

Missoula Nordic News



Special points of interest:

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- Ski Clinics
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- Join the MNSC

Missoula Nordic Ski Club Maintains XC Trails

The Missoula Nordic Ski Club, in cooperation with the USFS and the Univ. of Montana, grooms the ski trails in Pattee Canyon, the Rattlesnake valley and at Lubrecht Experimental forest.

Trail grooming in the Missoula valley presents special problems including limited snow cover, warm weather, freezing and thawing and balancing many special interests. Over the years an expert crew of volunteers have done summer maintenance to allow skiing on a thin base.

Our winter crew spends countless hours to work the snow and groom the trails. We use snowmobiles with specialized equipment to pack the snow then grade the surface and set tracks. You will occasionally see our volunteers working, but more often you will find them skiing during

Events Calendar

Free Ski Clinics at Pattee Canyon. Clinics are led by Kellie Carim with help from other club members. Check the website to verify location.

- Sat, January 16th
- Sat, February 6th
- Mon, February 15th (President's Day)



the day and grooming early mornings or late evenings.

The trails at Pattee Canyon are maintained for both skating and classic and groomed as weather permits. In the Rattlesnake, the main corridor is maintained, snow permitting, for classic skiing only. Dogs are not allowed on either Pattee or Rattlesnake trails.

The Ozone Race will be on January 10, 2010 at Seeley Lake XC trails.

The Barneloppet for youth, along with associated activities: February 7, 2010, Sunday, at 1:00 pm at Lubrecht Forest..

The club also maintains the trails at Lubrecht Experimental forest. The trails are maintained for both skating and classic skiing and dogs are allowed.

The grooming is not always perfect. We do the best we can with limited snow and lots of warm weather. Luckily, all of our groomers also love to ski and

you can be sure that they will do the best possible with what snow we have.

Please support the costs of grooming by joining the Missoula Nordic Ski Club.

Grooming updates and trail conditions can be found on the Missoula Nordic Ski Club website.

A full race calendar with event contact information and updates on schedule changes can be found on the Missoula Nordic Website:

MissoulaNordic.org



Letter From The President

Man, I love to ski. There is nothing better than a beautiful day, perfect snow and the incredible scenery we are lucky enough to share. Yea, I love to ride my bike, hike and run trails, but to me, nothing beats skiing. Maybe it's the shortness of the season or the unpredictability of the snow that makes it so special when those experiences happen.

As the president of the Missoula Nordic Ski Club (MNSC) I am happy to be able to be part of an effort to share the enjoyment we have in skiing. That can mean making it easier for friends to ski together through condition updates and ride shares, clearing trails, sponsoring a race, or providing instructional events.

Short of just having snow, which of course we can't control, good grooming is the most important factor underlying all of the activities and events we sponsor. We can offer ski waxing, technique and fitness clinics, but without good grooming they won't have the effect we want.

Helping to give kids the opportunity to experience the joy of skiing is much easier when

the surface is properly prepared. We all know how hard it is for experienced skiers to ski on icy, ski rutted surfaces, much less kids who are just learning. That's true, of course, for older novices as well. A stable, consistent surface is necessary for learning and executing proper technique. Without good grooming, you can't expect participants to travel for races and other events. Why drive out of your way for substandard trails.

Places like Pattee Canyon, Lubrecht Experimental Forest and the Rattlesnake (all of which are groomed by the MNSC) with low snow levels and warmer daytime temperatures, rely on consistent grooming. Grooming is needed to both pack the snow (to try keep it around for a while) and to renovate the snow (so it's not icy with hazardous tracks frozen throughout the surface). In these conditions, especially for skating, grooming can be an almost daily necessity. It is rare when tracks can be set and left for days. The temperature variations and heavy traffic usually just don't allow it.

The trails in areas like Lolo, Chief Joseph, and Mt. Haggin (all of which are groomed by

other entities other than MNSC) with heavy snowfall and consistently colder temperatures, rely on packing and grooming to provide a stable surface. The necessity of packing in order to allow skating is clear. It is just as valuable for classic skiing. We all know that once one intrepid skier breaks trail, pretty much everyone follows the tracks. Grooming allows trails with the stability needed for skiing and proper poling. The frequency of grooming is determined by additional snowfall and or heavy use.

