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Map makes sense of area trails

By Vickie Aldous

Ashland Daily Tidings

Mountain bikers, whether beginners or seasoned veterans, can explore the network of trails in the Ashland Watershed with confidence following the release of a new three-dimensional map.

Issued by Bend-based LLEDMAPS, the map covers trails in the watershed, as well as those surrounding Applegate Lake and in the Brown Mountain area.

"It's really, really detailed," said Dana Bandy, trails advocacy co-chair for the Southern Oregon Mountain Bike Association, or SOMBA. "It has ratings for trails from beginner to expert so people know ahead of time what they're getting into. It shows the length of the trail and the elevation gain and loss so people can see the uphill and downhill. For people into GPS, it shows where the trail starts and ends. It's the most comprehensive map I've ever seen. It has pretty much every trail out there in our area."

Bikers looking at the map for the watershed will feel like they are looking down at the area from an airplane because of the shaded, topographical images.

The format does away with the need to decipher contour lines that appear on other types of maps. That will be a relief for some outdoor enthusiasts who still find themselves puzzling over whether a feature is a valley or ridge.

Elevation charts for trails also will help riders know in advance whether a trail has a hand-numbingly long descent or a steep uphill climb at the end of a day's ride.

In addition to showing the watershed - the most easily accessible bikers' playground for Ashlanders - the map depicts Applegate Lake trails.

"The Applegate Lake area has a huge network of trails," Bandy said. "It's probably the No. 1 mountain biking destination in Southern Oregon and Northern California. There's a trail completely around the lake and 15 to 20 additional trails."

Brown Mountain, which lies between Lake of the Woods and Fish Lake, also is popular with bikers, he said.

The map covers 40 trails and more than 130 miles, according to LLEDMAPS staff.

Bandy said the comprehensive map will make it easier for bikers to explore new terrain.



Submitted photo

Lled smith delivers the first new map, hot off the presses, to Gwen Haynes, owner of Sims Cycle & Fitness in Medford.

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"People with this map will be able to go out with a lot more assurance that they're not going to get lost. They'll be able to find their way more easily. It's something that wasn't available before," he said.

The map also should prove valuable to other trail users, Bandy noted.

"The map is wonderful for hikers and backpackers. Everything on it is applicable to multi-use," he said.

SOMBA will receive 5 percent of the proceeds from sales of the map, which is available for \$9.99 at Ashland Cycle Sport, Ashland Food Co-op and Get 'N Gear in Ashland, and Medford Cycle Sport and Sims Cycle & Fitness in Medford.

Designed by cartographer Lled Smith, a former Southern Oregon resident, the map is the first in the Treadmaps series of Oregon mountain biking destinations, according to LLEDMAPS staff.

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