

Snow News IS Good News

Newsletter of the Nooksack Nordic Ski Club

P.O. Box 28793, Bellingham, WA 98228
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NOVEMBER 2022



Club Meeting – Meet with NNSC on Zoom!

When – Tuesday, November 8th

Check your email or the NNSC website for details and an invitation.

<http://www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org/meetings/>

Meeting starts at 7:00 PM.

Who - Anyone is welcome!

Visit Our Website for the Latest Information: www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Tuesday, November 8, 2022:
7:00 PM**

Our first general membership meeting of the year is a Zoom meeting, sitting in front of your very own computer! Meet other members of the club and hear mini-presentations about club activities this winter. Feel free to ask questions. (Predictions call for a good snow year on our local trails!) Visitors interested in Nordic skiing in Whatcom County and the club's activities are welcome! Link to meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86790961363?pwd=TFI3NzViV1JDajNsY01MWDRPUVNudz09>

The link to the Zoom meeting is also posted on our website: <https://www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org/meetings/>

NOTES FROM MEMBERSHIP PERSON

Just a friendly reminder that membership dues for the 2022-23 season are now due. You can pay online (and order a SnoPark pass) at <https://www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org/membership/join-renew/> or print out the form found in this newsletter and mail it with your check to the club. Thanks!

President, NNSC



PETE TRYON

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

There is snow on the ground – in Alaska, in Michigan... Rumors have it that we'll have a good winter here in the Pacific Northwest too! We're all looking forward to a good season of skiing. But what else besides dreaming is your club doing to help make this happen?

Our board has already met three times this fall. Other articles have mentioned work parties. Our trails are looking pretty good! Barring a big storm, we should be going into the winter ready for snow. Our grant-writers have kept up with the paperwork: the SnoPark has money for grooming (this doesn't go through the club, but for the SnoPark contract to be written, the club needs to support it with volunteer work and organization) and we have federal money for trail maintenance. We're planning a new program of mini-lessons. Look forward to a chance for short, personalized lessons on our own ski trails, tailored to your specific concerns. We're partnering with the Bellingham Parks and Rec program to host introductory ski sessions combined with our Nordic Ambassadors program.

As we go into our third ski season with covid hanging in the background, we have been discussing what it will take to return to some of our treasured activities: the multiday ski trip to Canada! Or to Methow Valley! We're hoping to expand our support for day trips within range of Bellingham.

Let's have a great ski season!

PETE TRYON



Cindy Joseph at Heather Meadows on Mt Baker

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER FOR THE 2022-23 SKI SEASON

Reminder: our fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30th. Please send in your membership dues by December 2022 for this coming ski season.

On July 1, 2022, we had \$25,771.54 in the treasury. Since all our expenses are pay up front and we get reimbursed later for items that fall under the federal National Recreational Trails Program grant (NRTP), it is necessary to have at a minimum \$10,000 to start each new season.

Last season our membership dues brought in \$2,290. So, it is obvious we survive because of grants and donations.

We apply for a SnoPark grant from the State of Washington Parks and Recreation Commission for the snow grooming of our ski tails. This coming season the grant requested was for \$26,388.72 -same as last season. While there has been no written

verification, there has been verbal indication that the grant was approved. None of the funds go through our treasury. The groomer has this much to groom our trails for the season and he bills the state of WA for his services, and they pay him out of this grant. Our Sno-Park Grant application is due by June of each year for the following season. We also receive a Shell grant for \$500 courtesy of Jim Rhodes.

Every 2 years we apply for a federal National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) grant. The NRTP grant for the 21-23 season was not approved until April 2022. Thus, some of the 2-year grant period has elapsed. So, that means the funds need to be used up by October 30, 2023. The current grant is for \$20,500. What is not used is lost. NRTP money is used for maintenance of 15 miles of ski trails and 5 miles of snowshoe trails in the Salmon Ridge trail system. This covers items such as road grading and mowing of the roadsides on Razor Hone, Cougar Loop, Anderson Creek Road, and White Salmon Road. An average expense for mowing one of the trails is \$4,000. The grant can also be used for snow grooming if the season goes long, and the snow park grant has run out. As well, this grant supports volunteer work parties.

We do sell SnoPark permits. This is basically a service we provide for the convenience of the members. It is mostly a pass through in our financials.

Examples of the use of funds during the 2020-22 seasons included:

1. a gate installed at the parking lot entrance to Mom's replacing a bunker. A donation covered this expense.
2. adding about a quarter mile of a relatively flat ski trail with the addition of the Gerbil Loop and Hamster Run (grading and tree removal). Many got a chance to use it this past season.
3. Grading work on Far Cougar with some culverts installed and water bars to improve the road surface.
4. Improvement and enlarging of the portion of Mom's from the parking lot to the crossover.

We would love to hear from you for any suggestions for the NRTP funds for this season?

