



Signs for the Peak View Snowshoe Trial and Jeff View Shelter at the Upper Three Creek Sno-Park.

Jefferson

Continued from B1

“The hill is steep,” they warned. “The wind only gets worse the higher you get.”

Initially, they were not wrong. The hill only seemed to get steeper as the wind picked up. It became clear early that this might be a bit of a challenge than originally thought.

After several miles — actually, a dozen or so yards — of the grueling uphill climb, questions began to swirl.

Why would the good people at alltrails.com blatantly lie by calling the trail’s difficulty moderate, and what abominable trail would be deemed “hard”? Will The Bulletin be held responsible for suggesting such a torturous activity to its readers? And how many screws are loose in the heads of people who find this to be an enjoyable way to spend a weekend afternoon?

Yes, thoughts of turning around were bouncing around the head in the early stages of the climb. But we kept plugging along — mainly because of this story and for the hope that the views from the shelter would be worth the struggle.

Of course, my dog did not mind the climb and would mock us two-leggers by sprinting up the hill, then back down, then back up again.

Many more miles (yards) later, the trail suddenly began to flatten off a bit. Then came more welcoming news. The trail once believed to be nearly 5 miles out-and-back was actually only 3 miles, and the shelter was a mile closer than originally thought. Everyone but Rodger was relieved.

We weaved through the forest where the effects of the fire from nearly a decade ago were still noticeable. The once-evergreen trees were reduced to giant twigs shooting out of the snow. As Fertig pointed out, the open spaces left by the fire helped create better views of the surrounding Three Sisters and Mount Jefferson.

As we climbed and got closer to the shelter, the snow-

How to get there

From Sisters: Travel 11 miles south on Forest Road 16 (Elm Street in Sisters).

drifts became deeper. Watching my pup stumble and sink into snow made me glad for the invention of snowshoes—serves that showoff right.

Walking through a patch of trees, the Jefferson Viewing Shelter appeared. It is a small Adirondack shelter with a giant heavy tarp covering the entrance to shield the wind.

Inside, there was a wood stove and benches, which made for a perfect spot to relax, rehydrate and munch on some trail mix, all while warming up and escaping the elements. The Nancy’s Loop and Three Creek Lake Trail nordic trails also lead to the shelter.

Outside in the distance, in all its glory, was Mount Jefferson. And on this day, it

was completely covered up by clouds. Just our luck. The view was stunning nevertheless.

Refueled and after snapping a few photos, we began our trek, thankfully, downhill.

To get an idea of how windy it was, the tracks that our snowshoes had made heading to the shelter were completely gone. On a day where it was not snowing, the wind had blown the snow into our tracks that were several inches deep as if no one had been there.

Mother Nature tested our hardiness by giving us heavy winds on our climb and rewarded us with no wind on the way down. Suddenly, the moderate ranking made sense, and we discovered that the people of alltrails.com were not liars as we effortlessly made our way down the mountain and back to the parking lot.


And we made plans to revisit in the summer.

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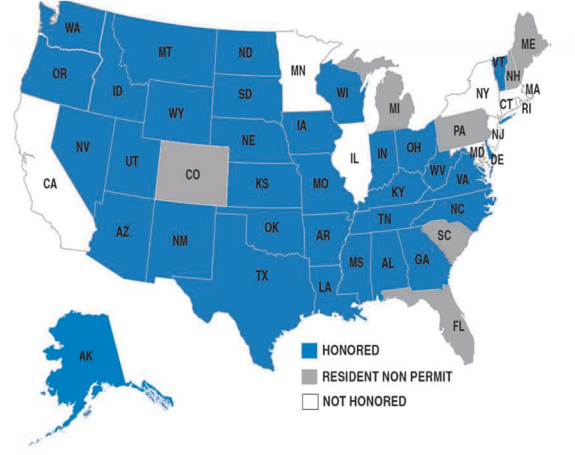
Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin photos

A group of hikers head out together Saturday to explore a trail from the Upper Three Creek Sno-park.



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