

SKI TRACKS

Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

December 2016 — Volume 14 — Number 12

Thoughts from our Outgoing President

**December Meeting - Annual Potluck and
Election of Officers**

Trail & Ski Condition Report

Renew your Membership

Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

presents

Alaska's Inside Passage



Pam is a retired teacher who loves having time to explore new places and try new things.



Pam Okland will share her experience exploring Alaska's Inside Passage on a small ship with a photo presentation. Hiking, kayaking, paddle boarding, snorkeling, bushwhacking, shore walks, whale watching, wildlife viewing and breathtaking scenery were all parts of the package on this adventure cruise. Uncruise Adventures are unrushed, uncrowded, and unbelievable!

**Everyone Welcome - Potluck Dinner - 6:00PM
Meeting - 7:00PM - Thursday - December 8
Presbyterian Church - 1220 West Main**

Linda and I joined the Ski Club, about 10 years ago, while being taught to cross-country ski by Bill McCrum and Bill and Linda Stoudt. We continued to improve our technique and enjoyed the camaraderie of skiing two or three times a week with our friends. Along the way, we met other folks like you who enjoyed outdoor wintertime activity on the Chief Joseph Ski Trail System.

Then, a little more than seven years ago, someone on the Club's Board of Directors noticed that I was one of those who, when confronted with a job that needed to be done, would tackle it with everything I had at my disposal. Slowly, I was "enticed" to get more involved in the Club's operations and, before long, was asked to run for Club President. I agreed because I saw a job that needed to be done and believed I had some of the necessary skills. Besides, I would be giving back to the Club, especially to the people who taught us to cross-country ski—Linda and the Bills.

During my first year, the Board recognized that some things needed more attention than others, specifically:

- The task of trail grooming was taking a toll on our volunteer groomers;
- Some of our snowmobiles were old and next to useless;
- Most of the grooming equipment was in very rough shape and needed replacing;
- Club membership was slowly declining;
- The Club continued to run on a shoestring budget, a situation which made it difficult to weather any fiscal emergency; and
- The average age of Club members was continuing to increase, an indication that younger people were not being encouraged to join.



The Board decided to tackle these problems head on:

- Jim Greenfield implemented his concept for a larger-format, full-color map. His idea helps promote the Club and now brings \$5,000+ to the bank account each ski season;
- A brochure was developed to introduce the Club to the local communities;
- We began writing annual requests for grants to help cover grooming and other costs;
- We replaced the worst snowmobiles with new more reliable models;
- Mel Holloway handled the job of head groomer through the sometimes-challenging transition to different methods of trail grooming;
- Over a few year period, we replaced all the snowmobile grooming equipment with more modern implements designed by Doug Edgerton, a world-renowned grooming expert;
- The trail system was expanded to accommodate skate skiers (many of them younger people) and dogs; and then, more recently
- The club began engaging the services of Lost Trail Powder Mountain's PistenBully to groom all of the ski trails—snowmobile grooming is still required and advisable at times.

The Chief Joseph Ski Trails are rapidly becoming more popular. During last winter's ski season, the user days passed 11,000; more than double the level of six years ago. That speedy increase in the number of people using the ski trails is the result of many things the Club has worked on for the last six years.

Only one thing is visible to most visitors who use the trails, the consistency of the ski surface. All the work done behind the scenes to produce the consistent skiing experience remains invisible to most people, even some Club members. Maybe that's the way it should be. However, those multiple behind-the-scenes tasks are the base of the pyramid that supports a consistent skiing experience: off-season trail clearing, money raising, map production, publicity, newsletter, website, Facebook, finances, records, equipment maintenance, grooming, etc.

I am, and will forever be, grateful to those who helped with those many tasks during my tenure. Some volunteered for a while, a year, two, or even longer. Some are still at it, having been recently joined by new volunteers. Seldom is something worthwhile accomplished by an individual. It was the Club's Board of Directors which provided the driving force as we attempted to implement the changes that allowed our Club to remain viable. The current Board members—George (past President), Mel (Grooming), Nan (Newsletter and Publicity), Richard (Youth Skiing), Reine (Treasurer), Earl (Membership), Diane (Meeting Presentations), Kelly (Vice President), Marrea (Secretary), Jesse (Webmaster)—have my heartfelt thanks and lasting respect.

