



Bend's Jeremy Dickman walks along the summit of Strawberry Mountain in northeast Oregon.

Mark Morical/The Bulletin

Strawberry

Continued from B1

After a good night's sleep, we set out on our first hike, which would take us to Strawberry Lake, Strawberry Falls and Little Strawberry Lake. (Permits are not required for hiking in the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness.)

The Strawberry Basin Trail began just a few feet from our tents, and we started out in a steady climb to Strawberry Lake, which is only 1.4 miles from the campground.

Brook trout are stocked in the lake, and we could see many swimming near the shore. After circling to the south side of the clear blue lake, we turned on the trail to Strawberry Falls, a thin veil of water that drops nearly 100 feet over moss-covered boulders.

From there, the trail to Little Strawberry Lake led us on switchbacks to the top of the

falls, and then to an increasingly steep trek to Little Strawberry Lake, which was 3.4 miles from our campsite. Little Strawberry Lake sits right at the base of a melted glacier that is now mostly shale along the vertical cliff side, though one tiny patch of snow lingered under rock ledges. The lake is bordered by a bright green meadow, which was layered with pink wildflowers.

According to the Forest Service, glacial ice carved the U-shaped valleys in the Strawberry Mountain Range and formed the rock beds that now hold the seven alpine lakes of the wilderness area.

After swimming and eating lunch at the lake, we made our way back down to the campsite, finishing the trek of about 7 miles.

The next day, we opted for a more challenging hike, deciding to make the summit attempt of Strawberry Mountain,

the highest peak in the wilderness area. The trek would be 12 miles round-trip and include about 3,300 feet of elevation gain.

We hiked past Strawberry Lake, and instead of making a left turn toward Strawberry Falls, we continued straight on the Strawberry Mountain Trail.

The trail took us along amazingly picturesque ridgelines where we could look back at the rock-strewn cliffs and peer down on Strawberry Lake.

As we continued climbing, we came to an opening in the trees through which we could clearly see Strawberry Mountain. It appeared it would be a steep grind to make the summit, but we pushed on.

We passed through a lush meadow and then began climbing in earnest as the trail transitioned from dirt to exposed switchbacks along loose rock. We came across three or four

other groups that were descending, including the large group with the young hiker who offered words of motivation.

After eating our packed lunches and snapping photos at the top, we began the long descent back to the lake and the campground.

We needed about six hours to complete the hike, a grand tour of the remote and rugged Strawberry Mountain Wilderness.

■ Reporter: 541-383-0318, mmorical@bendbulletin.com

TOP PICKS WHERE TO EXPLORE

Parks and trails in Bend

Hollinshead Park — The iconic barn may be a focal point, but don't discount the rest of the 16.5-acre park's beauty. The old working farm was donated to the Bend Park and Recreation District by the Hollinshead family, and today's park maintains much of the historic charm of Bend's past, including the barn and a small museum in the old Share Cropper's house (you must make arrangements with the park's department to visit the inside of the house). With lots of green space, shady trees, a community garden and an off-leash area for your pooches, this Midtown beauty has a lot to offer.



Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file

Kathy Bishoff, right, is greeted by another four-legged visitor while walking her dogs with Marilyn Richards at Hollinshead Park in Bend in April 2020.

Meadow Day Use Area — One of the many access points to the Deschutes River Trail, Meadow (or Meadow Camp as some refer to it) is a quick and easy way to hike or picnic riverside. Managed by the Deschutes National Forest, the day use area has a few picnic tables and some stunning rock formations, which you may catch climbers scaling on any given day. While the river may look calm, the water is one of the most challenging spots on the Deschutes, according to the forest service website and should only be attempted by experts. You'll need your Northwest Forest Pass to park (or pay the day-use fee) and dogs must be kept on a leash through Sept. 15.

Riley Ranch Nature Preserve — The preserve may be for bipeds only (dogs and bikes are not welcome due to the impact on the landscape), but it offers some great hiking options for those who visit. Stick to the upper loop trail for an easy 1.57-mile walk with mountain views across the flats or descend into the river canyon down lava rock steps and check out the more rugged 1.25-mile trail hugging the river. If you go far enough down the trail, you can connect to Tumalo State Park — if you're up for the 7-mile jaunt there and back again.

