



UP SLOPE

Newletter of the NORDIC Ski Touring Section of PATC



Visit Us On the WEB at <http://www.patcskitouring.us>

January 2022

From the Editor: This mid-winter edition has two purposes:

- * *To let you know about remaining openings in our trip schedule;*
- * *To report on ski activity so far this season.*

I typically DON'T get many ski reports from folks, so I've resorted to compiling threads from the Groups.io listserv. Let me know if this is useful or not, and by all means, send me your stories and pictures from your ski adventures. They make better reading!

Ralph Heimlich

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(blue links are live)

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Many STS Ski Trips Still Have Open Slots

I know how tough it is to get into the SPIRIT of WINTER in November, when we traditionally hold our Ski Fair, especially this one, which was so warm you'd be forgiven for thinking it was SUMMER. But, now the touch of old Jack Frost is in the air and snow is actually lying around on the ground in some places. Many people signed up for trips in November, on faith, perhaps. Despite that, we still have some slots in a lot of the PATC-STS ski trips our leaders have been planning since it actually WAS SUMMER!



Rob Swennes: As regards my January **White Mountains, New Hampshire ski trip**, we are still awaiting a launch date when significant snow is forecast in mid NH. The temps are pretty ideal. We just need the white stuff. Only have 4 skiers signed up and approved as current PATC members. But a couple of those may be wavering due to Omicron. One early enthusiast has already bailed for that reason. See [here](#) and [here](#) and [p. 7](#)

Second trip is February's to **Summit County, CO (Feb. 13 - 18, 2022)**. Seven skiers have signed up for that trip, though I still need to get vaccination records on some, and several need their PATC membership updated. Many have already booked their flights to Colorado. I'll deal with those issues later this month. See [here](#) and [p. 9](#)

Greg Westernik:

Dec. 29-1/2, 2022 Trip to Laurel Highlands PA: Cancelled, unskiable.
January 28-30, 2022 to Laurel Highlands, PA: At least 2 vacancies, 6 confirmees. See [here](#) and [p. 9](#)
February 18-20, 2022 to Laurel Highlands, PA....7 vacancies. See [here](#) and p. 9

Ralph Heimlich:

January 25-28, 2022 Trip to Blackwater Falls, WV Deluxe Cabins: So popular I had to rent another cabin. Still have 1 slot for a male in one cabin. See [here](#) and p. 9
February 7-10, 2022 Trip to Lapland Lakes, NY: Very popular. Filled all 9 slots in the house.

Bert Finklestein:

February 18-21, 2022 Trip to Blackwater Falls Lodge, WV. No info, so may be slots. See [here](#) and p. 9

Bob Mathis:

February 18-21, 2022 Ski Dance, Laurel Highlands. Postponed to 2023. See [here](#) or [p. 10](#)

Joe Bachman:

March 4-7, 2022 Trip to Maine High Peaks Region, Carrabassett Valley, ME. Slots still open. See [here](#) or [p. 10](#)

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FROM THE \$LOPES – Chair Notes

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We have had some tantalizing January snowfalls in the greater DC area so far this winter season. Many STSers have put on their skis and gone out and glided through golf courses, nature trails and other ski-friendly locations within the Beltway or beyond. When snow comes to town, skiers not only go out to enjoy the snow. They also start posting on the Ski Touring Section's listserv on Groups.io to share their experiences with the local Nordic skiing community. Judging by what I've seen recently, there's also been a very active exchange of information posted about things like what ski wax to use when the snow is sticky, what nearby rural and forested area are available within an hour of Washington for a delightful longer ski, and the like.

If you are not signed up on Groups.io, you are missing the ski community's chatter and excitement, and missing valuable information on how to try different nearby areas that other skiers declare are wonderful! It's easy to sign up. Go to <https://groups.io/g/PATC-STS> The instructions to sign up are self explanatory. Please look at the Group Settings column. One of the most interesting parts of this Groups.io webpage is the Message History chart. During the summer season there may be no messages exchanged for months. But once snow flakes start falling, watch out! There were 3 messages posted in October, 23 in November, 3 in December, **and 71 (thus far) in the first half of January!** Woah!

This is where the action is, where you have your fingers on the pulse of the Nordic skiing community. The Groups.io listserv also is a great resource for skiers to set up local trips with others out to Canaan Valley or other skiing venues within a day's drive of Washington.

Though the STS community has a strong contingent that prefers to ski outside of the Mid-Atlantic region, in the current times (think COVID) many skiers may choose to ski locally, even though the snow may not be as perfect as further away. That way you can have a great skiing weekend and then make it back to home well before any Omicron symptoms might arise. That's just a thought to keep in mind as we work to find ways to keep ourselves positively attuned to the current winter season.

Rob Swennes
 Chairman
 "Think...SNOW!"

BUT, If you DO use Groups.io...

The groups.io platform is great, but has an Achilles Heel that promotes cross chatter that irritates some subscribers. When people reply to a posting sent to their email account, replies always get sent to THE WHOLE group. To access the ability to reply only to the sender, you have to log into your groups.io account. As an admin I do that without thinking but I surmise that most people don't; hence the recent TRIP SPECIFIC postings about trip check receipt, driving distances, what motel, etc. 240 people don't need this chatter.

For trips, or any topic that doesn't need to be shared with the UNIVERSE, please EXPLICITLY DISCOURAGE groups.io as a communication platform. I ENCOURAGE use of traditional email using people's private addresses rather than the group address. BTW, the "mute conversation" feature of groups.io can be used to suppress perceived spam, but again you have to log into your groups.io account to exploit this.

Doug L
 Benevolent PATC-STS groups.io tyrant

Looking for Another Local Option?



Nice snow at Catocotin Mountain Park photo by Al Larsen

by Al Larsen

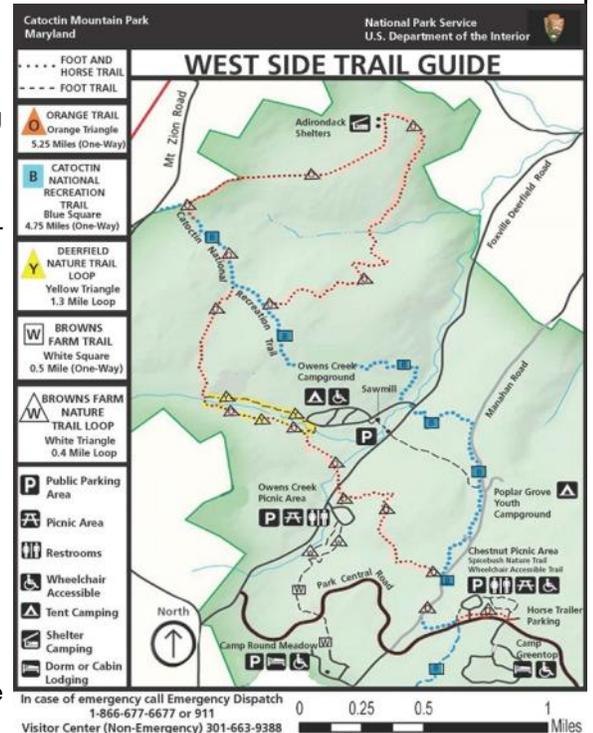
Just click the heels of your red ski boots together three times and repeat, “There’s no place like home. There’s no place like home...” That’s what I was telling myself at the beginning of last year’s ski season, as a combination of travel restrictions and my own Covid caution rendered trips to the Emerald City (Oregon) or the Enchanted Forest (the Adirondacks) out of the question for me. Those were the places I had been able to find snow of any consequence in recent years. But then, just like in the movie, it started snowing where I was, not in a poppy field, but here in the mid-Atlantic. At that point, I started looking up in the sky for flying monkeys.

Any of you who also live in the mid-Atlantic know the drill: When it does snow here, you need to get out right away, because either a warm front will move in and temps will hit 60 degrees later in the day; or a southern air mass with rain will wash away the white stuff; or if the weather doesn’t crush your dreams, the dog walkers and vibram-soled hikers will be out on the local trails rendering them marginal-to-unskiable within 2 hours and forty-eight minutes after the snow stops falling.

