



# SKI TRACKS

Newsletter of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

Box 431 • Corvallis, Montana 59828 January, 2004



## January Meeting Highlights

January 8, 2004

By Kay Fulton

**President, Sonny LaSalle**, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Approximately 68 people were in attendance.

### **Treasurer's Report by Jean Lippert:**

Income, \$2,790; Expenses, \$1,212; Checking, \$3,271; Savings, \$6,592. We received \$415 from the Ski Race and \$523 from donations.

**Membership Report by Leo Joron:** Leo reported a membership of 395.

### **Upcoming Events and Items of Interest:**

**The Gourmet Extravaganza on March 26<sup>th</sup>** was announced again. Tickets are for sale from Annie Creighton. \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Annie also announced that the Sula Store is donating a 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for the Extravaganza. They are donating a one-night stay in their cabins with a breakfast for two.

**Ed Hastings announced that Lost Trail Ski Area will have a Special Olympics January 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.** Anyone interested in volunteering to help should call Linda at 363-2570.

**Trail Report by Gordon Reese:** There is 50 inches of snow with 27 inches since December 29<sup>th</sup>. The temperature has been around 18 degrees. They have not yet been able to use the leveler. It appears that the moose have left. Free Ski Lessons will be on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00. Meet at the parking lot.

**Gordon announced that Ken Fortney had passed away. There was a memorial for him today in Darby.** Gordon told the club about Ken and all of his contributions to the club both personally and monetarily. He helped the Club get started on funding for grooming machines, set up the lifetime membership concept, loaned money twice to purchase machines and was one of the early groomers. He will be greatly missed.

### **New Business:**

**Sonny discussed the need for funds to buy future grooming machines.** The current replacement cost is about \$8,000. The current machines are 1994 models and have been used for 11 seasons so the Club needs to be prepared to replace them. He asked for a committee to

*Continued on page 2*

## FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Thursday, February 12 at 7 P.M.

### **Wolves in Romania**

presented by Diane Boyd at the Ski Club meeting on Thursday, February 12 at 7 P.M. If all you know of them stems from Dracula's Transylvanian chums, you've got a lot to learn. There are some 4,000 wolves officially reported in the Carpathian Range of Romania, and Diane will give us a first-hand report, with slides. Limited seating along the back wall, and after all, there's nothing to be afraid of. Is there?

## FROM PRESIDENT SONNY LASALLE

Dear Club Members,

This letter will be longer than usual, as I want to report the results of 2 meetings with the Forest Service, our partner in the Chief Joseph Ski Area.

January 5<sup>th</sup> Mel, Gordon, Mary Ellen, Ed, Earl and I met with Forest Supervisors, Rangers and Staff from Three National Forests involved in management of Chief Joe. The meeting was at the Sula Ranger Station and there was one main topic and several secondary ones. The type of operating agreement between the Club and the Forest Service was the main topic of discussion. We have been operating under volunteer agreements for years. One with the Bitterroot in winter for use of a vehicle to pull the snowmobile trailer, one with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge in the winter for trail grooming, and one with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge in the summer for cabin maintenance and trail maintenance. The volunteer agreements provided us with liability coverage in case of a lawsuit and office of workman's compensation program (OWCP) coverage in case someone was injured. These coverages are very valuable to us! The volunteer agreements are not very flexible for the Forest Service and there are restrictions on what they can do to provide financial and other types of support, such as equipment and supplies, to the Club. The Forest Service is proposing a Challenge Cost Share agreement with the club. The CCS agreement will place the responsibility for liability insurance and OWCP coverage on the Club, and that will be an additional expense to us. The "big ticket" item is the pickup used to haul groomers and materials to Sula and the snowmobile

*Continued on page 2*

## HIGHLIGHTS *(continued)*

evaluate our current fee structure. The following people volunteered to help: Leo Joron, Mary Ellen Reese and Lou Lippert.

**Sonny also reported on a meeting that was held on Monday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, with the Forest Service.** Club attendees were Sonny, Gordon, Mel, Ed, Mary Ellen, and Earl. There were Forest Service Rangers and Directors in attendance. Sonny felt that the meeting had gone very well and he will provide a complete report in the next newsletter. Topics covered included the Volunteer Agreement, setting up a "Challenge Cost Share" which could help in purchasing snowmachines, liability insurance and obtaining grants. Look for Sonny's detailed report.

**Program:** Pat Hastings presented a fun and informative program about the "Selway Sisters" Backpacking trip down the Selway River in 2002. With the help of her "Sisters" – Marsha Reed, Jean Lippert, Jan Driscoll and Della Cothorn, Pat explained the trip from start to finish including how it evolved, what they took, their bear and snake encounters, the trail and the environment and even their aches and pains. She showed some great slides as well.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER *(continued)*

trailer to Chief Joe. We are working with the Forest Service to find a way they can continue to provide the pickup. Gordon is gathering costs for OWCP coverage and liability insurance as well as snowmobile replacement so that we have an estimate of our needs to present to the Forest Service. Our snowmobiles are eleven years old and replacement machines are almost eight thousand dollars each.

The tone of the meeting was quite positive and all of the attending club members came away with good feelings about our partnership and the future. Two of the Forest Service folks are exploring grant opportunities in Montana and Idaho for snowmobile replacement.

Another topic at this meeting was the condition of the vegetation at Chief Joe, and opportunities for management to protect the Cabin and reduce the chance of a high intensity stand replacement wildfire. This discussion resulted in a second meeting with Forest Service folks from Sula, Wisdom and Wise River on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Gordon, Ed, Mel and I have been discussing the vegetation condition for some time, especially since the fires of 2000 and 2003 came so close to the Chief Joe area. Many other Club members have participated in some of these discussions.