— Makenzie Whittle, The Bulletin

Bureau of Land Management seasonal trail closures

The following Bureau of Land Management trails are now closed through Aug. 31 to protect nesting raptors:

- Millican Plateau OHV Trail System (Route 95 only)
- South side of Trout Creek Trail including climbing walls
- Cline Buttes Recreation Area (portions of Deep Canyon, Fryrear, Maston, Jaguar Road)
- Horny Hollow Trail
- Dry River Canyon

For more information visit blm.gov

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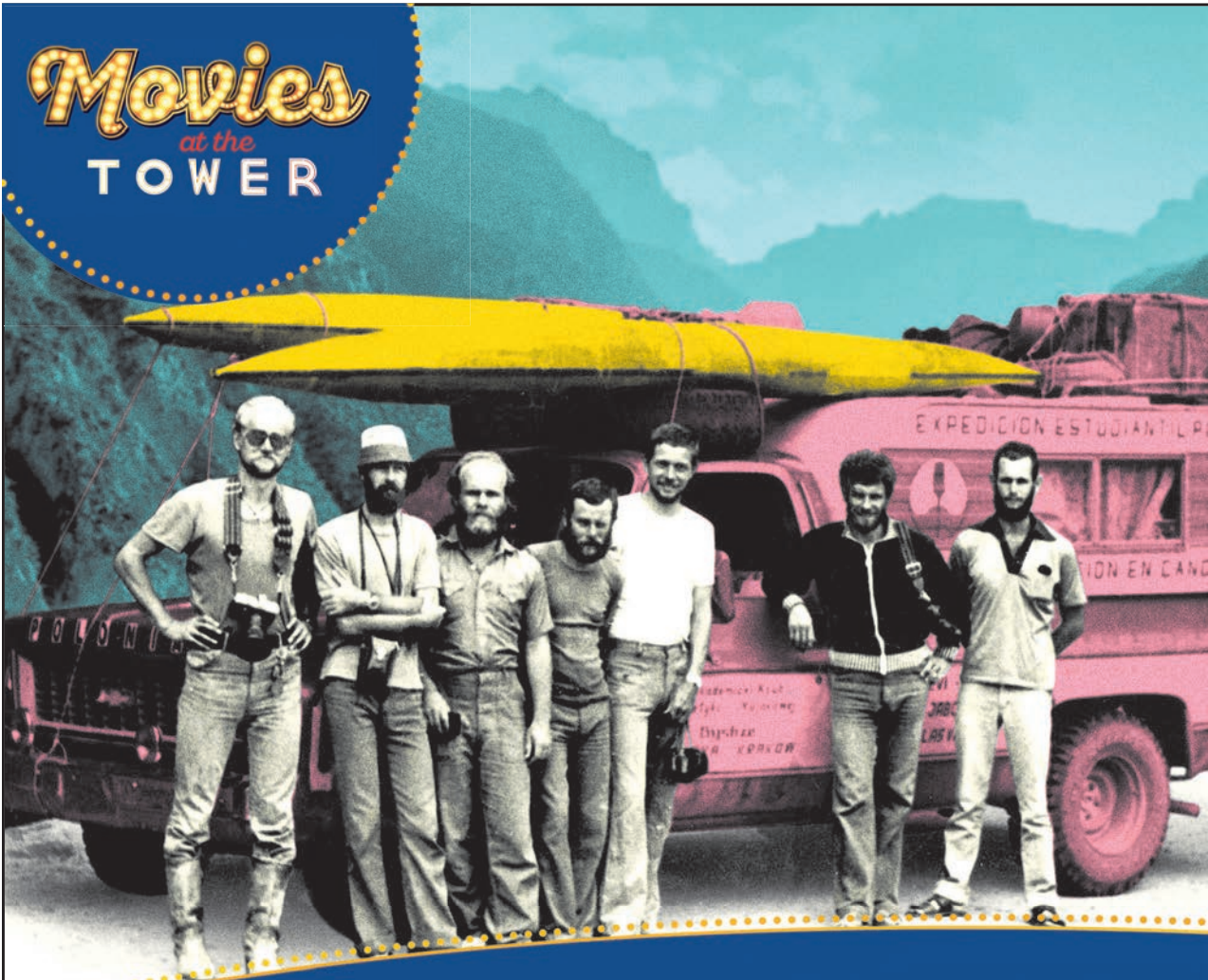
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