So, that means that we need to thread the needle of finding a ski location close enough to get out to promptly, but remote enough that it won’t be overrun by the aforementioned dog walkers and post-holing hikers. Last year, we were fortunate enough to have at least three sizable snow dumps nearby. I found my needle-thread location about an hour away from my Arlington VA home: Catocotin Mountain National Park near Thurmont MD. Depending on the direction of the snow storm, Catocotin seemed to get more and drier snow than in the immediate DC -Baltimore area. For example, when we had 6 inches at home, they had a foot. And here is the important secret about going to Catocotin: the Western side of the park, further from Rt. 15 and the park headquarters, gets more snow and less use than the portion that most people think of as being the Catocotin Mountain NP/ Cunningham Falls State Park. Maybe best of all is the fact that there are real people at the park who will answer a (gather round me children) telephone call (301-663-9388) and tell you what’s actually on the ground at the moment you call—more reliable than an internet weather website.

Here is my advice for your outing. From U.S. Route 15 in Thurmont, take the exit for SR77west toward the park. After a few miles, you will see the Visitor Center on the right. There is an unplowed road (Park Central) and several trails that are accessible from the Visitor Center. I have found those have less snow, usually mushier snow, and lots of non-skier use, making them less desirable for an xc ski outing, than the Western side of the park. You could stop and inspect the situation on the day you are there, but I have found that to hold true almost universally. So, I don’t even stop there to check it out. I continue on, past the Visitor Center, staying on Rt. 77 (Foxville Road) for several more miles to the first right-hand turn, Stottlemeyer Road, and then the next right onto Manahan Road. Where Manahan intersects Park Central, the plowing stops and there is a gate across it. There is plowed out “official” parking at the side of the road. Start skiing beyond the gate along unplowed Manahan Road. There are various options from there. For an hour or two outing, you can just go out and back on Manahan Road, or the trail that is immediately at the side of it (Blue blazes). Or, after a short while on the trail along Manahan, you’ll see a trail to the left with a sign saying “Horse Trail”, and painted Orange blazes, heading downhill. It comes out near the Owens Creek Picnic Area (a few hundred yards to the left), which you can ski around. Or, you can stay on the trail along side Manahan until you come to another trail, near the Poplar Grove campground, going downhill to the left. Finally, you can go even further to a third trail, to the left (Blue blazes), going downhill. See the pattern here? Other than the out-and-back on Manahan, the other trails in this area of the park go down hill to the left. All three eventually come out to paved and plowed Foxville Deerfield Road. You’ll have to take off skis to continue on the other side, or you can return on the trail you came down on, or you can parallel that road find one of the other of those three trails that come down from Manahan and return via one of them.

For a longer outing, continue across Foxville Deerfield Road. The second and third trails come out at an old sawmill ((refurbished as an exhibition) and the Owens Creek Campground. There is a trail (Blue blazes) off to the right a short way in on the campground access road, between Foxville Deerfield Road and the Owens Creek Campground. This has well-marked blazes, and is generally referred to as the Catocotin National Recreation Trail. (Of course, if you do get lost, you can shout out, “Where in Blue Blazes am I”). You can make this an out-and-back, or from it, you can make an additional several mile loop out of the Orange Trail. Yet another option for an extension is



<https://www.nps.gov/cato/planyourvisit/west-hiking-trails.htm>

Looking for Another Local Option (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

to go outbound from Owens Creek Campground on the Recreation Trail, and then return via the Orange trail, which crosses Foxville Deerfield Road near Owens Creek Picnic Area.

The point is that within a relatively small area, there are multiple trails that can provide an outing of almost any length. Sometimes, there has been broken trail for me to take advantage of, but often I'm the only one there, and I'm breaking trail. The latter makes for more work, but a beautiful outing. Also, last year, I found I could go back days or a week after my initial outing on a given snowfall, and find conditions still quite good. Again—call up the park folks and check on conditions.

If White Grass, Laurel Highlands or Western MD would be a 3-4 hour drive for you, making a day trip not feasible, Catoctin is a “local” option that checks all the boxes for me: more and drier snow, relatively short driving time, not trampled beyond usability, and available with the click of your heels.

These are the Best Cross-Country Ski Trails in the U.S.

Edited by Ralph Heimlich

From ‘crust skiing’ a glacier in Alaska to descending trails on the Devil’s Thumb in Colorado, these are the best Nordic ski destinations this winter.

Everything about Nordic skiing—the difficulty, the still wonder of the woods, the powerful efficiency required of your body—connects you to joy. XC skiers seek out that feeling when they travel in the winter, purposely choosing destinations within close proximity to ski trails. Here are a few of the best Nordic ski spots in the U.S., sourced from National Geographic’s new book *100 Slopes of a Lifetime*, written by Gordy Megroz, and summarized in a December 2021 article by Outdoor Magazine’s Stephanie Pearson at https://apple.news/A8ZK7FEMUSpOo6S_NaBNGIQ.

Devil’s Thumb Ranch (Tabernash, Colorado)--Despite being just an hour-and-a-half from [Denver](#) and right down the road from Winter Park Resort, [Devil’s Thumb Ranch](#) feels remote. The property sits in a quiet valley, spread out across 6,500 acres of windswept fields and dense forest. Built in the 1930s and named for the Devil’s Thumb, a prominent rocky outcropping that juts out from the [Indian Peaks Wilderness](#), the trails were developed in 1975 by former Olympic ski racer Dick Taylor. They are now almost 75 miles of groomed trail, the best of which are Lactic Grande and Waxwing.

Jackson Hole (Wyoming)--In 1963, Paul McCollister, one of the founders of [Jackson Hole Mountain Resort](#), strapped some climbing skins to his skis and, along with Barry Corbet, a ski mountaineer and guide who’d earned a reputation making first descents throughout [Wyoming](#)’s perilous [Teton Range](#), headed to the top of Rendezvous Mountain, a 10,450-foot peak within the Tetons. The sloping Shooting Star Nordic track spans over 9 miles of gently rolling terrain, including a dog-friendly loop dubbed Buddy’s Trail. [The Teton Pines Nordic center](#) maintains 10 miles of groomed trails for the past 27 winters, and offers trails for all abilities. Along with views of the Tetons, you may see moose, deer, trumpeter swans, foxes, coyotes, and bald eagles on your ski.

Korkki Nordic Ski Center (Duluth, Minnesota)--In keeping with Scandinavian tradition, Charlie Banks, a popular cross-country ski racer with Finnish roots, used an ax and grub hoe to craft a tangle of singletrack behind his house in Duluth in 1954. In 1992, Mark Helmer, a local skier who’d met Banks and started using his trails a decade earlier, suggested that he open [the beloved network of trails](#) to the public. These days, other than a small warming hut that was constructed in 1993, the 6.8-mile trail network is much the same as when Banks built it. Only wide enough for classic skis, the nonprofit draws skiers who come to test their skills on the original 10-km loop where the Erik Judeen Memorial Classic was first held.

Methow Trails (Methow Valley, Washington)--In the mid-1970s, [Methow](#) locals enlisted help from Seattle environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, and after decades of lawsuits—one of which made it to the U.S. Supreme Court—fought off chairlifts, condos, and a base village. Opting instead for human-powered skiing as its economic driver, the Methow Valley developed North America’s largest cross-country ski area. This connected its small towns with more than 125 miles of groomed Nordic trails, preserved its rural setting, and created an invested community—as well as multiple Olympians. The vast majority of trails are beginner or intermediate terrain, including the region’s most popular attraction: the Community Trail.

Rikert Nordic Center (Ripton, Vermont)--The woods tucked beneath Bread Loaf Mountain drip with [Vermont](#) charm. As you cross-country ski along [the trails here](#), you’ll slide through maple groves and farm fields, over babbling brooks, and past stone walls, as well as the former summer cabin of famed poet Robert Frost. The best skiing is on the 3.1-mile Tormondsen Trail loop. Opened in 2011, snowmaking was added in 2012, with 10 to 15 snow guns that each blow 250 gallons a minute. That same year, the NCAA skiing championships were held on the trail, and it has been used for countless races since.

Best Cross County Ski Trails in the U.S. (cont.)

