

TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE



North Twin Lake with snow in 2016.
Bulletin file

Top picks for the mountains

Dutchman Flat Sno-park — This is one of the higher elevation sno-parks in Central Oregon located north of Mt. Bachelor. As such, the snow tends to stick around a little longer than other places meaning that the smaller park is great for nordic skiing and snowshoeing. It can get busy so go early and if it fills up, head back down the road to another park for some outdoor winter fun.

Steins Pillar — As we've been having more and more mild days, the trail east of Prineville should be thawing out nicely. The 3.8 moderate, out and back trail can stay icy in shady parts of the trail so bring YakTrax or crampons if you want to do the full length. If not, stopping at the viewpoint a little over a mile in still gives you a great view of the tall rock plinth that the trail is named for. Watch for cougars that have been seen in the area.

Twin Lakes Loop — Another place that is beginning to thaw so watch for icy and snowy sections. The 4.5-mile trail begins at South Twin Lake and wraps around counter-clockwise and connects to the neighboring North Twin Lake and wraps around that before reconnecting with its southern counterpart. Plus, if you fish the lakes are good spots for rainbow trout and open year-round for angling. The road out might be snowy in spots, so high ground clearance vehicles are still recommended.

— Makenzie Whittle, *The Bulletin*

Volunteer

Continued from B1

This makes the trail more sustainable and more fun for trail users.

We ride our bikes to the farthest new drain location and work back toward the trail-head. Tom has rigged his bike so he can carry two tools on it, and a few of us are given fancy collapsible tools that can be taken apart and put into a regular backpack.

Everyone in our group has done trail work before, so we have a leg up on understanding trail drainage and how to dig drains. But digging a well-functioning drain isn't easy, and we work together deciding the best location, shape, angle and size of each drain. The trail tread is firm, and we dig carefully to avoid disturbing it any more than necessary.

Tom has a tennis ball and we have fun rolling it down the trail to test each new drain. If the ball rolls into the drain, water will do the same and the drain is a success. But when the ball rolls right past the drain, we keep working on shaping the drain until the ball rolls into

it and we all cheer.

It is a beautiful day, and as we work we tell stories and say friendly hellos to the many bikers, hikers and runners who pass by — most of whom thank us for the work we are doing, which makes me feel like a million bucks.

Now every time I ride that



Andrews

section of trail, I remember that day and those great people and the satisfaction that comes from giving back to the trails that have given me so much. And that, my friends, is what living in Bend is all about.

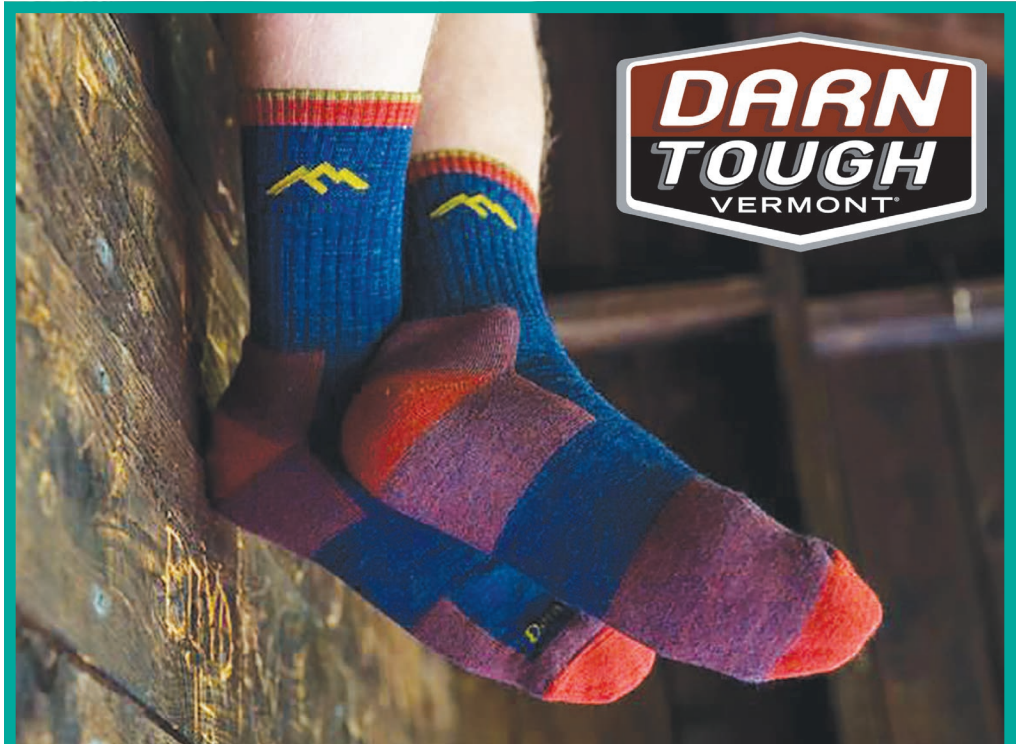
■ Emmy Andrews is the executive director of the Central Oregon Trail Alliance.

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