



Monday morning, Bend awoke to a surprising 4 to 6 inches of spring snow. It looked like a winter wonderland. The roads were slippery and no one had studs or snow tires on their vehicles. The next day, Gadabout Serene Adventures was scheduled to kick off the 2006 season with a tour over the Santiam Pass to the Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm in Woodburn, and then on to the Oregon Gardens in Silverton to see the spring flowers! Would the trip be cancelled?

Tuesday morning, Bend awoke to sunshine and calm but very chilly morning air. The Gadabout Serene Adventures bus picked up enthusiastic passengers first in Sunriver and then in Bend, and began the tour over the Santiam Pass. The sky was crystal clear, all the Cascade Mountains were visible, white with snow against a beautiful backdrop of clear blue sky!

During the trip we identified the mountains for the newest Oregonians, only here 3 months now, and enjoyed some history regarding the mountains and volcanoes as well as local areas such as Sisters, Black Butte Ranch, and other local points of interest. Even the Elk at the ranch in Sisters cooperated and let us see a number of their herd and White Tail Deer could be seen alongside the road.



After a meager showing for the first three weeks of the 21st Annual Tulip Feast, the Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm was in full bloom and the colors were gorgeous and vibrant. There was row after row of assorted tulips, all varieties and colors. There were also rows of specific varieties, all labeled for our knowledge, and display gardens bursting with every color and shape imaginable. Mt. Hood sparkled in the background, above the field of tulips. We also saw fields of blooming yellow and white daffodils. So many colors could be seen and the air was fresh from the previous day's rain. It was truly relaxing just to stand and gaze at the colorful flowers. The Farm offered cut flowers, potted bulbs in bloom and bulk packages of bulbs for purchase and included a delightful gift store to browse.

We proceeded to Silverton for lunch at the Oregon Tea Garden restaurant, a charming old-world atmosphere with an excellent menu and gracious host. After a relaxing lunch we visited the Oregon Garden and browsed the expansive gardens and displays. The trees, in their early spring bud, afforded a lovely view across the valley from almost every point along the garden paths.

At last it was time to head back over the hill for home along Rural Route OR-213, which meanders through vibrant green farmlands and grazing pastures and then back to Bend to wrap up a full day of leisure and exploration. Good food, good friends and conversation and good times were the words for the day. All in all, a good time was had by everybody and it was the perfect start for the tour season.