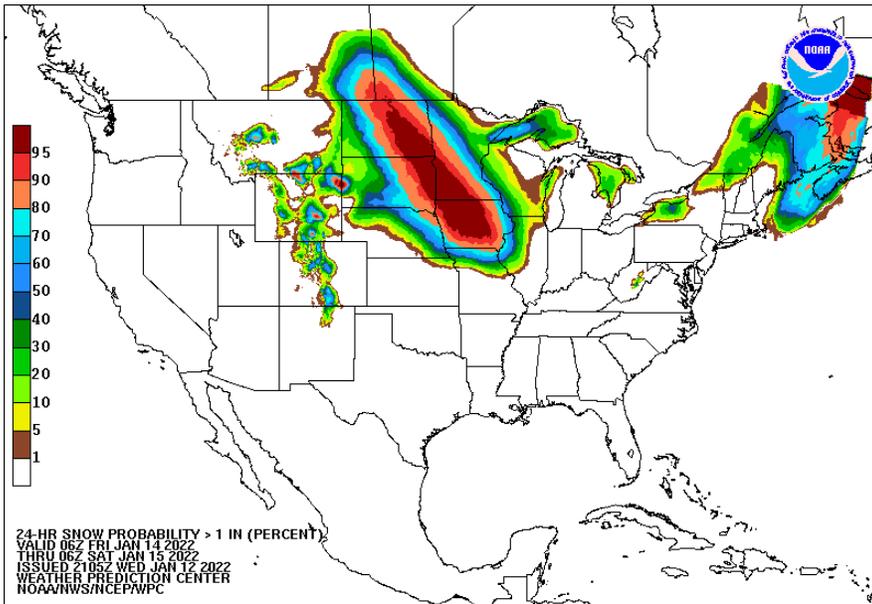
Skookum Glacier (near Whittier, Alaska)--They call it crust skiing, named for the icy layer that forms overnight on the surface of snow. For decades, between about mid-April and mid-May— the only time of year that the crust forms—Alaskans have used skate skis to soar across the smooth, supportive surface in the same way that ice-skaters glide across a lake. One of the more popular places to crust-ski is on the [Skookum Glacier](#) on the [Kenai Peninsula](#), just a 40-mile drive southeast from [Anchorage](#) on the Seward Highway. To find the way in, you'll need a GPS device or, better yet, a guide. On the crusted surface, you'll travel twice the speed you normally would, which means that making it to the end of the 4-mile-long glacier can take as little as 10 minutes. There, you'll find ice caves, stunning blue-ice walls, and giant columns of blue ice.

Wolverine Nordic Trails (Ironwood, Michigan)--When the glaciers that carved out most of [Michigan](#)'s Upper Peninsula receded two million years ago, they left behind rolling hills and Lake Superior, which produces lake-effect snowstorms that blanket the region with some 200 inches of snow each year. The snow and topography, along with long, cold winters, make for ideal cross-country skiing conditions. Some of the best trails are found in the [Wolverine Nordic Trail System](#), a 15-mile network of tracks on the Wisconsin border that are known for their consistently good grooming (for both skate and classic skiing) and the fact that during the ski season, they're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The gems of the system are the Cliff and Cliffhanger trails.

National Weather Service Winter Precipitation Guidance

Try this link....really like this free stuff!

https://www.wpc.ncep.noaa.gov/pwfp/wwd_accum_probs.php?fpd=24&ptype=snow&amt=1&day=1&ftype=probabilities



The operational WPC Winter Weather Desk (WWD) creates 24-h forecasts of snowfall and freezing rain accumulations for each of three consecutive 24-h periods (days) extending 72 hours into the future. These products are shared with the NWS Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) in a collaborative process. Prior to the 2013-14 season, the probabilistic forecasts were manually edited by the WWD forecaster. For the 2013-14 season and onward, the limited suite of probabilistic forecasts is usually not edited.

The probabilistic forecasts found here on the WPC PWPF page are generated automatically. The automatic nature of this product generation allows an extensive set of displays of probabilities for snowfall or freezing rain exceeding a number of thresholds and accumulations of snowfall or freezing rain for various percentile levels. The percentile amounts and probabilities for 24-hour intervals are generated at six-hour increments through 72 hours.

Info on Groups.io Listserv

Given the continuing COVID-19 pandemic situation challenging the operation of social groups of all stripes, staying connected with the aid of internet-hosted tools and platforms is more important than ever. Fortunately, PATC-STS successfully migrated from the dying Yahoo groups platform in early 2020. Our new "listserv" is hosted by groups.io, which offers a less clunky user interface than Yahoo and has operated smoothly for us in almost a year (your MEMBERSHIP DUES help to pay for it ... it isn't free).

The STS group is reachable at the address <https://groups.io/g/PATC-STS>. The user interface has, apart from one exception discussed below, all basic operations front and center. "Log In" and "Sign Up" appear upon first entry, and "post", "subscribe" and "unsubscribe" are handy buttons on the "home" dropdown. Postings are available for perusal via the "messages" dropdown.

The one function that gave subscribers trouble during last season was the classical "reply to all" versus "reply to sender" choice, a matter of group mailing list etiquette that occasionally leads to subscriber annoyance. At the bottom of any posting, see the options gathered under the heading "Groups.io Links": "You receive all messages sent to this group. View/Reply Online (#797) | Reply To Group | Reply To Sender | Mute This Topic | New Topic | Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe"

Particularly note "reply to group" and "reply to sender". "Mute this topic" is also helpful. If you simply execute an email client reply, your response goes to the whole group and you may not intend and/or want that.

Doug Lesar

Winter Storm Skiing in Early January

Abstracted from the Groups.io discussions by Ralph Heimlich

1/3/2022, 3:43 PM

I took a couple of hours of leave from work this morning combined with lunch break to see if the local roads heading to Manassas around 11am might be passable. Alas, the local roads were no better than the state plowed-ones with loads of traffic headaches, so I turned back to my neighborhood in Lake Ridge section of Woodbridge.

I was rewarded with around 8 inches of snow today if ignore drifting. Drove in neighborhood over to a favorite short hiking trail in the woods following Occuquan Creek to the local marina about 1mi one way. There was no help to be found trail breaking this partly rolling grade so I had trail breaking all to myself. Took a lot longer to do this trail on skis than when I walked it a few days ago. Did enjoy gliding on my own tracks on the way back without any snow snakes. Then I drove over to a local hill next to an elementary school near me. The sun appeared at this time and the snow ended around 1pm.

Behold all the slalom gates on this hill full of sledders! After a few runs of sledder avoidance, it was time to get back to my home parking spot in my driveway just in time to be plowed in by the snow plow trucks. What a country! At least my car is snow free for tomorrow.

Greg Westernik
1/3/2022, 1:25 PM

Pounced on our semi-hilly neighborhood streets after 10 am before accursed plows and shovelers ruined the fresh untracked snow. Managed to beat the plows and had to portage skis across a plowed road just once in roughly two hours. Is best to pack scraper and glide wax before setting out though. I had the former but not the latter, and my last wax job didn't quite last. Nevertheless, there were periods where snow was relatively fluffy, and glide was good. After completing the tour, had to shake snow off front yard trees and shrubs that were bent over more than double. It has been a while since we could do ski right out our front door.

Doug Lesar
1/3/2022, 2:46 PM
Concur, Doug! Yay!
Steve Jarvis
1/3/2022, 3:09 PM

Same experience, Doug, although I went about a hundred feet out of the driveway and turned back to get the glide wax (in addition to the scraper which I already had). You're right--needed those today. it's a real challenge to hit the sweet spot here in the DC area--have to wait until the snow accumulates, but get out before it either melts or the plows and other human-caused removals get underway. i waited until noon, when we had picked up another couple of inches compared to the 10 AM level, but, of course, more cars etc. had tackled the snow by then. Still, as you say, nice to be able to head right out from the house. A little in-your-face enjoyment as I skied past neighbors digging out their cars while I was having fun, thinking, really, you need your car right now? But, that's schadenfreude, and I lightly admonished myself for that and quickly turned back to the real joy. Have fun, folks.