Of course, this is an expensive process in time, equipment, and fuel (although, in the larger picture providing skiing opportunities in Missoula saves the fuel needed to travel to other areas that might have more snow). The MNSC relies on club memberships to fund grooming. Other clubs rely on "on site" collections or a combination of the two. Make sure you express your appreciation of good grooming at all of the trails you use, with your contributions and your thanks. If we don't value good grooming, we won't have it.

Craig Krueger

"Grooming the ski trails depends on the support of users like you. Please join the Missoula Nordic Ski Club."

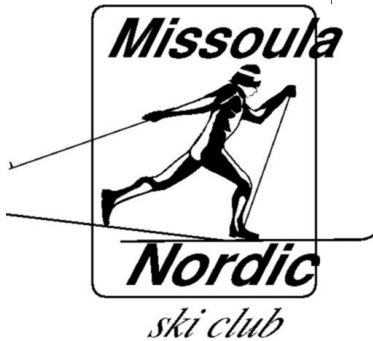
Technique Tips From Kellie

Unlike alpine skiing, the poles in classic skiing are not used for balance. Rather, poles provide force and power, propelling the skier forward. However, efficient and effective use of poles can be tricky if you are not properly balanced on your skis. To improve your balance and body position, throw your poles aside and practice the following drill:

With your skis in the tracks, relax with your shoulders rolled forward and knees slightly bent. (Skiers are lazy-you actually WANT slouch in this position!) Begin striding forward, focusing on a complete weight shift from one foot to the other with each stride. All your weight should be on the gliding ski and on the ball of your foot, just behind the toes. Swing your

arms with imaginary poles to help keep momentum.

After a few minutes of no poles skiing, find a section of trail that is flat to slightly uphill, roughly 50-100 meters long. Count the number of strides it takes you to complete the section. Repeat 5-10 times, trying to reduce the number of strides needed to
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Waxing - For Glide Adapted from *Crosscountryskiworld.com*

Local ski shops often have waxing clinics and demonstrations. Check with Open Road or other shops

Why Wax?

Both Classic (wax able and no-wax or fish scale) and Skate skis periodically need to be glide waxed for optimal glide and performance. Classic skis are glide waxed above and below the wax pocket while skate skis are glide waxed the entire length of the base.

Glide waxing both protects a ski base and "customizes" the pores of the base to the snow and temperature conditions. In order to maximize the durability of glide wax, the wax is heated into the base using an iron with the excess wax scraped off.

What you need

The first step in glide waxing is to find a good place to heat the wax and a good support system for the skis. The bare-bones approach in the house is to just lay down some newspaper with some pillows or books underneath to support the tips and tails. You can also use a workbench or two sawhorses outside or in a garage. This kind of makeshift set-up is fine for heating in wax for beginners

Tips Continued

complete each lap. Proper forward body position with weight on the ball of your foot and complete weight transfer from one foot to the next are the two biggest factors improving your stride efficiency. To really work those fine balancing muscles, warm up with some easy skiing and then practice skiing without poles for 30-60 minutes. With improved balance, your skiing will be faster, more efficient, and significantly more fun!

and scraping can be done anywhere shavings aren't a problem or where they can easily be cleaned up.

After a while you really will want to purchase or make a profile bench. These are wood or metal forms that fit the bow of a ski with a clamp in the middle. Profile benches allow for much more precise ski work and generally protect a ski while waxing, scraping, or structuring. The only tools you REALLY need will be:

- a good iron with an adjustable heat control (no holes are the best)
- a thick plastic wax scraper with sharp edges
- a rounded groove scraper (clean klister paddles work great!)
- glide wax
- a nylon brush or soft pad for finish work

You can sometimes find acceptable irons at thrift stores, but the ski-specific models in ski shops and catalogs are well worth the extra money. Think of it this way...you spend hundreds of dollars on skis and wax, why not make sure the one tool you need is built for the job? Scrapers and wax you can find at any XC ski shop or area.

How to Hot Wax

Heat your iron to a point just hot enough to melt the wax you will be using. The lowest possible setting you can get away with is the one you want to always use. If the iron smokes it is way too hot! For beginners, simple paraffin waxes are all you need to worry about and they melt at a very low temperature. (Note: Fortunately, paraffin waxes are also cheaper and are easier to apply than high-end waxes.)

