



SKI TRACKS

Newsletter of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

Box 431 • Corvallis, Montana 59828

February, 2005



EDITOR'S NOTE:

So far I have had no takers on providing a bulletin at the end of April. If nobody volunteers, I will have to select someone by the NKVD persuasion technique. That's not a pretty thing to see.

Dan Driscoll

BITTERROOT CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLUB NEWSLETTER MINUTES

JANUARY 13, 2005

President, Sonny LaSalle, called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. There were approximately 60 people in attendance. The program Crossing Divides was cancelled due to bad roads and the speakers could not travel from Bozeman.

Treasurer's Report by Jean Lippert:

Income, \$\$2612.00; Expenses, \$1483.33; Net Income, \$1128.67; Checking, \$1145.23; Savings, \$3494.30.

Extravaganza Tickets: Annie will be selling the tickets at one more meeting on February 10th. If you are not able to attend that meeting and would like to buy some raffle tickets please stop by Valley Bikes in Hamilton. The Extravaganza is March 4th at the Hut.

Race Day on December 18, 2004: There were several opinions on how good the racecourse was on the 18th. The non-racers thought it was too fast and the racers thought it was outstanding. Good job again, Tony and Annie. There was a deposit made to the club for \$280.00 after all expenses was paid. Thanks so much.

Fund Raising for Truck:

Mary Ellen Reese reported that there were donations made by the Ryan's for \$1,000 and Farmer's State Bank for \$1,000. Thank you to everyone that is helping us with this fund- raiser. Mary Ellen also placed a challenge for 100 members to donate \$20.00 each to kick off this campaign. Make your checks out to Bitterroot RC&D and mail to the clubs address.

Bill McCrum and Bill Stout also have been out

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FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Thursday, February 10, 2005

**First Presbyterian Church
1220 West Main Street in Hamilton**

7:00 p.m.

The program will feature a presentation by **Don and Jane Schmidt** about being in the Peace Corps in Madagascar, East Africa.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We were all disappointed at the January meeting that the couple presenting the program could not make it to Hamilton due to road conditions on I-90. They have promised to reschedule for a later date.

We did have a long but good business meeting which included a meeting with Forest Service Folks. See minutes.

We had a lively discussion around the December decision regarding the pick-up and agreements with the Forest Service. There are varied opinions within the club.

Earl Philips has volunteered to be a central point for finding people to fill cancelled host dates at the Hut. If you have the flexibility to replace hosts that have cancelled, and you want more nights at the Hut contact Earl at 961-0101 or e-mail [P](mailto:p). Thanks The Forest Service at Wisdom have agreed to call Earl when they have a cancellation and he will use his list to find a replacement. to Earl for taking this on.

Don't forget our fund drive for the pickup. Mary Ellen Reese announced that we have a \$1,000 donation from the Ryans and \$1,000 donation from Farmers State Bank. She also kicked off a challenge for 100 club members to donate \$20.00 each.

The February meeting will be the 10th at the same time and place.

Don't forget your non-perishable food items to be taken to Haven House.

Sonny

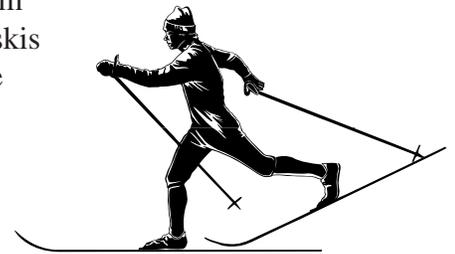
SLIPPING

In the last two tips we covered the kick and the stride. Now we'll cover something that can happen to you between the two, the dreaded slip! For some people it's an occasional thing that you just deal with, re-group, and keep going. For others, it's a constant problem every time they try to go uphill. Slipping can be caused by a number of factors, but is mainly caused by a lack of full weight transfer (standing on both feet at the same time) or by trying to push back on the ski rather than straight down. A couple more possible causes are late kick, which is trying to push off the ski after it has passed behind your hips, or by bending too much at the waist, which puts your weight too far forward causing the ski to slip back rather violently!