LYNNE OLIVER

STATUS OF OUR SKI TRAILS

Some of you might remember that there were countless trees down on the trails from the storms of early last winter. We made it through the winter, but it seemed that there was always another tree blocking the trail. Anderson never did get groomed and Razor Hone had the groomer snaking between the log ends on either side of the trail.

Well, thanks to 473 (and counting) hours of labor done by 34 volunteers this summer, all of the groomed trails are

cleared of logs and branches, both roadbed and shoulders. With contracted mowing scheduled for November, we should be well prepared for the season. Razor Hone, Cougar Loop, Mom's, the Gerbil Loop, and Anderson (to the washout) are all good to go! With contracted soil work done by Drake Harkness, we're hoping that the Cougar Loop can be groomed to the bridge on both sides. Backcountry trails are looking pretty good too! Huckleberry might be ready for backcountry skis as well as snowshoes this year. We just finished a work party on the top half of the Connector Trail; let's do the bottom half soon.



Enhancement To The River Trail

TRAIL WORK FROM THE GRUNT'S PERSPECTIVE

Full disclosure, while I am married to NNSC's president, I no longer ski. I do enjoy snowshoeing through the woods. But I enjoy working on clearing trails just as much.

NNSC volunteers do trail work in both the snow-free months and in winter. We ended last November thinking all trails were ready for grooming. December and January storms proved that trail maintenance is not seasonal. Our work supports not only cross-country skiing, but also keeps the trails useable for recreation in the spring, summer, and fall.

New members or those too busy to engage with the club on trail work might be curious about what it entails. The most important thing is to simply turn up. The club can supply all the tools that you will need to participate. Special equipment for us duffers can be as simple as a couple of pairs of gloves to stay dry when handling wet wood.

There are several people who are more than willing to run the chainsaws. These are the experienced sawyers who enjoy figuring out how to safely remove overhanging branches and trunks. They also enjoy the challenge of cutting a log with a diameter twice the length of the bar on their chainsaws. These are the workers who will stand on the tailgate of their pickup truck to reach an overhanging log.

But work parties also need unskilled labor! We duffers are in short supply! We are the ones who clip the boughs from the bigger branches and trunks to make the chainsaw work both safer and easier. We remove the cut logs and branches from the trail to make them passable. We roll the bigger logs into the woods to get them out of the

drainage. We fill in holes with rocks, gravel, cedar bark, and duff. We rake out gravel from the drainages, cut channels to drain wet areas, and remove rocks from culverts. We cut overhanging greenery so that blue diamonds can be seen from both directions.

We duffers are the ones who laid short logs and branches down through the wetlands on the Huckleberry Trail. In February, those branches supported two feet of compacted snow, forming the dry route across the wetlands.

While the sawyers in the club have the satisfaction of cutting through the heavy timbers, we grunts change the visual look of the trails. There is something very satisfying about removing a brushy hemlock top that weighs about 15 pounds, but that gives the impression of a 6-foot-wide barrier.

As I admitted above, I am not a skier. So, I can't easily get to the far side of Cougar to help out there in the winter. But you skate and expert strider skiers can! Please consider showing up to help on trail work farther out than us duffers travel in the winter. And join us on a work party. You will enjoy the comradery, the sense of accomplishment, and learning more about our trails.

MEG HAYES

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN IDAHO

Thanks to Covid-19, I have become more familiar with The Gem State, Idaho. In years past, the NNSC has

hosted many overnight trips to various ski destinations in British Columbia. When the Covid-19 epidemic arrived, the Canadian border became too difficult to cross and we stopped offering overnight trips. As the club's trip coordinator, with no trips to coordinate, I decided to take advantage of this opportunity to explore Idaho for potential new destinations. Since last fall, I have been searching online for groomed ski trails in Idaho.

The McCall area has three trail systems and is an excellent destination for several days, however I wanted to check out systems new to me and I had been to McCall two years ago. My destination this time would be the Saw-tooth and Wood River Valleys.

It took me two days driving to reach the village of Stanley in the Saw-tooth Valley. It was close to the Park Creek and Alturas Lake trail systems. I skied Park Creek, (32 kilometers) on a very cold, windy day. It was well groomed and lightly used. Actual skiing was a challenge, due to the temperatures but I was bundled up and comfortable enough to slough along. The next day, I skied Alturas Lake (16 k.). The grooming was recent and the weather more pleasant. I met no other skiers, just a groomer. These trails are some of the most remote and sparsely populated in the lower 48. The scenery was exquisite, well groomed, the terrain and weather mild and pleasant and yet no one else was there! The experience was such a contrast to the

short, icy, crowded trails of Cabin Creek off I-90.

In Stanley, I stayed at the High Country Inn. At the time, their heating system was broken, and it overheated my room, making it impossible to sleep! Happily, the management repaired the problem and refunded my first night fees. Nothing says sorry like a refund. I recommend the High Country Inn for an excellent brunch Thursday through Sunday.

