

# A Book About Mt. Bachelor

Q & A with author Glenn Voelz

BY BECCA MURPHY

**B**end resident Glenn Voelz, a former military officer, history professor and accomplished writer, has recently published a nonfiction book about Mt. Bachelor, titled "Mt. Bachelor, a History." With his diverse background, including experience as a ski patroller at the Mt. Bachelor Nordic Center, Glenn brings a unique perspective and expertise to his writing on the iconic mountain. We chatted with Voelz about the book.

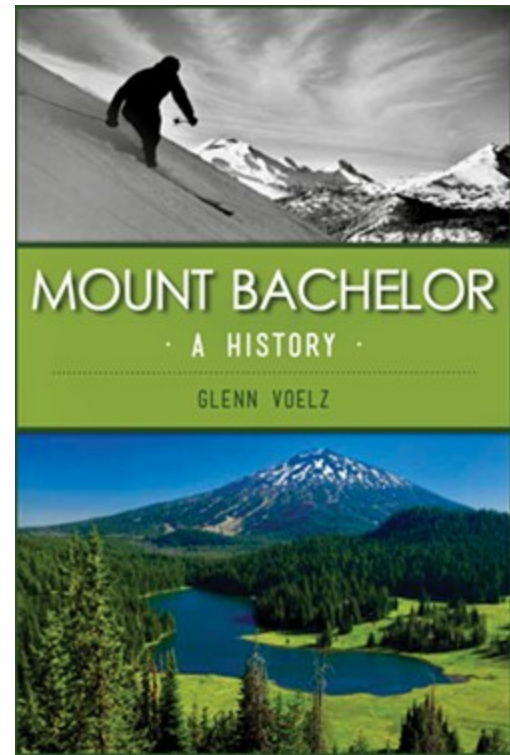
**Source Weekly:** What inspired you to write a book about the history of Mt. Bachelor?

**Glenn Voelz:** I've lived all over the world, and I've always had an interest in local history. Whenever I go somewhere, I try to dive into the local history. I started working at Mt. Bachelor, at the Nordic Center, and I started paying attention to stories from people who have worked there for a long time. Initially, I was going to do some research about the Nordic Center. But it's hard to look at the history of the Nordic Center outside of the context of the development of the entire mountain and recreation history in Central Oregon in general.

**SW:** What do you hope readers will take away from this book — especially the Oregon community that has been here for a long time but might not know the rich history of Bachelor?

**GV:** I think part of that is that many of us don't have deep roots here. We're newcomers to the area. And so a lot of people who are moving in or moved in the last 20 years when Bend has grown don't appreciate or don't realize the history of the mountain and how far back it goes. Mt. Bachelor played a significant role in transforming the economy and creating what it is today. Bill Healy, Mt. Bachelors' founder, had a vision for the mountain, which I think many people, both locals and probably newcomers, forget. It was a vision that wouldn't be achieved by relying on local skiers; he wasn't going to create another Hoodoo or Willamette Pass; he wanted to make a big resort. And that required financing and skiers from outside of Central Oregon. His early development plans were laser-focused on bringing in people from all over the Pacific Northwest. He didn't see it as a local place and promoted it that way from the mid-1960s.

**SW:** What was one of the most exciting discoveries in your research?



*Book Cover: Ray Atkeson (Top photo)  
Tom Iraci (Bottom photo)  
Mount Bachelor: A History book  
cover.*

**GV:** Bill Healy wanted to get up to a million skier visits a year, which is huge. It never achieved that, but the highest they've ever had was in the 600,000s in the late 1980s. He was looking at making it into a world-class resort that required customers, guests, and skiers from all over the country to visit Bend and Mt. Bachelor. But I found that he was very civic-minded about it. He made some very conscious decisions in the late 1960s that he was not going to pursue slopeside development. He had a brief experiment with food service and overnight lodging at the base area that lasted for about five years, but then he decided that it would be a resort. He wanted to emphasize building a tourism economy in Bend and Sunriver. I think he was very forward-looking and wanted to create something that was ultimately going to be for the benefit of the community and the residents of Central Oregon.



*Susan Conrad*

Glenn Voelz, author of a new book on the history of Mt. Bachelor.

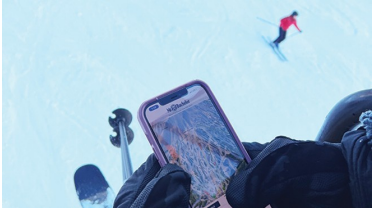
**SW:** Is your book digestible for any audience?

**GV:** I wanted it to be accessible and interesting for someone who lives here and maybe even someone who's not a skier. It is about Mt. Bachelor, but it's also about recreation in general, the Deschutes National Forest, and the transition of Bend's Central Oregon economy from a logging and extractive economy to a recreation and tourism-based economy.

I am also working on a book about the history of search and rescue in Oregon. It's important for Oregonians because so much of our cultural history is about outdoor recreation and spending time outdoors in the natural environment. So hopefully, they will be books that are accessible and interesting to anyone.

—Voelz will discuss his new book, "Mount Bachelor: A History," on Thursday, June 8, at 6:30 pm at Roundabout Books. Tickets are available on Eventbrite. The author will be available to sign books after the event.

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