A common thing that I have seen stems from learning on a pair of skis that are very grip biased - like most karhus, cheap rossignols, traks, etc. These skis climb very easily no matter what your technique is, and tend to teach very bad habits (see list above) that are hard to break. If you do buy a different, better gliding ski, that is designed to be skied with proper technique, you may find that it is difficult to get up anything!

Don't despair, the ski manufacturers are not sadists, they really wouldn't put a product out there without a lot of testing first. You may just be discovering that you have to bump up your technique to the next level. Also, remember that just the middle of the ski grips. If you are in rolling terrain, there are times that the middle of the ski is not in contact with the snow, and it will slip if you try to push on it then.

So, watch the terrain as you slide over it, and keep in mind that snow type, temperature, and what type and quality of grip pattern you have will also determine whether you will slip or not. If you keep slipping, stop, re-group and herringbone up the hill. It's better than fighting it, cussing it, or worse - risking pulling a groin muscle! If you feel that you've done everything right and are still slipping, have someone perform a paper test on your skis to make sure they are not too stiff for your body weight. Happy trails and keep working on it!



Membership Renewals / DUES

Annual Memberships EXPIRE November 1!

Renew your membership now!

INDIVIDUAL - \$15 • FAMILY - \$25

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL - \$30

SUPPORTING FAMILY - \$40

LIFE MEMBER - \$500

Membership Dues

Nov. 1, 2004 - Oct. 31, 2005

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 _____

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Warming Hut Reservations (USFS Wisdom)		689-3371

calling on businesses in Missoula. They called on the Trailhead, REI, Open Road and Pipe Stone. They received positive feedback from these businesses.

Sonny and Gordon have called upon several car dealers either personally or with a letter.

New Business:

There was a vote to take \$5,000 from our Treasury to use as seed money for the purchase of the truck. The money would come from the sale of the old snowmobile and the reimbursement of the grant money for the new snowmobile. The motion was made and seconded and then voted on and passed to do this.

On Saturday January 18th, Gordon did a parking lot survey at Chief Joe. He recorded 135 people skiing and out of that number 22 were ski club members, and 33% signed in.

A proposal was made to pay the Groomers \$100.00 a day and the cost of fuel. A motion was made by Art Seifert and seconded by George Corn. It was voted on and passed.

There was a question about insurance coverage for the pickup that we will purchase and the conclusion was that more communication was needed with insurance agents.

There was a report of a dog in the hut overnight, the Forest Service has written a warning letter to this party stating the rules of no dogs on trails or in hut in the winter.

Gordon Reese reported that Kathy Hammer from the County Extension Office has proposed a program for the 4H kids to X-Country ski. They are hoping to have approximately 20 students between 12 and 17 years in age. They are using a grant to fund this activity.

Julie Schreck, USFS and Jason Allred, Darby School teacher, are working toward the Healthy Forest- Healthy Kids program to have skis for kids to use. If you have any old x-country skis, (no-wax), boots or poles please drop them off at Valley Bikes.

There were four Forest Service employees at the meeting; Dennis Havig and Patti Johnston from Wisdom and Dave Bull and Tracy Hollingshead from the Bitterroot.

Dave Bull, Bitterroot Forest Supervisor, explained the rationale for his decision not to allow us the use of a Forest Service pickup. He believes the liability to the

Forest Service is too great to continue the use. He also stressed his commitment to volunteering and cross-country skiing.

Dennis Havig explained the differences between challenge cost share agreements and volunteer services agreements. There were quite a few questions from the club members.

The final activity of the meeting was an exercise with both club members and Forest Service. We established some common goals and listed some actions to improve our relationship. The results are shown below:

Common Ground Objectives:

1. Provide a quality recreational experience for the public at Chief Joe.
 - A. safe, well groomed trails
 - B. clean quality facilities
2. We have a positive respectful relationship between the Forest Service and the Club

Clubs points:

Open positive communication, Don't close doors for future opportunities, Focus on "Project" ie non-motorized prescription in Forest Plan, Focus on the future and quit living in the past, Have a healing experience, Club members promote partnership, Stay with goal of providing no cost recreation, Focus on working as a team with the FS partnership, and recognize that we are not the only priority the FS has.

