

## EXPLORE MORE



The Pilot Butte Base Trail wraps around the lower portion of Pilot Butte, a 480-foot lava dome in Bend.

# Pilot Butte Base Trail



Watch your step: In winter, snow and ice can make for slick conditions along the north portion of the Pilot Butte Base Trail, which works itself around the lower portions of the butte.

David Jasper/  
Bulletin photos

BY DAVID JASPER

The Bulletin

Pilot Butte State Scenic Viewpoint is home to the Pilot Butte Summit Road Trail and paralleling Nature Trail, each of which is one mile long and wraps around the 480-foot butte, among the most heavily trafficked trails in Bend. That's no surprise given the many neighborhoods surrounding the park, which is located on Bend's east side and a convenient place to grab a quick bit of cardio exercise.

But Pilot Butte also has a much less widely traveled trail, the 1.6-mile Pilot Butte Base Trail. Don't let the name fool you. As this reporter and his nearly 13-year-old dog were reminded earlier this week, the trail's name is a bit of a misnomer given the fact that a good portion of it — the sections on the east and south sides — are located a little way up the butte.

I'm not sure about the dog, but this reporter was also reminded what a gem Pilot Butte is as we strolled among the junipers. You can patch into the Base Trail from the summit road (closed to vehicle traffic in winter), or if you're arriving on Larkspur Trail or you're parked in the parking lot to the east, start on the paved trail up the butte, a la hikers with higher aspirations, and keep an eye for Base Trail signs.

Staying on the main trail may prove a little trickier on the west side of the butte, where there are fewer signs and more user-created trails, and keep an eye out for lingering ice near where the trail abuts Pilot Butte Middle School.

Pilot Butte State Scenic Viewpoint is located at 1310 NE Highway 20, Bend. Contact: 541-388-6055 or [oregonstateparks.org](http://oregonstateparks.org).

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Drew Peterson/Submitted photo

Snowshoeing may be a good compromise when snow conditions are less than optimal, suggests writer Cristina Peterson, seen here snowshoeing near Suttle Lake.

## Snowshoeing

Continued from B1

Making some change while still pursuing adventures and spending time outside is possible. POW understands it's not realistic to ask people to stop getting out to do what they love. Those adventures may be what inspire people to take more action. POW advocates for making change where possible such as putting pressure on ski areas to power lifts with renewable energy sources; making conscious decisions about commuting to trailheads either in a carpool or in a low or no emissions vehicle; searching for used gear to replace items only when they are really needed rather than just to have the latest and greatest.

There can be a balance between effort and surrender, between going to such extremes that life loses its joy and resigning to do nothing. Every person's mere existence creates a carbon footprint, and every person has agency to reduce it.

There's also an effort and surrender in choosing an

outdoor activity in these less-than-ideal snow conditions. Some will make the effort, continuing to head into the mountains in search of smooth turns in the snow. Others may surrender to the warm temperatures, get out the hiking boots or mountain bike to find dry trails (remember not to ride on muddy trails, creating deep ruts or widening them by going around large puddles).

Maybe this is an in-between option: Snowshoeing!

Since this activity can be done in various depths of snow and doesn't require sliding (unless you're doing it wrong or being super extreme), it can be a way to experience the woods in the winter even if the snow is crusty or sticky. There are many snowshoe trails on the Deschutes National Forest as the Deschutes National Forest provides a pretty good cardio workout if you add some elevation gain or go for miles and miles. It doesn't require much skill or coordination since it is basically hiking over snow, so almost anyone can try it from young children or older

folks.

Snowshoeing can also fall into the middle ground of requiring some gear but not much: snowshoes and some old poles, in addition to clothing and boots appropriate for the weather. It's important to be prepared for any outdoor activity in the winter as the cold increases risks for exposure and some areas can be harder to access if help is needed. So be sure to bring essentials such as food, water, appropriate clothing, navigation tools, heat source, headlamp and a first aid kit.

If you don't want to go alone or don't have the gear, check out the free snowshoe tours at Mt. Bachelor. Outings are led by a U.S. Forest Service volunteer and snowshoes are provided. Visit [mtbachelor.com/things-to-do/resort-activities/snowshoeing](http://mtbachelor.com/things-to-do/resort-activities/snowshoeing) for more information.

For more info or to get involved with Protect Our Winters, visit their website at [protectourwinters.org](http://protectourwinters.org).

Outdoors writer Cristina Peterson is an avid climber and trail runner.

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