



**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.

# Impromptu escape to Chush Falls

*(New wilderness permit NOT required)*



Chush Falls is located along Whychus Creek in the Three Sisters Wilderness, just south of Sisters.



Views of the Three Sisters and Whychus Creek can be found along the trail to the falls.

Mark Morical/Bulletin photos

BY MARK MORICAL • The Bulletin



**I**t is going to be a hiking season unlike any other in Central Oregon. Starting May 28, access to many of our favorite trails in the Three Sisters Wilderness will require a Central Cascades Wilderness permit, purchased in advance and subject to availability. Gone are the days of an impromptu mid-summer Saturday trek to the summit of South Sister or up to Green Lakes. But most trails in our beloved wilderness will still only require a free, self-issue permit available at

the trailhead.

One such trail is Chush Falls. Located south of Sisters off Forest Road 16 and along Upper Whychus Creek, the 5-mile round-trip hike to this beautiful waterfall is a perfect way to kick off the hiking season. The trailhead is not easy to find, as it requires driving about 6 miles on gravel forest roads. On a cold, high-overcast morning last week, I started the trek from the Chush Falls Trailhead, following the path of destruction of the 2012 Pole Creek Fire. Trees on both

sides of Whychus Creek were charred black, and North Sister and Middle Sister rose to the west, blanketed white with lingering snow. The first portion of the trail passes through the severely scorched forest. Wide and not at all technical, the trail — which ascends moderately from 4,800 feet to 5,200 feet in elevation — cuts through a mixed-conifer forest and crosses two small tributary creeks.

See **Chush Falls** / B9