Forest Service points:

Dennis-Forget the past and focus on the future, More frequent joint meetings, Don't perpetuate rumors without checking facts, Bitterroot National Forest look for opportunities to be more involved, and all 3 forests work on Conservation Education Program.



~ My Perceptions ~

January 05, 2005

Gordon Reese

If you have read the last two newsletters and the two special letters from our President Sonny, you probably have a reasonable understanding of the big change facing our Club this season and the resulting new challenge. These last 2½ months have been a bumpy road for the grooming crew as we prepared for, and began another season. I am using this opportunity to share my thoughts and perceptions with the Club membership.

First, a brief recap of the “change.” Since the 93-94 season, we the groomers, have been allowed to drive a green (USFS) pickup from Hamilton to the Pass pulling our snow machine trailer from the Sula Ranger Station, at no cost to the Club. We were classified as volunteers for the Forest Service doing ski trail grooming, cleaning the toilet, shoveling snow and checking the trails for problems. As you know, the Forest Service is the land and resource managing agency on these public lands that are managed for multiple use, including nordic groomed trail skiing and snowshoeing. During this period of time, the three Forest Supervisors who preceded Dave Bull allowed, facilitated and respected the Club’s contribution.

Dave Bull’s decision to take away our use of the green truck was arbitrary and certainly borders on capricious. No rules or regulations had changed and we have never had an accident (knock on wood). The grooming crew, which has for the past 11 years consisted of three retired volunteers (yes, old guys) who collectively put in 650-700 hours each season (yes, we have substitutes and yes, we have a waiting list) believe in what we do. Dave Bull’s explanation of his decisions to those who were present at the January meeting, can be stated in very basic terms: He did not value, respect or appreciate the Club’s contribution **enough** to afford us the use of a Government vehicle one day each week for 20 or so weeks each season. This was a vehicle that would generally spend the winter parked in a snow bank. It is always nice to find out who are our friends and who value our efforts!!!

Second, the “challenge.” At our Club meeting in December, after a discussion that centered on the Club’s efforts to reduce our financial involvement with the Forest Service by purchasing our own vehicle, a motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to explore this possibility. A committee was named and we met and agreed to recommend to the Club to set aside \$5,000 of our funds and begin a special effort that will eventually lead to the purchase of a used 4x4 ¾-ton pickup.

I am very optimistic —to date over \$2,000 has come in. At the January meeting Mary Ellen kicked off a membership challenge, “**Wheels for the Groomers or a Truck for the Trailer.**” One hundred members (or more) contribute \$20 each (or more). On behalf of the grooming crew, I want to thank everyone for having the confidence and trust in us to make this work. The Club has always supported our efforts to improve and maintain our equipment. A used pickup in good condition will be a 10-year or more solution to a critical need. It will also make it possible for future groomers to be involved who do not have this type of vehicle.

During the past 14½ seasons, the Club has funded the cost of grooming trails at Chief Joseph Pass. Other than the use of a green truck, the Forest Service did not financially help us. The Club’s seasonal expenses; maintenance and repair of our machines and equipment; gas and oil for the weekly grooming; breakfast for the groomers for the past three seasons; and putting funds aside for new equipment, came from membership dues, our commercial sponsors and donations. Part of the dollars for new equipment came from three separate grants the Club submitted to Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

An important side note on our newest machine —a Skandic Super wide track manufactured by Bombardier in Canada. At a meeting with some Forest Service folks last winter, Patty Bates, who was the District Ranger on the North Fork District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest, volunteered her recreation person, Norma Stauff, to write a grant application to Idaho for some Recreational Trail dollars. This grant would pay about half the cost (about \$7,800) for a new machine —the Club would pay the other half. This was accomplished and the grant was funded and, in addition, the Salmon-Challis put \$500 of their funds into the project. This has turned out to be a very, very good machine —which Mel drives and Ed and I just get to look at!

Now that the Bitterroot National Forest is not furnishing a vehicle, they do not have any part in the Chief Joe Cross Country Trail’s Project.