Al Larsen
1/3/2022, 3:20 PM
The W&OD runs by my house so went out after lunch, and forgot the scraper. Managed by ok and saw two other skiers. Mentioned to them PATC. They are members, so encouraged them to try a trip.

John O'Keefe
1/3/2022, 4:43 PM
But it was SO beautiful in the woods. And perhaps a sigh of good Xcountry snows to come.

Shae Metclaf
1/3/2022, 5:38 PM
Conditions OK in Greenbelt, but it's always fun to ski from the door (well, almost in my case. I had to walk ~50 yards)

John Ausema
1/3/2022, 6:57 PM

Greetings all - My wife and I moved to Richmond this summer to be near our daughter who gave birth to our first grandchild in November. Upon moving, I assumed I'd never ski again unless I were to travel to White Grass or points north. Imagine my surprise when we got 3" of snow today. I was able to ski at a park within walking distance, but soon ran into trouble with clumping. Any recommendations for a wax for waxless skis in wet snow? Thanks.

Dave Norman

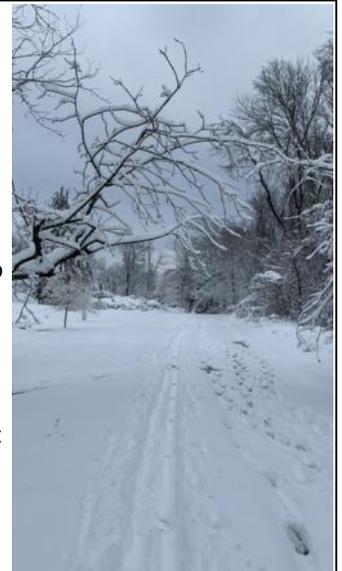


Photo by Steve Jarvis



Photo by Shae Metclaf

(Continued on page 8)

PATC-ST\$ XC-Ski Schedule 2021-22

Date	Place	Leader
ASAP	Ski Trip Descriptions for newsletter.	Ralph Heimlich
Nov 20	Ski Fair, VA. Trip Leader Workshop	
Nov 13-14	Work Trip, Whitegrass, WV	Lynn Yates
Dec ? – Jan 2		
Dec 30 – Jan 2 New Years	Laurel Highlands Area, PA— CANCELLED NO SNOW	Greg Westernik
Jan 7/8-9		
Jan 7 – 27 snow dependent	New Hampshire— Slots Open	Robert Swennes
Jan 13/14-17 MLK Weekend		
Jan 21/22 - 23		
Jan 25 - 28	Blackwater Falls SP Cabins, WV— Slot for 1 Male	Ralph Heimlich
Jan 28 - 30	Laurel Highlands Area, PA— 2 Slots Open	Greg Westernik
Feb 4/5 - 6		
Feb 13-18	Dillon, CO— Slots Open	Robert Swennes
Feb 7 – 10	Lapland Lake, NY— FULL UP	Ralph Heimlich
Feb 11/12 - 13		
Feb 18 - 20	Laurel Highlands— Slots Open	Greg Westernik
Feb 18 – 21 Pres Day Weekend	Blackwater Falls SP Lodge, WV— Slots Open	Bert Finkelstein
Feb 25/26 - 27		
Mar 4 - 7	Maine High Peaks, ME— Slots Open	Joe Bachman

Cancelled NO SNOW Dates—Dec 29-Jan 2, 2022 (Wed-Sunday, 4 nights) Ring In 2022 At Laurel Highlands PA area XC ski Mini-Week (cancels if no snow) .

Lodging—Best Western SureStory Plus in Somerset PA

Description—Join fellow Nordic skiers getting ski legs in shape for 2022 while gliding at usual and less-traveled favorites in the Highlands of SW PA (e.g., Laurel Mtn, Laurel Ridge, Roaring Run, North Woods, Laurel Hill) with more kms of trails and choices than time for event. We will enjoy \$0 to \$10 budget-busting trail use fees, and maybe first crack if STC reopens at Laurel Mtn. **Leader—** Greg Westernik at 571-575-0695, gmwester@gmail.com.

Cost—\$260/applicant (single occupancy includes 2 beds in room, only lodging and free continental breakfasts).

Dates—Jan 7-27, 2022 (Window depending on snow conditions). No Cancellation. New Hampshire’s White Mountains.

Lodging—White Trellis Motel, North Conway, NH (<https://www.whitetrellismotel.com/>) Skiers will make their own room reservations and travel arrangements. NOTE: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Ski one of the most scenic venues on the East Coast--the White Mountains of N.H. at cross-country ski touring centers such as Jackson (<http://www.jacksonxc.org/>), Bretton Woods <http://mtwashington.com/xcountryiski/> and Bear Notch (http://www.xcskinh.com/bear_notch.cfm) in Bartlett, NH. Many backcountry ski and snowshoe trails are in the area, such as near the AMC lodge at Pinkham Notch and the various ski centers.

Leader—Rob Swennes, 703-405-8232, robertswennes@hotmail.com

Cost—\$400-450, depending on skier’s reservations and arrangements.

1 slot for a Male. Dates—Jan 25-28, 2022 (Tuesday to Friday, 3 nights). No Cancellation. Blackwater Falls, WV

Lodging—Blackwater Falls Deluxe Cabin. NOTE: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Deluxe cabins sit on the north side of the park and are all four-bedroom units with two full bathrooms, gas fire-place, full kitchen with dishwasher, laundry machines, flat -screen televisions, WiFi, and cable-TV. Two bedrooms with one queen-sized bed each, and two bedrooms with two twin beds each. Both bathrooms have showers. We will share responsibility for dinners. Ski at White Grass, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Canaan Valley State Park. Enjoy the indoor pool and hot tub at the lodge to soothe those muscles after a long day of skiing.

Leader—Ralph Heimlich, heimlichfamily@comcast.net

(Continued on page 9)

Winter Storm Skiing in Early January (cont).

(Continued from page 6)

1/3/2022, 9:02 PM

Great pics and information being shared. I skied Difficult Run trail near Great Falls, VA this afternoon Sad to say the trail itself was a wet, muddy mess from hikers who got there before I did but gliding through the snow-covered woods when possible off trail was a joy. Spraying my skis with *WD40* helped keep the clumping down but it was hard to avoid the puddles in the trail which foster it. Not sure how much snow landed west of us but thinking to check out Sky Meadows park tomorrow before it all melts. Happy ski trials 2022

Harrison Snow

1/3/2022 7:13 PM

With this snow I would recommend visiting Meadowood Recreation area. It's located on Mason Neck in VA. The trails there are basically perfect for XC.

Craig Ausema

1/4/2022, 10:16 AM

I've skied there. Beautiful spot. And it's the closest thing to back-country skiing you'll find without actually traveling to back country. Another beautiful spot close by for DC area skiers: Huntley Meadows Park. It gets a lot of hikers, but there are many informal trail offshoots that don't get foot traffic.

Dave Norman

1/4/2022, 3:15 PM

Doug, just fyi up here in PA where I now live, we got not a flake, just some clouds. completely cleared up by mid afternoon. however, it was colder. got in a hike on the AT and temps ranged between 22 - 24. We're supposed to get pure snow [but it may be light] Thursday night in 2 Friday. not sure how much it will be. not far from where I live is a ridge of over 2100 ft. on up and no doubt it will be plenty cold up there.

Arthur Winn,

1/6/2022, 11:03 AM

Had a good ski up Kaiser Ridge fire road near the devils staircase in the Shenandoah's to little Hog Back Mt yesterday but most of the snow below 2600 feet melted off by late afternoon. If there's more snow tonight the fire roads in the park might again be skiable. The SNP plows the skyline drive so that is not skiable even though is closed to traffic. The AT runs next to the drive but is challenging in places where it is steep and narrow.

Harrison Snow

1/7/2022, 8:30 AM

PACCSA (PA XC Ski Assoc) has sponsored hosting the report as of now below for some of the trails in PA Highlands this weekend. In summary conditions appear marginal to poor to me for XC skiing there. NWS forecast indicate only POSSIBLE days for XC skiing in the Highlands would be today and Saturday. From the webcams at Laurel Ridge State Park STC and Laurel Mtn areas, I would guess they have 4-6 inches of new snow with no base. Since the ground has largely been frozen for days, little melting likely. Most trails in Laurel Mtn need more snow to be skiable. If the snowmobiles are missing at Laurel Mtn., then those are the trails I would recommend using there. Laurel Ridge trails usually more forgiving. Too early to say if any grooming will be done at Laurel Mtn and Laurel Ridge St Park STC.