The most efficient application method is to rub the end of the block or stick of wax on the iron face and then crayon the heated end of the wax on the base of the ski. By crayoning on semi-heated wax you waste less wax than by dripping wax from the iron tip. You just need enough wax to cover the entire base (on skate skis) with a smooth layer...any more will simply be wasted.

For classic skis avoid getting any glide wax in the middle third of the ski where you will rub on kick wax. If you have nowax skis, glide wax the tip and tail and use one of the special liquid waxes which you can rub onto the fish scale kick portion of the ski.

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More information on the Missoula Nordic ski club Website.

The Missoula Nordic Ski Club website contains a wealth of information including:

- Join the club online.
- Schedule of events
- Snow conditions for most XC ski sites within 1 two hour drive of Missoula
- Equipment for sale or to sell.
- Current events and photos

- Links
- Race Results
- You can update ski conditions and see what others are saying

We hope that you will join the Missoula Nordic Ski Club. Joining is a small cost to support trail grooming, the web site, clinics, races and a vibrant Nordic community.

"Try a new area! Find up to date ski conditions at all area XC ski trails on the club web site. Seeley Lake, Chief Joseph, Lolo Pass, Mt. Haggin, Como, and our local areas: Rattlesnake, Pattee and Lubrecht."

We encourage you to support the Missoula Nordic Ski Club. The club maintains XC ski trails at Pattee Canyon and up the main Rattlesnake corridor via a cooperative agreement with the USFS. The ski club also maintains trails at Lubrecht Experimental Forest in cooperation with the University of Montana.

Please consider joining the Missoula Nordic Ski Club and support the continued maintenance of trail grooming and updated information. To join the club you can pick up a membership envelop at trailheads in Pattee Canyon, the Rattlesnake or Lubrecht, join on-line or use the membership form below.

MEMBERSHIP FORM:

One Year Membership typically runs November 1 - October 31. New members joining in the spring/summer have membership "rolled over" to the next Halloween.

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ (print carefully

please!)

Year of Birth _____

Mail form and check to:
Missoula Nordic Ski Club
P.O. Box 7354
Missoula, MT 59807

One Year INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP (\$18.00) _____
One Year FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (\$30.00) _____
OPTIONAL (tax-deductible) CONTRIBUTION \$ _____
Make sure to attach appropriate payment (US Dollars only).

Includes: Subscriptions to The Missoula Nordic Newsletter and print publications; support for missoulanordic.org website (operated by Missoula Nordic); exclusive member discounts; discounts at the National Masters (\$15 value); license-to-participate and travel/team support for the annual Masters World Cup (\$125 value); exclusive international Masters racing information/access via the World Masters Association; and much, much more!

Donations go towards Missoula Nordic educational programs and general cross country ski development in the U.S. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all donations beyond annual dues are tax deductible.



Waxing Continued

Once you have the base covered, gently warm the wax into the pores of the base by moving the iron up and down the glide wax areas for a minute or so. Keep the iron moving until you have clearly melted all the wax. NEVER let the iron touch a bare ski base. Let the ski cool completely before scraping.

How to Scrape Wax

If you are doing this without a profile bench, make sure to support the ski with your body and your free hand as much as possible. Always work on skis from tip to tail using gentle, fluid motions with the scraper. NEVER use a metal scraper to scrape wax! Even with a plastic scraper, you should be very careful and take your time. Try to

angle the scraper towards the direction you are scraping and use your entire hand to hold the scraper since they often slip creating little nicks and base cuts. It can be easier to clean the groove first, but regardless, make sure it also gets scraped. Try to get as much wax as possible off the surface for superior glide. A good nylon brush is an excellent finishing tool to really leave a ski clean but it is not necessary for beginning skiing.

General Glide Waxing Tips

Selection of glide wax is actually pretty easy for beginners. Buy basic wax and just follow the temperature ranges on the package of any brand on the market and you'll be in the ballpark. In purchasing wax, a beginner's best bet is a combi package with several colors in

one package. Glide wax stores very well as long as you keep the wax in cool areas away from heat sources or direct sunlight.

Safety

For a beginner that hot waxes skis one-three times a year, all you really need to do is make sure to open the windows when you wax or better yet, heat waxes in an open garage or even outside. If you have a good organic vapor mask (used in painting and other industrial uses), be sure to use it, but don't make a special trip just for low-end paraffin waxes.

MissoulaNordic.org
wow! check it out

Providing a vibrant
community for Nordic Skiers