Although I will continue to volunteer my help as needed, it is now time for me to move on. No organization can survive if it does not change—impossible if the same people set its direction for too long a period. Along with most of the Club's members, I want the Chief Joseph Ski Trail System to continue as Montana's best cross-country ski area. Keeping it "free to the public" far into the future will be a big challenge. To accomplish that, the Club will continue to require volunteers who are willing to perform the required behind-the-scenes tasks.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve the Club and through it, the public. Best wishes to the next Club President and may skiing into the future proceed smoothly with a minimum number of falls.

Michael Hoyt, Outgoing President

December Membership Meeting:

- ❖ Great Program
- ❖ Election of Officers – President & Treasurer
- ❖ Annual Potluck – Bring Along ...
 - A dish to share,
 - Your own plate & utensils, and
 - A drink if you want something other than water or juice.

Thursday Dec 8th at 6:00 pm

Presbyterian Church, 1220 W Main, Hamilton

Trails & Grooming

We are still waiting for snow – As of Thanksgiving there were only 3-5" of snow ... some promising snow storms went to the north and missed Chief Joe while snow that has fallen at the Pass doesn't contain enough moisture to pack for a good base. More is predicted for this weekend, so keep your fingers crossed. When we get 15-18" of snow we will get the rollers out on the trails and get the base started.



Bookmark this
[Live Webcam of Lost Trail Pass](#)

Maintained by ID Dept of Transportation, the website shows current conditions at the Pass.

This picture shows conditions as of noon on Dec 2nd.

The good news? Summer maintenance work on the trails at Chief Joseph Ski Area has been completed, and our groomers are ready to go!

Tony Neaves, Trails & Grooming Coordinator

Memberships

Annual memberships expire on November 1st of each year. We hope you will renew your club membership at this time.

Your membership dollars support ski trail maintenance & grooming at Chief Joseph as well as the monthly newsletter and our website at <http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net> where members – and visitors – can access the latest information on the conditions of the xc ski trails along with a variety of other cross country ski information.

You can renew your membership by hard copy mail or online:

Hardcopy Renewals – just complete the form attached to the back of the newsletter, and mail it and your check to:
Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club
PO Box 431
Corvallis, MT 59828-0431

Online Renewals – simple as clicking this link:
<http://bitterrootxcskiclub.net/membership/>

You can pay with Paypal, or a credit card.

Thanks and have a great ski season.
Earl Philips, Membership Coordinator

Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club
Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, November 10, 2016

In attendance: Michael Hoyt, Kelly Zeiler, Reine Hilton, Marrea Mathews, Mel Holloway, Jim Greenfield, Richard Stone, Earl Phillips, Diane Lee, Nan Christianson

Call to order: 6:15pm

Mike reported the RTP Grant was approved for \$45,000 and has been deposited. This will definitely cover the costs of grooming.

Unfortunately, no one has expressed interest in serving as the club president. Mike has discussed options with George other than the club dissolving. George looked into the laws and found the club can run with board acting as a committee through spring of 2017. This will not cause us to lose the nonprofit status. The next option would be the grooming would be run as a concession. Users to pay for use. The concessionaire would evaluate the expenses, to determine the fees, but hopefully they would be around \$80 or less for a season pass, \$5 for a day pass. This is agreeable with both the Beaverhead and Bitterroot forest services. The forest service must offer the concession to the public. Scott Grasser of Lost Trail Ski Resort is interested in operating it, but he would prefer it to remain as it is. Scott would like the club members to provide support in exchange for free skiing. Money is not a problem, the problem is finding someone willing to take on the task of leading the club.

Mike added that with others taking on some of the responsibilities that he has handled in the past will now make the position of president less time consuming. Having the RTP Grant online now simplifies the application process. Mike will compile a list of duties for the president.

Mike explained the FS couldn't find a supplier to get the toilet. The rubber floor is stored to be installed next summer. The water barrels have been removed.

Several members of the board expressed strong feelings about keeping the access fee free and that school students should be offered a below cost.

Reine suggested this be presented to the membership. Mike said that was his plan.

Reine suggested a mingle period before the meeting to foster interaction among the membership. George suggested the membership introduce themselves.

Mel provided an auction item- a locking cable.

Jim and Diane handled the publicity for tonight's meeting. The board would like a member to take on the job of handling publicity in the future.

The facebook page received lots of hits for trail conditions last year. Mike will give Nan, Diane and Jim administrative access.

Grooming- The club needs someone to run the operation of equipment maintenance. Mel will continue as support, but does not want to take the entire responsibility. Tony will organize the pre-grooming that takes place with the snowmobiles.

