

## Mt. Bachelor Natural History Snowshoe Tours Now Available

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

Have some fun in the snow and learn about local ecology, geology, wildlife and winter safety while you're at it.

The US Forest Service, Mount Bachelor Ski Area and Northwest Interpretive Association are conducting the annual program of free natural history snowshoe tours at Mt. Bachelor's West Village.

Forest Service field rangers began the tours on December 26th, and will continue this week, Tuesday through Saturday, January 2-7. Tours start twice a day, at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Field rangers will continue to lead the tours on weekends and holidays from January through March.

Tour groups will meet on the west side of the West Village ticket building at the Forest Service snowshoe shed. Snowshoes are provided and prior experience is not necessary. Participants should be at least ten years old, and wear snow boots and warm winter clothing.

The 90-minute tours will occur in a restricted area designated for a route that includes several interpretive stops where participants will discuss the ecology, geology, wildlife and snow conditions around one of North America's largest ski resorts.

Field rangers will also lead students on Project SNOW (Studying Nature Outdoors in Winter) tours at Mount Bachelor January through March. Project SNOW tours will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to provide winter ecology field experience to elementary and middle school classes. Participating students learn about snow studies and watershed ecology while on snowshoes.

Contact Jennifer Winston, Deschutes National Forest recreation technician, at 541-383-4771 for more information or to make tour reservations for groups.

Mount Bachelor Ski Area and the Northwest Interpretive Association (NWIA) support the tours and other Forest Service winter programs. Snowshoe tour program donations can be made through the NWIA.

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