NWS forecasts possible additional inch of snow may fall today in am in these areas. [Greg went on to forward PACCSA's forecast].

Some of us like myself have to stay in town this weekend. No more waiting on doing those snow dances and prayers, pls....

Greg Westernik



Photo by Dave Norman

Where Have All the Skate Skiers Gone?

1/11/2022 9:23 AM

Met One XC ski skater from Seattle area participating on my Jan. 28-30, 2022 trip to the Highlands in PA wants to know. I tried asking other local DMV skiers who are ski skaters like Heleene Tabet [I last saw Heleene instructing at White Grass in March 2020].

Heleene SKATE skied the J.E. Miller and Silvermine trails of Laurel Mountain state park and the groomed trails of Laurel Ridge STC in the PA Highlands with me last Jan. 2019. Unfortunately I just ate her ski dust as we skied separately. And those Laurel Mtn trails folks were NOT even machine-GROOMED (occasionally partially dog-sled groomed)! The Laurel Highlands area of PA is one of the more reliable places for local snow in the mid-Atlantic hills. That's why you see XC skiers gliding there on PACCSA webcams this past January 7-9, 2022 wknd. Could be good for an impromptu XC skiing again this Fire & Ice Wknd in Somerset PA area.

I am leading 2 Laurel Highlands XC ski trips, one the wknd of 1/28-30 and 2/18-20/2022. The application fee is \$140 that covers lodging for 2 nites, an entire individual room per applicant and free continental breakfasts. We already have 8 confirmees on my Jan. 2022 trip. For my Feb. 2022 trip, WE STILL HAVE MULTIPLE vacancies for XC skiers of all types: animals, minerals, vegetables, skaters, classic. Join fellow Nordic skiers gliding at usual and less-traveled favorites in the Highlands of SW PA (e.g., Laurel Mtn, Laurel Ridge, Roaring Run, North Woods, Laurel Hill) with more kms of trails, 0 to \$10 budget-busting trail fees and more ski destinations than time for event. What's on your winter bucket list? On mine I am still ISO the waterfalls area accessible from Laurel Hill state park area. Also heard rumors of STC at Laurel Mtn, but have not confirmed. To apply or for more details, contact Greg at 571-575-0695 or gmwester@gmail.com

Greg Westernik

Ski Schedule (cont.)*(Continued from page 7)***Cost**—\$120 lodging only, double occupancy based on 8 people.**2 Slots: Dates—Jan 28-30, 2022 (Friday-Sunday, 2 nights) Cancels if no snow. Laurel Highlands PA area XC Ski.****Lodging**—Best Western SureStory Plus in Somerset PA**Description**—Join fellow Nordic skiers gliding at usual and less-traveled favorites in the Highlands of SW PA (e.g., Laurel Mtn, Laurel Ridge, Roaring Run, North Woods, Laurel Hill) with more kms of trails and choices than time for event. Still the one with \$0 to \$10 budget-busting trail use fees and walk option to meals from the lodging. Way cooler right before Olympics!**Leader**—Greg Westernik at 571-575-0695 and gmwester@gmail.com.**Cost**— \$140/applicant (single occupancy with 2 beds in room, only lodging and free continental breakfasts)**Dates—Feb 13-18, 2022 Summit County, CO.****Lodging**—Best Western Ptarmigan Inn, Dillon, CO (https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotels-in-dillon/best-western-ptarmigan-lodge/propertyCode.06098.html) Skiers will make their own room reservations and travel arrangements. NOTE:

Proof of vaccination required.

Description—As those who have done Alpine or Nordic skiing out West know, elevation is everything. Summit County, Colorado has become a mecca for both types of skiing since the county's base elevation is around 9,000 feet. The county is blessed with both high peaks for downhill skiing and broad areas of rolling countryside and backcountry for cross-country enthusiasts. There are also at least three Nordic ski touring centers nearby. Both types of skiing and also snowshoeing available. The county is less than a two-hour drive from Denver on I-70. Lodging is in rooms with two double or queen beds and includes a daily continental breakfast. Large hot tub and sauna available. Small refrigerator in each room.**Leader**—Rob Swennes, 703-405-8232, robertswennes@hotmail.com**Cost**—\$600, not including air or ground transportation, depending on skier's reservations.**FULL UP: Dates—Feb 7-10, 2022 (Monday-Thursday, 3 nights). No Cancellation. Lapland Lake, NY Ski Resort .****Lodging**—Rental Tupa (house) NOTE: Proof of vaccination required.**Description**—Staying on a XC-ski resort with 44 km of groomed ski trails and an hour to Garnet Hill trails, Gore Mountain and Oak Mountain (downhill resorts). House has full kitchen and we will share dinner responsibilities. Best for couples based on the accommodations. <https://www.laplandlake.com/>**Leader**—Ralph Heimlich at heimlichfamily@comcast.net.**Cost**—\$230 per person, double occupancy, lodging and meals, for 10 people.**7 Slots Open: Dates—Feb 18-20, 2022 (Friday-Sunday, 2 nights) Cancels if no snow. Laurel Highlands PA area XC Ski.****Lodging**—Best Western SureStory Plus in Somerset PA**Description**—Ring in the end of 2022 Winter Olympics with fellow Nordic skiers gliding at usual and less-traveled favorites in the Highlands of SW PA (e.g., Laurel Mtn, Laurel Ridge, Roaring Run, North Woods, Laurel Hill) with more kms of trails and choices than time for event. Still the one with \$0 to \$10 budget-busting trail use fees and walk option to meals from the lodging.**Leader**—Greg Westernik at 571-575-0695 and gmwester@gmail.com.**Cost**—\$140/applicant (single occupancy with 2 beds in room, only lodging and free continental breakfasts)**Slots Open: Dates—Feb 18-21 (Friday-Monday, President's Weekend). Cancels if no snow. Blackwater Falls****Ski/Snowshoe.****Lodging**—Blackwater Falls Lodge**Description**—Want to try something different this winter? Go places that are off-limits to you on cross-country skis? How about snowshoeing in Canaan Valley / Blackwater Falls? We'll warm up with some easy trails and then tackle some that you might not want to ski on but are fun on snowshoes. If you can walk the trails without snow, you can snowshoe the trails with snow.**Leader**—Bert Finkelstein, bertanamo@gmail.com or (703) 282-0170**Cost**—Dependent on pricing and willingness to share rooms.**Postponed until 2023: Dates—Feb 18-21 (Friday-Monday, President's Weekend). Ski-Dance Weekend, Laurel Highlands**

NOTE: The Ski Dance Weekend is NOT a PATC-STC trip but is listed for STS member's information.

(Continued on page 10)

Ski Schedule (cont.)

Lodging—Camp Sequanota. Note: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Cross-country, snow shoe, or Alpine ski in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania during the day and contra dance at night! Janine Smith will have you moving to the music of Dave Wiesler and Mat Clark.

Leader—For more information call Bob Mathis at 240-858-9341, talibob@starpower.net.

Cost—Prices range from \$95 to \$300 depending on your accommodations.

Slots Open: Dates—Mar 4-7, 2022 (Friday-Monday). **Maine High Peaks Region Ski and Snowshoe.**

Lodging—Participants are responsible for their own lodging reservations in Maine’s Carrabasset Valley motels/hotels. Note: Proof of vaccination required.

Description—Skiing venues in the area include Nordic centers with groomed trails at the Sugarloaf ski area (<http://www.sugarloaf.com/activities-and-nightlife/outdoor-center>) and in Rangeley (<http://rangeleylakestrailscenter.com>). Maine Huts and Trails (<https://mainehuts.org>) has an 80-mile network of groomed backcountry trails with huts where one can stay and where day-trippers can buy a hot lunch. There are other ungroomed backcountry trails for skiing and snowshoeing.

