visited, we opted to bound down the steep, straight path to the crater floor 425 feet below, and came back up the easy way.

Whichever path you take at Hole-in-the-Ground, a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet.

■ *David Jasper; 541-383-0349, djasper@bendbulletin.com*

Find it all online  
bendbulletin.com

## The Perfect Valentine...



...or *Galentine's* Gift!

20% off services booked with \$100 gift card purchase

HAIR • NAILS • LASHES • SKIN • BROWS

BAMBOO 405 NE 3RD STREET  
SALON & SPA 541-385-8060

**Less Than 2 Hours South of Bend**

888.552.6692 | klamoyacasino.com

**NEW MEMBERS**

can win up to **\$250 Free Play**  
and Earn up to an additional **\$50 Free Play**

PEPSI THURSDAY KIOSK	FAB FRIDAYS	RED HEART KIOSK DAYS
Earn 30 points between 10am-8pm Win a 2-liter of Pepsi product and a Tote Bag (tote bag, one per day) <b>(While supplies last)</b> <b>Earn up to 4 2-Liters each day</b> <small>(May only win once per day)</small> <b>FEBRUARY 4, 11, 18, 25   10am-8pm</b>	Every 10 points earned will get one entry into the drawings starting on February 1st. One winner each drawing every half-hour. <b>WIN UP TO \$500 CASH</b> 6:00pm - \$100 Free Play   7:30pm - \$250 Cash 6:30pm - \$150 Free Play   8:00pm - \$300 Cash 7:00pm - \$200 Free Play   8:30pm - \$350 Cash 8:00pm - \$500 Cash <small>(May only win once per night)</small> <b>FEBRUARY 5, 12, 19, 26   6pm-9pm</b>	Earn 50 points, swipe card at Kiosk to win a prize. If cash or gift item prize take print out to Bonus club for redemption. <b>PRIZES:</b> • \$10 Free Play • \$15 Cash • \$10 Cash • \$50 Free Play • \$15 Free Play • Wine Decanter • Hoodie <small>(May only redeem once per day)</small> <b>FEBRUARY 7, 14   10am-6pm</b>

See Bonus Club for Complete Details

**WHEN ENTERING - All Guests and Team Members will have:**

Their temperatures checked

Must wear a mask

Maintain a minimum of 6ft. distance from others

No smoking or vaping will be allowed in the Casino, Restaurant or the Sleep Inn Hotel.

Live

at the

TOWER

Make The Tower Yours

## The Ultimate Valentine's Day Gift

**\$15 Enters you in a drawing for a date-night with your special partner or up to six people in your "quarenteam."**

**Tower Theatre Valentine's Day Special Includes:**  
Your names in lights on the Wall St. marquee  
Unlimited beverages & concession treats  
Food delivered from our friends at 5 Fusion

Multiple raffle ticket purchases allowed.  
All raffle funds help sustain the future of the Tower Theatre.

**TowerTheatre.org • 541-317-0700**

SHOWCASE PARTNER:

CENTRAL OREGON RADIOLOGY ASSOCIATES

Cascade

---

Sotheby's

INTERNATIONAL REALTY

APPLAUSE PARTNERS:

STEVE & CYNDE MAGIDSON

TERRY REYNOLDS

BRAVO PARTNERS:

SALLY RUSSELL

Riverside animal hospital