To the south of the Saw-Tooth Valley is the Wood River Valley, where over 100 kilometers of groomed trails are maintained by the Blaine County Recreation District. Their System reminds me of the Methow Valley Ski Trail System, in Winthrop, WA. In both cases a local community has decided to provide a varied winter recreational opportunity for both their residents as well as guests. It is possible to fly into Hailey and use the free local bus service to access the trails throughout the Wood River Valley. Three days of skiing there, convinced me that I need to return. There was so much to ski that a week's stay makes more sense.

My next stop was Chief Joseph Pass. Located on the Continental Divide, north of Salmon, Idaho, this trail system receives over 300 inches of snow per year. While temperatures, in the valleys had turned above freezing. At the Chief Joseph ski area, the snow was well groomed and firm, without the icy problems caused by nightly refreezing It

was impressive how well maintained this remote system is. Of course, the sunny, calm weather didn't hurt either! Any skier traveling between Salmon and Missoula should not fail to stop and enjoy this excellent trail system!

I had planned to spend time in the Missoula area but rising temperatures were making for soft snow, so I only checked out Lolo Pass. It is less than an hour out of Missoula and had not been groomed in several days, alternately icy and soft, with a lot of debris in the trail. Since it was more of a challenge, I used my backcountry skis and checked out the 6-mile Packer Meadows Loop.

The next day, I decided to head home, due to warmer weather. I did stop at Fourth of July Pass, just before Coeur d'Alene. It had not been groomed for several days and the snow was melting. It also required an Idaho Park and Ski Permit, which I did not have. Consequently, I decided to leave it for another day. My ski adventure did show that there are some good regularly groomed trails to ski in Idaho and I hope to get back to enjoy them again. Fly or drive? That depends on your time and resources. Either option is possible, depending on your circumstances.

I was gone ten days and in those ten, I skied seven new trail systems in Idaho. It is eleven hours to Stanley, from Bellingham; two days on the road.

Idaho at the time, had twice the incident rate of Washington and mask use is less universal as it has been in Bellingham. I kept mine on and was reluctant to interact with anyone unnecessarily.

Still, I had a good time skiing on well groomed trails in very good conditions. At the time they had not had snow in over three weeks. Kudo's to their grooming. It was impressive how they renewed the trails, without new snow.

The trails in the Wood River Valley are a mecca for area skiers and something they can be proud of. I would suggest you go and ski there at least once, as they are impressive with their scope and length.

KURT DUEY



FUTURE MEETINGS

December 13

January 10

February 8

March 14

Nooksack Nordic Ski Club Membership Application and SnoPark Order Form

Use this form to purchase SnoPark permits, join the club or renew your membership. Sign and mail to the club with your check. Or, bring it to the next meeting.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____
Street/PO Box City State Zip

Phone 1: _____ (Home, Cell, Work) Phone 2: _____ (H, C, W)

Email 1: _____ Email 2: _____

Dues and SnoPark Information

Check Membership Level: \$20 Individual _____ \$35 Household _____ Amount \$ _____

SnoPark Permit – Vehicle License Required for Permit: _____ \$50 SnoPark Fee \$ _____
Vehicle License

Optional Donation – we are a 501(c)3 \$ _____

Total membership + SnoPark + Optional \$ _____

Please read this agreement carefully before signing and dating:

In signing and submitting this form, I recognize that cross-country skiing involves strenuous activities, is potentially hazardous, and involves inherent risk. I knowingly and voluntarily assume all responsibility and risk for my actions and my family's actions while cross-country skiing, during travel related to Nooksack Nordic Ski Club (NNSC) activities, and during use of facilities and equipment. This includes, but is not limited to falls, collisions, effects of weather, conditions of equipment and trails and other areas while skiing or participating in NNSC activities. I hereby for myself, my heirs, administrators, or anyone else who may bring claims on my or my family members' behalf, covenant not to sue, release and discharge the NNSC, its Board and Committee members, and all related organizations or individuals, from any and all claims of liability for death, personal injury, or property damage arising from my or my family members' participation in NNSC activities.

Name (Print please): _____

Signature: _____

Other family member(s): _____

Other signatures: _____

Date: _____

I would like to receive Snow News is Good News newsletter by: Email: _____ U.S. mail: _____

Select Club Tasks you could help with:

- Serve on NNSC Board _____
- Clear brush from trails _____
- Find speakers/programs _____
- Put up trail signs and sanican base _____
- Help with Ambassador Days _____
- Write an article for "Snow News" _____
- Audit NNSC financial records _____
- Write a grant, or, fundraising _____
- Lead a ski trip _____

Please make checks out to: Nooksack Nordic Ski Club and mail with this form to:
 Nooksack Nordic Ski Club, P.O. Box 28793, Bellingham, WA 98228

Deposit Date
Sno Park #