Leader—Joseph Bachman 410-446-8501 joseph.bachman@verizon.net

Cost—\$400-450, not including airfare and car rental costs.

Boots, Bindings and Lacing

Abstracted from Groups.io discussions by Ralph Heimlich

1/2/2022 8:26 PM

One of the downsides of not having one’s own equipment is not being able to ski these special days. I used to ski at Whitegrass and got used to renting since snow was so unpredictable. Where do you all recommend purchasing equipment? My challenge is ski boots, with my super narrow feet.

Gabrielle Czaja

1/2/2022 12:26 PM

On buying next pair of XC ski boots....I recommend you go to multiple ski touring centers with a known quantity of decent types of ski boots and bindings. You rent a pair of boots and skis with the make and model you might be interested in buying, and request a trial rental use [rent with possibility to buy]. If the rental works for you, and the price appears fair, make a deal to buy. Otherwise, try a second pair at same ski touring center or a different ski touring center. It would be ideal if the rental equipment was as new as the NEW pair of ski boots you are seeking to buy...but used boots of same make and model may work almost as well.

Being eager to lock into first pair of ski boots you are sized for is not the benefit it seems. Just because the size is correct, does not mean that the new boots will avoid blisters unduly, or avoid letting your heel pop out of back of boot too easily, or not allow insertion of any orthotics that you might need to put into boot, or keep your feet comfortable, etc., etc.

Then there is the question of which kind of boot should you be using with the binding on your skis, assuming you own your skis. The soles of boots you rent/buy need to match the binding on your own skis [unless you plan to change your ski bindings]. Using a ski boot type that does not match your existing binding installed on your skis means to keep that type of new ski boots will require you replacing the binding installed on your skis. Here is one chart on what to watch when trying to match your ski binding type to a potential ski boot type.

There are at least 7 different primary groups of binding systems used in modern cross-country skiing as listed in table below. Older styled three-pin bindings (Nordic Norm), with or without cables, are still used by backcountry and Telemarking enthusiasts as a binding system. With the release of the Turnamic system, featured on 2018+ Rossignol and Fischer products, and the ProLink system, featured on newer Salomon products, there’s much more crossover among boots and bindings. Turnamic, ProLink and NNN are all interchangeable with one another. The chart below will help you understand which bindings are available to you based on the types of soles on your boots.

Boot and Binding Compatibility

Boot Sole Type	Compatible Bindings
NNN	NNN, NNN Nordic Integrated System (NIS), Turnamic, ProLink
NNN BC	NNN BC
3-pin 75mm	3-pin 75 mm
Turnamic	NNN, NNN NIS, Turnamic, ProLink
ProLink	NNN, NNN NIS, Turnamic, ProLink
SNS Profil	SNS Profil
SNS Pilot	SNS Pilot

Added Notes on Binding Plates Found On Newer Skis With Respect To Boot/Binding Systems:

Some skis come with binding plates installed on them. These offer several advantages, including quick and easy binding installation without drilling and the ability to reposition the bindings forward and back based on things like snow conditions and skiing ability. If your skis have plates installed on top of them, you need to buy compatible bindings. For instance, skis with NIS plates on them are designed for NNN NIS

Boots, Bindings and Lacing (cont).

bindings. Likewise, skis with Integrated Fixation Plates (IFP) are designed for Turnamic bindings. In some cases, you may be able to put other bindings on binding plates either by drilling through the plates or purchasing adapters, such as the Salomon IFP Adapter Plates that allow ProLink bindings to go on IFP plates.

The Nordic Integrated System (NIS) allows for quick and easy binding installation directly onto the ski, without screws—simply “click-on.” The binding is based on NNN technology so that all NNN boots (regardless of age) will fit the binding. Most new XC ski equipment is selling this type of binding on the XC skis. Unlike the 3-pin and NNN binding systems, NIS has **full integration between ski and binding**. The tight contact between the ski and the binding improves stability, ski control and kick. This binding system has a broader binding plate for added stability when skiing. NIS system has a special composite plate that is permanently bonded to the cross country skis, eliminating the need for screws that compromise the strength and integrity of a ski. The movable ski binding securely “clicks on” the ski’s bonded NIS plate, offering the skier with the flexibility to alter the xc ski binding’s position on the ski for universal fitting of a range of boot sizes. NIS skis have plates on the skis that allow the ski to have a more even and deeper flex over the ski that is beneficial if you will encounter lots of small rolling hills on the trail. Skis that have a NIS Plate already attached to the ski require a NIS binding that is sometimes included with the ski. If the binding is not included with the ski you must make sure that the binding is NIS compatible. NIS bindings require you to simply slide the binding on to the plate and they lock into place.

NNN BC Bindings- NNN Backcountry Bindings have two smaller grooves on the plate of the binding, but they require an NNN BC boot that has a beefier toe bar and wider grooves on the sole of the boots to provide you with more stability and control for breaking trail and success with nordic downhill techniques. NNN BC Bindings also have a wider footprint on the ski. NNN BC bindings and boots are wider, thicker and more durable than NNN.boot/binding systems. Backcountry skiers prefer this type of boot/binding system.

Back to rental/purchase places for XC ski boots at ski touring centers. The only mid-Atlantic hills STC place work trying that approach is at the Whitegrass STC in Canaan Valley WV. STS leads trips to other locations where you might also get a good chance on trying multiple new ski boots as a rental before buying. STS trips to farther locations such as the White Mtns of NH also a good locale for some STC places.

I bet other STSers out there have their own suggestions on next steps for you to consider since ISO new XC ski boots.

Greg Westernik
1/3/2022, 8:06 PM

Don't forget to change the lacing pattern! Narrow feet do heaps better with shoestore or Z lacing patterns than with the stock X. You can put surgeon's knots in the lace to lock in tension at a given section, and have the next be looser (or vice versa).

Predrag Gudac



See <https://www.gearx.com/blog/knowledge/skiing/nordic-ski-binding-compatibility-guide/>

Metal Edges, Technique, Sidecut

This discussion thread from the Groups.io page is edited by Ralph Heimlich.

1/7/2022, 7:32 AM

I have multiple pairs of skis, including a pair of metal-edged XC skis. When the snow is icy (typically in morning after refreeze overnight of melted snow, metal edges are preferred type of XC ski. However, most of time I do not use metal edges, as I get good edge pressure control from my NNN BC boots and occasional downhill XC ski techniques to avoid the "snow snakes" [roots, rocks and other obstructions that deflect skis]. When the snow cover is often marginal in this land of snow snakes [very low with little to no base, too often bane of mid-Atlantic XC skiing], I try to avoid using metal edges in this case because I find metal edges do not handle the snow snakes (roots, rocks, etc) as well for me as compared to ptex-only ski bottoms.

If you have to carve when turning, I find that you mostly need metal-edged skis. I like turning without carving, so I am OK with the trade-off. Everyone is different. Heavier skiers and XC skiers with very competent downhill Nordic skills probably get better edge control over lighter weight and more novice downhill XC skier skills, all things being equal. I have seen plenty of light-weight skiers carve without metal edges because of their superior downhill XC skills....they make me look like a beginner. If you are one of those folks like Chip Chase who can dance and glide on any ground surface and elevations, you probably will rarely have need for metal edges. For the rest of us, having a second pair with metal edges is more of a necessity when budget permits.

Not all metal-edge skis are equal. Some are full, some are 3/4 quarters length. Difference of opinion on which work best.

Greg Westernik

1/7/2022, 12:15 PM

Greg—Very good summary, and bottom line for me is that I question the added value of full length metal edge on XC skis even with a BC binding. I also have a bunch of different XC skis that I got over time including a "BC" full metal edge ski which I rarely use; they are a lot heavier and the glide is not as good as a similar one without metal edge, and not much better for turns. I mostly use a "touring" ski (61 mm width) with no metal edges and these work fine in most conditions in track or in fresh snow. I originally got the metal edge ski thinking that I would use for BC and tele turns etc., but there is not enough float with the narrower ski, and too hard to get enough edge pressure especially on icy conditions with the binding. You can go to a wider shorter ski to improve control for BC and while that helps its still tough to do with XC type binding, and you lose the glide. I used to ski on Catamount Trail in VT and while there are some expert skiers who can manage the longer narrower skis even on steep narrow trails, most like me could not. For BC skiing, I find that telemark skis, bindings and boots work best in BC or in woods and even on some of trails at White Grass. The boots give you the ankle support that you need, the bindings give you the toe pressure and the wider ski works great for tele turns in powder and even on crusty, somewhat icy conditions. My skis have fish scales to help uphill climbs, but are no good on flat or even track-set trails. Too much work, not enough fun. Tele are great for the "pipeline" and similar trails and the woods at WG, but learning the tele turn which is best with lessons takes practice. Hopes this helps.

