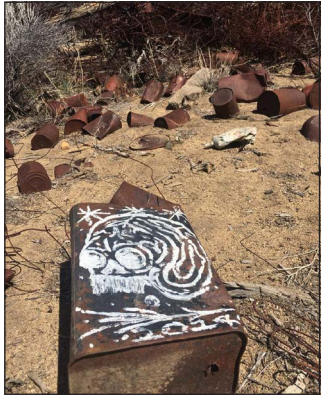


TOP PICK OF THE WEEK

Larry Chitwood Trail



David Jasper/The Bulletin

There are several piles of old trash, mostly rusted out cans, near the trailhead. Such relics are potential artifacts by the BLM. That didn't stop one artist from painting an old can and putting the year 2019 on it.

If you've been to the Oregon Badlands Wilderness — the sprawling High Desert haven about 20 minutes east of Bend more commonly known as the Badlands — you've probably been to one of the more popular trails, perhaps the Badlands Rock or Flatiron Rock trails.

But for something a smidge closer to Bend, yet in a sense even farther off the beaten path, try Larry Chitwood Trail, a segmented loop trail 7 miles in length that also connects to the Sand Lily and Mazama Ash trails to the east.

Most of the Badlands' 29,000-plus acres is home to the Badlands volcano, according to the Bureau of Land Management, which manages the area, home to strangely shaped junipers, sandy volcanic soil and interesting rock formations. That's true, too, on Larry Chitwood Trail, which used to be known as the Obermolte Trail before being re-named in memory of a U.S. Forest Service geologist who died while hiking on Pilot Butte 13 years ago.

On a recent hike at the trail that bears his name, much of the soil was surprisingly still firm, perhaps residual dampness from late-April rains, but be warned, dry weather will loosen the soil and give your calves a workout. During the heat of summer, evening and morning hikes are probably the way to go. You can't miss the rusted can piles near the trailhead, which remain, in short, because of the potential historic value — proving that one person's trash really is another's treasure.

Getting there: From 27th Street in Bend, drive east on U.S. Highway 20 6.6 miles and turn left on Dodds Road. Continue for about 3.5 miles to Obermolte Road. Turn right and continue to the trailhead at road's end.

—David Jasper, The Bulletin



Submitted photos

▲ This unnamed bridge along the southern part of the Deschutes River Trail is the last place to cross until Benham Falls East Trailhead. ▲ A pedestrian enjoys the community walking path in Rockridge Park.



Trail offers views of the creek and the park has accessible restrooms and parking.

On the east side of Bend, there are several highly rated loop trails options. Pine Nursery Park features over four miles of trails throughout the park. Paved, wide and relatively level, the paths provide accessible routes to the sports field areas, parking lots and dog parks. The renovated playground is also accessible.

Another recommendation is Rockridge Park, with trails looping through small, rolling hills covered in old-growth juniper, lava rock, sage and bitterbrush. There is a soft-surface fitness loop and

a paved loop that is just under one mile. With 60% of the park as natural space, the park can make you feel like you are miles outside of town.

The Stone Creek Park Trail in southeast Bend offers yet another looped trail that weaves through basalt lava and offers sweeping views. Most of the 6-plus acres remain natural and are accessed via the unpaved trails.

I hope you get the chance to enjoy these exceptional loop trails with water views wildlife, and a refreshing escape outdoors.

■ Kristin Cunningham is the community relations assistant for Bend Park & Recreation District.

Loop

Continued from B1

This gorgeous section of the DRT is my favorite trail because it has paths along both sides of the Deschutes River, creating a convenient and functional exercise loop. The trail is connected by a footbridge approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the Farewell Bend Park bridge.

You'll enjoy ponderosa

pinus and be treated to the sights and sounds of the Deschutes River as it rushes through a beautiful canyon. On this seemingly instant escape from the hustle and bustle of Bend's activity, it's a good place to go for a little health and happiness break in nature.

Other loop trails

If you haven't checked out Shevlin Park's loop trails yet, I highly recommend it.

Shevlin Park is arguably the crown jewel of the park system; it's only four miles west of downtown Bend, and it has great loop trails. Not only that, Shevlin Park just turned 100 years old. The Tumalo Creek

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