

## TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE



Mount Jefferson in the distance with the Metolius River arm and the Balancing Rocks at Lake Billy Chinook.

Makenzie Whittle/Bulletin file photo

### The High Desert

**Balancing Rocks** — Tucked away down a long gravel road at Lake Billy Chinook, the Balancing Rocks are fascinating geologic features that have been revealed fully after a 2002 fire burned away the trees surrounding them. Created when the two rock layers eroded at different paces, the volcanic bases were the first to be hewn out, leaving the rest of the rock to appear to balance. The rocks have a quarter-mile easy path out to an overlook from a blink-and-you'll-miss-it trailhead about 13 miles west after the Deschutes Bridge at the lake.

**Juniper Butte** — The moderate 6.4-mile out-and-back hike near Culver may be a bit on the steep and rocky side, but the views at the top are worth the extra effort. The trail follows an old 4x4 road that has very little shade from the juniper trees dotted along the way. Because of this, it makes it a great hike for a cooler spring day.

**Lower Crooked River Backcountry Byway** — The 43 mile stretch of state Highway 27 between Prineville and U.S. Highway 20 makes for a gorgeous Sunday drive or bike ride. The road twists through the canyon cut by the Crooked River, over the Bowman Dam at Prineville Reservoir then continues south along creeks and streams as the pavement turns to well-graded gravel until meeting up with U.S. Highway 20 east of Millican.

— Makenzie Whittle, The Bulletin



### Goose hazing volunteers on the hunt in one of Bend's parks.

Submitted photo

walking the trails in Shevlin Park. Volunteer hosts welcome visitors to offer information and share reminder for park rules: For Riley Ranch, that means no dogs and no bikes; for Shevlin, it's a thank you for keeping dogs on leash. Volunteers cover a weekly two-hour shift, and many report that their time spent in the parks is the highlight of their week. There are volunteer host shifts available at both Riley Ranch and Shevlin Parks.

### Goose management

Canada geese can be detrimental to the parks, and volunteers help keep the birds mov-

ing and off the turf.

My dog needs to stick with our litter clean-up walks, but if your pet can reliably respond to commands, has the instinct to herd and chase and the two of you enjoy walks together in the parks, this might be an opportunity to volunteer as a team. Dogs and their owners

must pass an evaluation before they are approved for volunteering.

In April, consider if there's something you can do to take care of the natural spaces that you enjoy.

■ *Kim Johnson is the community engagement supervisor for the Bend Park & Recreation District.*

### Volunteer opportunities

To learn more about volunteering, visit [bendparksandrec.org/volunteer](http://bendparksandrec.org/volunteer).

## Volunteering

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### Adopt-a-Park or Trail Section

If you want to volunteer more than one day, but need something flexible and a little less like working in your yard, this is an easy opportunity to love. Volunteers adopt a specific site and agree to visit often to help with litter, pull weeds and to keep an eye out for vandalism, weather damage or anything that might be a concern. With more than 80 parks and 80+ miles of trails, many volunteers adopt a site close to their home or office where visiting is simple, and some continue their adoption for many years. Some adopters take on seasonal landscape maintenance projects too.

### Be a host in the park

Bend Park & Recreation

District hosts are the friendly faces you might see by the parking area at Riley Ranch Nature Reserve, and soon,

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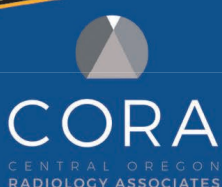
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