Paul Kamienski

1/7/2022, 12:48 PM

I would say that with anything less than a full laced 75 mm boot, metal edges on XC skis are more about sidehilling on ice and herringboning up ice :)

Pedrag Gudac

1/10/2022, 9:48 PM

Thanks for all the thoughts. Makes me contemplate picking up a 2nd pair of skis without metal edges (maybe a used set?) in order to be able to handle different conditions. Your writeup also made me think that part of my challenge may be not having much XC technique. My parents had me and my siblings do downhill ski lessons (think mittens freezing to a rope tow, not chair lift) - that got me as far as learning a snowplow turn. At some point my dad handed me a pair of longer skis (XC skis) and said something along the lines of "follow me" as he headed off across the field of snow. I.e., no formal lessons.

Lynn Baumeister

1/11/2022 1:26 PM

Perhaps for your second pair of XC skis may be skis with a more "hourglass" shape and a better, stiffer binding. Have no idea what kind of skis you use and boot binding system for current skis. Cross-country skis have **an hourglass shape known as a "sidecut."** For those confused at this point, sidecut to me means that the ski may actually have different widths in mm from the tip verses the middle verses the tail throughout the length of ski. For example, a hypothetical ski with some significant sidecut has tip width dimension of 60 mm, the middle/waist has a dimension of 55 and the tail has a dimension of 59cm. The change in width across length of ski (sidecut) makes it easier for turning and skiing in ungroomed areas [what ski touring is all about].

Some skis are sold with almost no sidecut...e.g., 54 mm width across all three sections of length of ski. While there is no guarantee metal-edge skis have significant sidecut, more likely than not they do. Rumor has it that Chip Chase's Whitegrass STC sells and may rent non-metal edge skis with significant sidecut and ski boots with stiffer boot collars.

Ski boots with a stiffer upper collar that are difficult to twist and bend with your hands will also likely improve your turning and edge control (e.g., NNN BC). Ski boots that are like normal running sneakers likely will not help your edge presser. Do not take my word for it, rent a pair and try them for a trial use at places like Whitegrass STC. Of course, if the boot does not fit your foot, forget renting or buying it.

Greg Westernik

Waxing Skis

This discussion from Groups.io was edited by Ralph Heimlich.

1/3/2022 6:59 AM

My wife and I moved to Richmond this summer to be near our daughter who gave birth to our first grandchild in November. Upon moving, I assumed I'd never ski again unless I were to travel to White Grass or points north. Imagine my surprise when we got 3" of snow today. I was able to ski at a park within walking distance, but soon ran into trouble with clumping. Any recommendations for a wax for waxless skis in wet snow? Thanks.

Dave Norman

1/3/2022, 9:02 PM

I apply a few squirts of Armor-All to my skis and spread it with a rag. Works great and will last a good while. It's available in a small bottle that you can put in a ziplock in your pack. A scraper is a must to carry. There are good ones made for the task or an old credit card will do in a pinch.

Dick Simmons

1/7/2022, 4:24 PM

I tried XC ski this morning near Olney MD. I didn't get very far. It seemed every few steps I had to keep stopping to scrape the ice and clumps of snow off the ski treads. I had forgotten to wax before I left. Is the issue that the snow had a lot of moisture under it? Or maybe I need to do a better job of waxing? Or something else?

Neal Becker

1/7/2022, 4:50 PM

I had same issue today as Neal. In Gaithersburg skiing at Seneca Creek State Park.

Maryanne Sacco

1/7/2022, 4:28 PM

Could be all of the above. Can't do much about ground conditions and snow wetness (which was a factor on Monday as well but today is probably worse), but waxing does matter. When was the last time your ski bases were HOT waxed?

Doug Lesar

1/7/2022, 4:55 PM

For optimal glide and lessened sticking of wet snow, the glide areas of "waxless" skis (tips and tails) should be hot waxed before every season. The same is done with downhill skis except that those are hot waxed over the entire base as those skis lack a grip area. The patterned mid-ski grip areas are not hot waxed, but there are various glide waxes that can be applied there (and on tips and tails if needed) in case of chronic snow clumping. You carry these waxes (e.g. "maxiglide") along with you to use as needed.

Hot waxing is done in the indoors with aid of a waxing iron. "Maxiglide" and the like is applied "in the field".

"Waxless" is somewhat of a misleading term as "waxless" skis with patterned grip areas need waxing TLC as described above. Older-style waxable skis needed to have grip wax applied over the center of the ski span. There is a spectrum of grip wax "colors" for specific ranges of prevailing temperature. Such skis demand much effort and patience on the part of the user when employed in the highly-variable temperature environment of the mid-Atlantic. I gave up on "waxable" skis early in my XC career, even though, in theory, they have superior glide over "waxless" skis when the correct grip wax is applied (i.e. you luck out).

Doug Lesar

1/7/2022 5:13 PM

Should I buy something like this?

[https://www.backcountry.com/swix-ultimate-nordic-wax-kit?](https://www.backcountry.com/swix-ultimate-nordic-wax-kit?s=a&avad=276973_b25fadbcd&utm_medium=Affiliate&utm_source=www.norwiski.com&utm_campaign=Custom+Link&utm_term=content)

[s=a&avad=276973_b25fadbcd&utm_medium=Affiliate&utm_source=www.norwiski.com&utm_campaign=Custom+Link&utm_term=content](https://www.backcountry.com/swix-ultimate-nordic-wax-kit?s=a&avad=276973_b25fadbcd&utm_medium=Affiliate&utm_source=www.norwiski.com&utm_campaign=Custom+Link&utm_term=content)

Is there a good, less expensive alternative? I found some choices here:

<https://www.norwiski.com/cross-country-ski-wax>

But I've never done hot wax before, some of these kits are specific to XC and others are not.

Neal Becker

1/7/2022, 5:31 PM

Like with all sports gear, there is a range of money one can pay for your stuff ...YMMV and others will have different opinions and approaches, but mine is cheap and dirtball. My waxing kit has three items; (1) a chunk of glide wax (as pictured in the \$250 kit cited), (2) an "iron" that is merely a block of aluminum on a handle (heaven knows where I obtained it circa 1980!), and (3) a combo cork smoother / scraper tool. I use our electric kitchen range as a heat source, heating up the aluminum block on an energized burner. I prop the tail of the ski on the edge of the stove, and I support the tip end on a tall speaker box (remember Boston Acoustics?) Once the aluminum block is hot enough, I press the wax chunk into the block, positioning both over the ski base, and drip melted wax over perhaps one foot of ski base length. I then QUICKLY smear the melted wax over the ski bottom with the iron, smoothing it so there are no uncovered gaps. This process is repeated until both tip and tail regions have been treated. Purists will then thin-down the re-hardened wax with the scraper portion of the

(Continued on page 14)

Waxing Skis (cont).

(Continued from page 13)

tool, but I don't bother. I am NOT a racer and merely like to futz around in the woods. Scraping off bits that oozed over the ski edges suffices for my taste.

There are two tricky parts to this process: (1) Knowing how hot the iron needs to be, and (2) QUICKLY smoothing the hot wax drips. If you wait too long to spread the wax it will harden into splotches that can't be readily smeared down. An iron that is too cold will not melt the wax very well and it may not drip at all. OTOH you don't want the iron to get the wax to SMOKING. Learned by trial and error.

If you have time and access to a ski shop you can let their technicians employ a kit like the \$250 job cited, but ski time is precious, especially when the snow is melting away underfoot, and I'd rather not wait for a shop to do its thing. With my downhill skis, it's a different story; I always have them professionally waxed and edge-sharpened.

