



THE REGION'S HUB FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Each week in this section, you will find the area's most complete guide of what's open and closed; outdoor activities and events; top picks of places to explore; conditions of hiking and biking trails, fishing holes, water flows, camping spots, parks and more — as well as features from outdoor writers and field experts.



"It just opened up a new world for me. I take a camera with me everywhere I go now."

Alex Laakmann

"The photography aspect is a product of the cool stuff that we do like going climbing or going whitewater kayaking."

Eli Zatz

Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Two teens explore Central Oregon with a **camera**

BY BRIAN RATHBONE • The Bulletin

Bend teens Eli Zatz and Alex Laakmann spoke fondly of a late September night up on Broken Top in the Three Sisters Wilderness where they spent hours trying to capture the night sky on their iPhones, using rocks to circumvent the lack of a tripod to get a steady photo.

That night, trying to capture the stars, is when the two friends discovered a love of photography.

For nearly six months, Zatz and Laakmann have been exploring the world of photography and capturing the scenery of Central Oregon.

"It just opened up a new world for me," said the 15-year-old Laakmann. "I take a camera with me everywhere I go now."

Rather than learning to bake a perfect sourdough loaf, the two began taking a camera on their adventures throughout the pandemic, when some activities became limited.

"We ended up going on a lot of backcountry, wilderness adventures and it was really fun to take a camera along so that we could

take some fun pictures," said the 16-year-old Zatz. "The photography aspect is a product of the cool stuff that we do like going climbing or going whitewater kayaking."

The two have traveled to Joshua Tree National Park in California, backpacked through the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Eastern Oregon's Strawberry Mountains and rock climbed City of Rocks in Idaho. In Central Oregon, areas close to home have provided more than enough material to hone their newfound craft.

See **Camera** / B9

Get lost in the Lost Forest

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE
The Bulletin

Sometimes, you just need to drive east.

Turning my Jeep eastward toward the so-called Oregon Outback is one of my favorite drives in the state. It's easy to find yourself lost down a bumpy dirt road without cell service, but it's just as easy to find your way back to paved country highways to get your bearings again.

And that's part of why it's so great.

Beyond the miles of sagebrush dotted with farmland is a small corner of Earth east of Christmas Valley that hosts a hidden treasure — the Lost Forest Research Natural Area.

Lost in time

The nearly 9,000-acre ponderosa pine and western juniper forest is nestled between typical arid High Desert terrain, the constantly shifting inland dune system of the



CAMPING

Christmas Valley Dunes and Fossil Lake, where hundreds of paleontological specimens have been unearthed for over a century.

By all accounts of the surrounding landscape, the forest shouldn't be here. But it has survived from a cooler, wetter age and can now withstand meager annual rainfall, sandy soil and wind storms that rip across the landscape.

See **Lost Forest** / B9



Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin

High winds whip up sand across the Fossil Lake area near Christmas Valley.

FAITH HOPE & CHARITY
VINEYARDS

Gift the Gift of Wine Club

Anchor Club • Gold Club

Silver Club • Vine Club



We're in this together

Please visit
FaithHopeandCharityEvents.com to sign up

Curbside Pick Up, Corporate gifts & local delivery available