Part of my motivation for writing this article is to share with you what the Wisdom District (Beaverhead-

Deerlodge National Forest) has done and is doing for the Chief Joe trails and, ultimately for the people who ski on them. Their accomplishments and contributions are things that the Club could never have done on our own. Also, reflecting back over 15 plus years is a very big stretch for this old mind!

In 1990 we needed their concurrence that groomed trails were appropriate at Chief Joe, they would not harm the resources and would be compatible with historic use in this area.

When the trails started drawing numbers of people (the second season I have a photo showing 34 vehicles parked on Highway 43) they used Beaverhead carry-over funds to build the parking lot and put in a toilet. Before the days of the toilet, trails would develop that generally led to very bushy spruce or alpine fir trees!

As use continued to increase, they financed most of our trail sign needs and allowed us to add: Gold Medal; Vista View; the north end of Lost Trail; Sentinel; Solitude; Banshee; Joseph Creek; Middle Fork; Whoopee and Technique and Tele trails. When we did the clearing on some of these trails, they reimbursed us for our chainsaw use and mileage. They furnished the materials and the Club provided the workers to build a storage shed for our equipment.

When a very uncooperative and belligerent individual thought our groomed trails would be enhanced by his dog's paw prints and poop, they led the way to get a "Closure Order" in place that makes dogs on our trails a no-no with teeth.

After much discussion, they allowed the Club to build the Hut and helped us by providing one of their people to assist and they put some of their dollars into the project. Two times in the past four summers, they have wrapped and framed the Hut to give it protection when fires have threatened. Each season the Wisdom District pays for the pumping of the two vault toilets and the grey-water vault. Filling the propane tank is an additional responsibility they have accepted.

They allowed us to cut the re-growth on some selected routes on Picnic Meadow to insure that this area would not be completely overgrown and all skiing in that area would be lost.

They closed off what is now our Broadway Trail to insure that early season skiers would not have to compete with motorized traffic when there is early snow and to give the Hut security.

Last summer the Club and the Wisdom District combined dollars and labor to install the new kiosk at the trail head. This was a much needed change and from the comments I have received, skiers appreciate being able to ski up to the panels and read the maps or the other information.

This past October they cut about 850 trees alongside our upper trails that had been identified as potential hazards to a skier's health (or to a groomer). This next summer they plan to salvage these trees as they do have value. Most of these trees were lodgepole with some amount of dwarf mistletoe infestation which created the bushy broom-type branches that collect snow balls —sometimes of very large proportions.

As the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest Plan moves forward, the Wisdom District has indicated they are proposing motorized travel restrictions for the area surrounding our Chief Joe trails as well as the Anderson Mountain area. I urge everyone to take a personal interest, stay informed and give your support to this effort.

And finally, after a lengthy meeting with Sonny, Bill McCrum and myself on the 12th of January (the day before our January Club meeting) and after talking with his Forest Supervisor, Tom Reilly, Dennis Havig allowed the Club to continue the partnership related to the Chief Joe winter —trail grooming using a volunteer agreement. I want to thank Dennis personally and on behalf of all skiers who use this area, for his confidence in us, his respect for our efforts and his appreciation for what this partnership provides the public. Again, speaking for the groomers, his support is valued and will be remembered and appreciated for years to come.

How do I know it will be appreciated? —well, the groomers know smiles when we see them. The waves, greetings, smiles, cookies and hugs (sorry, guys, groomers **always** get the best hugs) tell us that something special has been created and folks show their gratitude.

About ten days ago a lady, who Mary Ellen and I do not know very well, called and inquired about the condition of the trails. She indicated she would soon be going up to ski and as she had not been there for seven or eight years, she was anxious to see the area and the Hut. She is a realtor and she said she had people here from Boston and they were skiing the trails at Chief Joe. She went on to ask if she could again be one of our commercial sponsors next season and have a spot on the back of our map. I thanked her and told her I would have Mary Ellen get back to her and then I asked why she was choosing to support this project. She quickly described in very complimentary language what she believes these trails provide for the people who live in this part of Montana and Idaho. She said she was aware that people from other parts of the country were coming to our Valley specifically to ski at Chief Joe. She finished by sharing her opinion that what has been created at the upper end of the Valley is truly amazing.

Thanks to everyone who has had a part and thanks for listening.

Gordon