

SKI TRACKS

June 2013 — Volume 11 — Number 6

President's Message

The Club's Board has received an official request for assistance from Russ Reibe, the District Ranger who oversees our Club's activities at Chief Joseph Pass. In a nutshell, the letter requests that the Club formally resume the assignment and oversight of the maintenance for the Reese Cabin during each ski season.

Based upon experiences during previous seasons, especially the most recent (2012-2013), the Club is being asked to assign every 4th night from December 1, to April 15, to volunteers.

Here is a table showing what the assignment of every fourth night would look like for the 2013-2014 ski season. Volunteers would be assigned on each day of the week five times with the exception of Fridays, when volunteers would only be assigned four times.

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	dec
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31	1	2	3	4	jan
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31	1	feb
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	1	mar
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31	1	2	3	4	5	apr
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15					

34 nights

102 still available for reservation

Following is the list of activities which volunteers who stay at the Cabin will be expected to perform. A reading of the list reveals little change from the maintenance that the Club has easily provided during many past seasons, with one exception—no more toilet cleaning!

Maintenance Tasks for Volunteers

General

1. Perform outhouse maintenance at both the trailhead and the Cabin – Restock toilet paper and sweep out snow and debris. Report more extensive cleaning needs to the Forest Service.
2. Check the signs and ski racks – Inspect signs for damage and ski rack adjustment needs at cabin and trailhead facilities. Report needs to the Ski Club.

Cabin Interior

3. Inspect the wood stove's chimney. Report problems to the Forest Service.
4. Sweep and mop entire Cabin interior, all three levels.
5. Shake upstairs rugs (*outside*).
6. Remove and haul out any trash and garbage.
7. Clean the entire kitchen area, sink, stove, cabinets, etc.
8. Check cook stove top and oven for correct operation. Report problems to the Forest Service.
9. Inspect the solar electric system (*battery and inverter located in basement*) for proper operation. Operation instructions are posted at the system. Report any problems to the Forest Service.
10. Inspect the propane lighting system and replace mantles as necessary. Report other problems to the Forest Service.
11. Re-fill Cabin drinking water supply and inspect the filter system (*Katadine Water Filter, next to the sink*) to ensure clean drainage. All water to be filtered is stored in the basement in large water barrels. Report problems to the Forest Service.
12. Check the Cabin's firewood supply. Report shortages or problems to the Forest Service.

Cabin Exterior

13. Remove snow from Cabin decks.
14. Maintain paths for ingress and egress to Cabin and outhouse. Shovel snow when required.
15. Report accidents, injuries, motorized intrusions into the trail network, law enforcement needs, and public concerns with the trails or the Cabin and its maintenance to the Forest Service or Ski Club as appropriate.

The annual spring potluck was a terrific success this year. There were more than 60 in attendance and no one had a valid excuse for leaving the event hungry—plenty of food was left to take home. The Woods Cabin was obviously a draw, so we'll do our best to get it again for next year's event.

Oops! Someone left behind a small soft-sided cooler containing a couple of iced-tea drinks. If you're the person who did so, please contact me (michael.hoyt@gmail.com) so we can get it back to you.

All who attended were treated to a spectacular show from nature. As the short rain storm broke up, the sun shined through some breaks in the clouds to highlight the west end of Lake Como along with the areas near Rock Creek and Little Rock Creek. Tony Neaves picture captured the event perfectly. Thanks, Tony.



Russ' letter specifically requested that the Club take over the assigning of volunteers for maintenance in a manner that is fair for the public. He provided a list of suggestions and requirements for that process. The list is duplicated here.

1. Solicit the volunteer services of the general public to conduct heavy maintenance of the Gordon Reese Cabin. I expect the solicitation to be extensive and complete. The volunteers (*individuals or groups*) are defined as:
 - a. Are not required to be Ski Club members;
 - b. Should be capable and willing to perform the required maintenance duties;
 - c. Need to provide adequate contact information (*name, address, phone, and email*) to the Ski Club;
 - d. Should be able and willing to attend a short training session if required; and
 - e. Will be assigned on a first-come first-serve basis.
2. The solicitation will occur via multiple efforts. Several ideas listed here are a minimum and more can be added as created:
 - a. Newspaper articles;
 - b. Articles in the Club's newsletter;
 - c. Notice on the Club's website;
 - d. Notice on the Club's Facebook page;
 - e. Notice on the Forest Service Website;
 - f. Flyer Postings at Bitterroot, Salmon, and Missoula Valley businesses; and
 - g. Outreach to contacts in the Salmon Cross Country Ski community.
3. Requests for volunteer assignment dates will be only accepted by email on the Club's website so that accurate records can be kept and to have proof of the fairness of the maintenance assignments; and
4. The date on which assignments will be accepted will be published two weeks in advance in each of the above-mentioned media sources.

I feel it is not my place or that of the Board to decide whether the Club should resume assignment and oversight of the maintenance for the Reese Cabin during the ski season. That is a decision for the Club's members. Unfortunately it is difficult if not impossible to conduct a vote on this or any other topic during the summer months when no Club meetings are taking place. However, we can conduct a poll using email. It's not perfect but certainly better than nothing. Therefore, I'm asking that you take some time to read Russ' request and send an email to me with your thoughts and wishes.