Gordon and I met on January 15<sup>th</sup>, he gave me a map with some of his ideas for management, and I combined his with some of mine for the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>. I was with

the Forest Service folks for the entire time and Gordon, Mel and Ed met us for lunch at the cabin to review maps and opportunities.

The lodgepole pine on the area is around 165 years old and most of the trees have mistletoe and very poor crowns. The trees are in bad shape and at the end of their natural life. The dead and dry fuels are increasing, as are the green ladder fuels in the form of alpine fir regeneration. If any of the fires in 2000 and 2003 had started on or near our ski area we would be skiing in a very different visual setting and saving the cabin would have been a major effort. Something has to be done but the big question is what and where?

We want to protect the cabin and the scenic quality of our ski trails from fire but we also want to preserve the quality of our recreation experience. We have asked the Forest Service for help and they have responded. We will help them GPS all of our trails and special areas of concern, and they will develop some ortho photos with the trails on them. They will also do some vegetation surveys and present their suggestions to us at a future club meeting.

I want to encourage all of you to participate in this process in any way you can, and hopefully support our efforts to maintain the high quality skiing experience at Chief Joe. I know this is a lot to read, but I felt it was important for you to know what we are doing. Please call or email if you have questions or suggestions.

Sonny LaSalle

## Membership Renewals / DUES

**Annual Memberships EXPIRE November 1!**

**Renew your membership now!**

INDIVIDUAL - \$10 • FAMILY - \$20

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL - \$25

SUPPORTING FAMILY - \$35

LIFE MEMBER - \$100

## Membership Dues

**Nov. 1, 2003 - Oct. 31, 2004**

MAIL TO: Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

P.O. Box 431, Corvallis, MT 59828

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

(Listed above)

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter preference: (Check all that apply)

Send by USPS \_\_\_\_\_; Send by e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## BITTERROOT SKI CLUB EXTRAVAGANZA

There's still time to purchase your raffle tickets for a chance to win a gourmet dinner and a night's stay (for 4 people) at the Gordon Reese warming cabin at Chief Joseph. An evening filled with nothing but good food, companionship, and the magical setting of our ski trails and cabin. The date for this traditional event is set for Friday, March 26, '04.

**2nd and 3rd ADDITIONAL PRIZES** – A night for two at Sula Country Resort (2 people per cabin). Includes: Deluxe Cottage with fireplace, private bath, TV and VCR. Breakfast for two, up to \$5.00 apiece. Winners should call to make reservations 821-3364.

### PLANNING COMMITTEE

At the January 2004 meeting President Sonny asked if there were individuals interested in working with Leo on a committee assessing membership dues and long range income. Lou Lippert volunteered, and Mary Ellen Reese was nominated In Absentia by her spouse, Gordon. The committee met January 18 to brainstorm. The following are suggestions to be discussed at the February 12 meeting:

The first item addressed was the \$6,000 in a savings account at the Bitterroot Federal Credit Union in Darby. The suggestion was made that this money be designated the "Equipment Fund", to be used specifically to replace or repair trail grooming equipment. In order to continue our groomed trails at Chief Joseph dependable equipment is imperative. Additional funding to the fund would be derived from the annual Continental Divide XC Ski Race, Extravaganza Dinner ticket sales, new Lifetime memberships and the Ken Fortney Lifetime Support Level (to be discussed later).

The next subject discussed was general membership dues. In the 14 seasons of trail grooming, membership dues have not been raised. It is suggested that for the 2004-05 season dues be raised as follows:

Individual from \$10 to \$15

Family from \$20 to \$25

Supporting Individual from \$25 to \$30

Supporting family from \$35 to \$40

To honor recently deceased lifetime member Ken Fortney, it is proposed that the "Ken Fortney Lifetime Support" level be added. In the early days of the club when funds were scarce, Ken Fortney suggested lifetime memberships and wrote the first \$100 check. The money generated from this proposal was sufficient to purchase a used snow machine during the summer of 1993. The "Ken Fortney" level would be above and beyond an existing lifetime membership in any amount deemed appropriate by the contributor.

## February Ski Tours.

**Darel L. Seibert, D.C. [drdarel@yahoo.com](mailto:drdarel@yahoo.com)**

2/1 Cabinet Creek via Anderson Mtn. Road. Leave Chief Joe parking lot 10:00 A.M. Intermediate level, approximately 6 miles. Confirm this short notice trip with Darel @ 375-1999 or at above e-mail address. Bring 10 essentials, lunch. Car pool from Cabinet Creek parking lot back to CJ.

2/14 Hogan's Cabin via Scooter ridge. Leave Chief Joe parking lot at 10:00 A.M., continue Shoo-fly meadow to Highway 43 at Cabinet Creek parking lot. Shuttle back to CJ. Approximately 8 miles, intermediate level. Bring 10 essentials, lunch. Confirm with Darel @ 375-1999 or above e-mail address.

2/28 Richardson Creek via Anderson Mtn. Road. Leave Chief Joe parking lot at 10:00 A.M. Two options, (1) shuttle back to CJ from Richardson Creek parking lot, or (2) cross highway 43 and follow Joseph Creek back to CJ ski trails. Intermediate level, 4-6 miles approximately. Bring lunch, ten essentials, confirm with Darel @ 375-1999 or above e-mail address.



## BITTERROOT XC SKI CLUB

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