

WHERE TO GO

SNOWSHOEING

BUMPING LAKE

Distance from campground:
26 miles

A flat, easy snowshoe explores the forested shores of Bumping Lake. Lightly used in winter—a great choice for solitude.

PLEASANT VALLEY

Distance from campground:
20 miles

A series of mostly flat trails leave from the Hell's Crossing Sno-Park Trailhead and trace the American River. Expect to get some great views of Fife's Peak, weather permitting.

WILDLIFE VIEWING

OAK CREEK

WILDLIFE AREA

Distance from campground:
15 miles

The now famous winter feeding program at Oak Creek provides the rare chance to observe bighorn sheep, mule deer, mountain goats, and elk.

SNOWMOBILING

BALD MOUNTAIN ROAD STAGING AREA

Directly across road from campground

Access to more than 60 miles of trail. Staging only, with no restrooms or facilities. Perfect for quick, hassle-free access from Elk Ridge.

BOULDER CAVE SNO-PARK

Distance from campground:
9 miles

Access to over 20 miles of trail on the west side of Highway 410. Trail accesses the summit of Little Bald Mountain. Restrooms at the trailhead.

For more information, call the Naches Ranger District at 509.653.1400.



FROM TOP Elk gather in droves near the Yakima-area campground. Families have plenty of winter activities here.

The Bald Mountain Road staging area connects more than 60 miles of groomed trails that launch into the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Tight tree lines, exposed ridges, remote valleys as well as other sno-parks are all accessible from this jumping-off point. And because things tend to get more popular the farther west you go from there, it's a convenient, less-crowded portal, just across the highway. It's an invigorating way to spend your days at Elk Ridge, but this time around my stay was geared to less adrenaline-inducing pursuits. Steady, quiet breaths and solitude were on the next day's agenda. For the time being though, more fireside whiskey.

When I woke, I embraced the morning casually. Stretching, coffee, breakfast, hygiene, more coffee. I packed a lunch and drove to Bumping Lake to go snowshoeing. The roads were in great shape, and there were no other cars at

the trailhead. I was hoping for this, and it was kind of the point. A thigh-pumping ascent to a viewpoint that gazes into infinity is great, and I love those. But so do other people.

It was a good, strong, windless cold, the kind that steals the sound from the air and allows you to warm up without getting hot. Not quite needing to remove a layer, I proceeded steadily around the lake and campground area. Again, there were no magnificent vistas to be had, but there was plenty of chill and calm—the perfect accompaniment to the welcomed silence.

That afternoon I would enjoy a long massage, hearty dinner, and once again the fire pit with all of its glorious trappings. This was real winter and the exact sort of adventure I needed. For now, places like Elk Ridge will satiate that need. At least until I can find a way to move to Yakima. 🇺🇸