I think it is reasonable (*and possibly expected by more than a few of the Club's members*) that I share my thoughts regarding Russ' request.

A short explanation of my opinion is: I think the request is reasonable and believe the Club should pursue entering into an agreement with the Forest Service to resume the assignment and oversight of the Reese Cabin, especially now that toilet cleaning is no longer on the list of requirements.

My justification for that belief follows.

To begin, the purpose of our Club, as stated in our bylaws—a statement which was written and voted upon by the Club's members before I joined the Club—is to "...benefit the public by promoting Nordic (*cross-country*) skiing and other outdoor recreational activities..."

From the beginning of the Club's existence, the investment of volunteer time and resources at Chief Joseph Pass by the Club has been to promote cross-country skiing at no cost to the public. For many years the general opinion was that we did a good job; Club members were happy and so were the Forest Service and members of the general public (*including skiers who were not Club members*). During February of 2011, unfortunate events took place which put the fairness of our contributions into question. Many discussions have since taken place regarding the decisions reached by the Forest Service and the Club's Board of Directors to deal with those events.

During the most recent ski season (2012-2013) a group of people, mostly long-time members of our Club, took on the task of bi-weekly maintenance of the Reese Cabin at the request of the Forest Service. Having limited numbers and resources made their job difficult. Now the Forest Service, in the form of a formal request from Russ Reibe, is asking that our Club as a whole consider taking over the task that was handled by a small group during last winter's ski season. Some of the reasons may be:

1. The entire Club has more resources available than any subset of its members;
2. Last season the Forest District's available resources were barely able to support the group of people who were providing maintenance for the Cabin;
3. The Forest Service's resources have been substantially cut for the upcoming fiscal year, thereby making it less likely they will be able to provide much support for maintenance of the Cabin next season (2013-2014); and
4. The Club has handled the maintenance of the Cabin for many years and has the expertise and the knowledge base that is required.

One of the basic principles of our Club's operation has been to keep skiing and all the facilities at Chief Joseph Pass free to the public. Now that a \$9 registration fee is required for staying in the Reese Cabin, the facilities are no longer entirely free. That situation is strongly disliked by many Club members, including myself. Unfortunately, it seems that unless drastic changes are instituted at the very top of the Forest Service (*Washington*), the reservation system now in use for the Cabin is here to stay.

Possibilities are being researched by the Club's Board which, if approved, could keep the \$9 registration fee from being raised, lower it, or in the most hopeful case eliminate it entirely. Whether those explorations will amount to anything remains to be seen.

I ask each of you to consider the following:

1. For many years a person had to be a Club member to volunteer to perform maintenance at the Reese Cabin and in doing so, stay in the Cabin for the night. Whether that was discriminatory or not is no longer a question because it has been determined that, going forward, Club membership would not be required;
2. There was also a question of the impartiality of the method by which volunteer nights were assigned. Russ' suggestion that we use our website and email to keep checkable records of the process seems both valid and workable;
3. Russ' request that the process of assigning volunteers should receive more publicity so that more people will be aware of the procedure and have access to becoming volunteers seems reasonable. Plus the extra publicity will increase the pool of those willing to perform the necessary tasks;
4. We need a Club member to coordinate the procedures necessary to carry out the assigning of volunteers for Cabin maintenance. This is not a complicated position, but does need to be handled by single entity.

So, regarding Russ' request, the Board and I would like a sense of direction from you:

1. Do you think the Club should take on the task of overseeing and assigning volunteers to handle ski season maintenance for the Reese Cabin;
2. Would you be willing to volunteer; and/or
3. Would you be willing to be the coordinator for the process?

Please take some time as soon as possible to respond. My email address is michael.hoyt@gmail.com. I will pass your responses and input to the other Board members for discussion, suggestions, etc.

Mike Hoyt

Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club Officers

President Michael Hoyt michael.hoyt@gmail.com 406-360-3803	Vice President Kelly Zeiler krz-inc@live.com 406-363-8631	Treasurer Reine Hilton hilton@mcn.net 406-375-1952	Secretary Deb Duffy darbydeb1@gmail.com 406-821-2276
Trails & Grooming Mel Holloway tromper@bitterroot.com 406-381-1334	Programs & Map Jim Greenfield jkgreenfield@q.com 406-363-2110	Webmaster Jack Cooley jackc@jcphotography.com 970-227-1360	Membership Data Earl Philips philips@montana.com 406-369-0073
	Youth Coordinator Richard Stone rcstone@msn.com 406-642-9648	Ski Lessons George Corn gcorn@bresnan.net 406-363-1163	

Membership Renewals / Dues

Annual Memberships Expire on November 1st of each Year

Please Renew Your Membership Now

Family - \$25

Supporting Family - \$40

Individual - \$15

Supporting Individual - \$30

Mail To: Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club, PO Box 431, Corvallis, MT 59828-0431

Name (families, please include childrens names): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Email (to receive monthly newsletters): _____

Type of Membership (see above): _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____