As a last note, some people re-purpose a common clothes iron for this task, at least an iron no longer needed to be pristine.

Doug Lesar

1/7/2022, 5:34 PM

What about something like this? I'm reading liquid wax can be nearly as good and much easier:

<https://www.newmoonski.com/product/new-moon-rex-liquid-glide-wax-starter-kit-12176.htm>

Neal Becker

1/7/2022, 5:39 PM

Yikes, even this product is kind of pricey, but in this age of crippled supply chains at least it is "in stock". I now recall this waxing approach being mentioned to me last time I was in a downhill ski shop late last season. Have no experience with it but perhaps others have. From the kit components it looks like it covers all aspects.

Doug Lesar

1/7/2022, 6:27 PM

I still have a pair of lignostone-base waxable skis on which I perform the more elaborate heating, etc. As Doug mentioned in one of his notes, there's nothing like those skis when you have the right wax on for the conditions. Ah, but there is the, uh, rub, as it were. For my "waxless" skis that are much less finicky in variable conditions, I've gotten by for decades now with a cork rubbing block and peel-able tins of Swix or similar brand hard waxes plus a glide-wax product and a scraper. Pretty cheap, and probably does more than 80% of what doing all the fancy steps with fancy equipment gets done. But on a day like today--the problem is the snow itself, not the waxing steps you did or didn't do.

Al Larsen

1/9/2022, 1:35 PM

Friday there were plenty of postings about good skiing but sticky snow. I experienced that as well. Some of the worst I've seen. Saturday and this morning (Sunday) however were fine for me. With a single application of Armor All, I skied for an hour yesterday with no issues. This morning I skied out my back door (north of Baltimore) at sunrise. Just wonderful - the sunrise and the skiing. Limited cover but excellent glide and no sticking.

Right now, I look out the window and think of the Wicked Witch of the West " I'm melting!, I'm melting! What a world"

It's been a very nice weekend. Hope you got to enjoy it too.

Dick Simmons

1/10/2022, 4:20 PM

I apply Swix F4 to the full base of my waxless skis before I go out. This mostly keeps the ice off the base and provides good glide.

Craig Ausema

1/10/2022, 7:58 PM

Agree F4 works well, esp in paste form in shoe polish size can with foam application, apply let dry a bit and polish with cloth.

Paul Kamienski

1/10/2022, 4:42 PM

No matter what wax you use, there are a couple of things that help: Stay on better-drained (read:sloping) snow; Stay away from creeks (pizza dough humidity levels the closer you get); and Keep the feet moving. Still feet get slushed up.

Pedrag Gudac (Getting good results from Toko Blue and Zardoz Notwax)

1/10/2022, 7:16 PM

Joys of ski waxing sooo vast to cover. The techniques and methods you use probably just as important as the equipment and supplies you use. If you are into the Zen of XC ski waxing or a recreational racer, perhaps turn your eyes away from the rest of my comments. Whatever kind of iron you use to coat your XC ski bases, you have to be VERY, VERY careful not overheating the wax and the ptx on the undersides of skis. My 20 year old steam iron has done the job waxing my WAXLESS and waxable classical skis for decades. Last I saw, these types of irons cost something in neighborhood of \$15 new [Check used at Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.].

It is important to protect the gliding portions of the underside of one's waxless skis with a coating of "gliding" wax. This task includes deciding what kind of "gliding" wax, another deep subject. That ski wax coating also helps preserve the ptx on undersides of skis, where ptx AKA

(Continued on page 15)

Waxing Skis (cont).

(Continued from page 14)

either polyethylene or ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene . My personal favorite for waxing the tips and tails of WAXLESS skis is white paraffin wax blocks, which are often found at all those fine alpine brick and motor stores and their online sites at block-busting price of \$10+. Then there is the method to remove melted wax from irons. But that is another secret for others to share.

Some local outfitters that sell alpine skis may have some of the kinds of brushes and scrappers for which you are seeking. STCs like White-grass in WV probably also in the brushes and scrappers selling business. Bet other folks have lots of other waxing secrets to share. Happy sharing...and keep doing those snow dances so we can enjoy gliding on our favorite trails with those finally WAXED, "wax less" skis.
Greg Westernik

1/10/2022, 8:56 PM

Lots of great advice in this group. I also like a video series about all things cross-country called Tahoe Trail Guide. Check out this video about skiing in the wet stuff: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g852ZbZZyxY>. If you like this guy's low-key, no nonsense style, you will no doubt enjoy his other videos.

Dave Norman

1/10/2022, 9:53 PM

Reading this thread with interest, and thought I'd expand a bit on Doug's points. Have **attached three pix** of my waxing set-up which I use at home and while travelling so I'm prepared to re-wax according to snow conditions, temperatures, etc:

1. The red waxing frame or 'travel vise' - light weight, clamps to a workbench or table and provides firm support when you exert pressure to brush skis and to apply, iron-in or scrape wax from skis. Yes, a bit spendy, but it should last a lifetime and does make waxing easy;
2. One of my classic skis that takes wax along its entire base (it has no kick plate of 'fish scales'). I use a combination of waxes on such skis - the 'base or glide waxes' (the red and blue bricks) and the grip waxes (the smaller green, blue and purple cans w/peelable sides). Glide waxes are 'ironed in' (hot waxing the ski) and I use a different color depending on snow condition/temperature. The blue is 'harder' for colder temps and red is for warmer conditions. I change the glide wax day-to-day, depending on conditions. As for the grip waxes? I apply them over the glide wax, in the 'grip zone' of the base under the binding, just before heading out. I 'crayon' on the grip wax and smooth it with the cork -- maybe 3-4 coats, smoothing each time. The color of choice depends on the snow condition/temp - green, blue, purple (and there are grades between these) are used in ascending order of temperature; i.e., green is for colder temps;
3. Waxing iron - of course, the old steam iron that Greg describes works fine. But it's heavy and not so handy to pack in your traveling kit. Again, this waxing iron should last you years;
4. Cork and scraper - used on the bench in the shop or on the trail;
5. Brushes -- brass and nylon w/a felt-like back for buffing the bad after brushing w/nylon brush;
6. The card w/some basic directions.
7. Park your skis outside, in shed or unheated garage to 'acclimatize'.

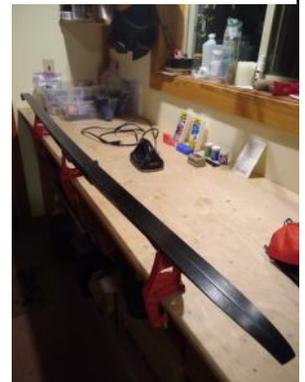
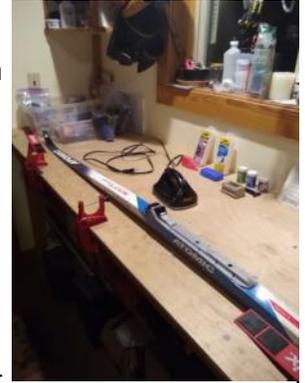
Lots of YouTube videos out there to see all in action. Don't mean to overkill this process, but it's satisfying -- working your skis to a fine playlist at night while the house is quiet and snow builds outside.

Robert Buzzard

1/10/2022, 9:58 PM

The secret to remove wax from the iron is to not apply the wax directly to the iron at all. Back in the early '70s when I used my mom's iron, I would wrap Cut Rite wax paper around the bottom of the iron and change the wax paper several times during the wax application before the wax paper could possibly deteriorate and allow the ski wax to clog the steam holes on the iron. I had several close calls, but I'm still alive.

Doug Schubert (the other Doug)



PATC-Ski Touring Section
c/o Doug Lesar
2507 Campbell Place



To:

PATC Ski Touring Section Membership Form

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PATC-Ski Touring Section, c/o Doug Lesar, 2507 Campbell Place, Kensington, MD 20895

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- If checked, add me to New Yahoo Group so I can get infrequent, adhoc announcements of local XC Ski activities: ___
- If checked, send my UPSLOPE only electronically (no paper copy) to save the club copying and postage: ___

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