Maps- Jim reported most sponsors have paid. He brought the 2017 Maps.

Treasurer Report- Reine reported the balance of checking and savings combined is \$39,379. \$400 has been received from membership and \$6000 from sponsors. The balance included the RTP Grant of \$45,000.

Membership- Earl reported we have 80 membership, 111 people.

The meeting closed at 6:50

Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club

General Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday November 10, 2016

Number attending: about 40.

Mike welcomed the members then turned it over to Diane Lee who introduce Angela Saporita. Angela led an interactive presentation on flexibility, balance and strengthening exercises for the upcoming ski season. She stressed the importance of pre-season training. Angela is a board-certified Orthopedic Clinical Specialist. She works at Catalyst Physical Therapy and is owner of Strong Mountain Yoga in Hamilton.

Membership: Earl Phillips reported he sent out an email to the entire membership. As of tonight, we had 80 memberships and 111 members. If you change your email address, please remember to relate the new address to Earl.

Treasurer Report: Reine Hilton reported as of yesterday, we collected \$400 in membership, and \$6000 from maps, expenses are \$1200 for insurance and grooming expenses. That leave a total of \$39,000 in both checking and savings. Mike explained the board agreed it was important to reimbursed Bill Sweet for the damage to his truck while working on the trails. Bill has done more on trail clearing on his own than any other member. And, he's done this for years.

Web Site: Jesse Crocker has redesigned web site, he is working on migrating old content, some analytics will be added. He will get posts to either the website or Facebook to be posted to both.

Maps: Jim reviewed the changes to the map. The support ads have been upgraded. He related these businesses support the club for some it is at a great cost to the business. The membership is encouraged to visit these businesses and show our appreciation for their support. Through this exchange the club is better connected with the community. The map distributors (7) do an excellent job of getting the maps out to businesses and other pickup sites.

Trails and Grooming: Tony Neaves, head groomer, said the goal this winter is to produce a predictable product. He hopes to have consistent ski conditions. They have worked hard to prepare the trails to reduce damage to the grooming equipment. The logging project is over, but a lot of junk has been left on Broadway. He asked for volunteers to clean remaining debris off the trail.

Mike Hoyt reported the RTP Grant was awarded this summer. It will reimburse the club for all grooming expenses.

Mike introduced Scott Grasser, Lost Trail Resort, who will oversee the grooming using his Pisten Bully. Last year, the use of the Pisten Bully allowed the Chief Joseph area to remain open longer than all other ski areas.

Last year the sign in sheets recorded 11,000 user days. This year we're adding a new sign-in box at the corner of Hwys 43 and 93 in hopes of collecting even more information about trail use.

Please thank these people for recently stepping up to share in club tasks- Jesse Crocker- webmaster, Nan Christianson- Newsletter, Karla Schiever and Patrice Loucks- Sign in sheets coordinators, Diane Lee- Program Coordinator, Edna Blanchfied- Refreshments Coordinator! Awesome Job!

Your club still needs someone to handle Communications/Publicity and President! In December, Mike will have been president of the club for six years. Now it is time for someone else to take over. With the influx of volunteers the job of the president is far more manageable. However, should no-one volunteer, the board may run the club for this ski season and next winter, the club will dissolve. This will end a 27 year service to the cross-country skiing community. The trails may become a concession. Mike has spoken with the Bitterroot and Beaverhead Forest Services and found them agreeable.

Mike will summarize the duties of the president for publication in the next newsletter and possibly the newspapers. Mike will continue to apply for grant.

Kay Fulton asked about the status of the club's trail grooming equipment. It is estimated that the equipment is valued around \$70,000. The snowmobiles are in good condition.

Mel Holloway was recognized for his years of service to the club with grooming.

Next month is a potluck. Mike will be honored for his service to the club. It starts at 6:00pm.

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm.

These minutes were prepared by: Marrea Matthews

Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club Officers & Key Volunteers

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 Marrea Mathews live2ridetoo@gmail.com 406-381-8377
Trails & Grooming Tony Neaves tneavesbikewizard@gmail.com 406-375-0852	Map Production Jim Greenfield jkgreenfield@g.com 406-363-2110	Webmaster Jesse Crocker jesse@datamongers.net	Membership Data Earl Philips philips@montana.com 406-961-0101
Meeting Presentation Coordinator Diane Lee fit4fun@montana.com 406-546-3848 Mtg Refreshments Coordinator Edna Blanchfield ednablanchfield@gmail.com 406-225-5541	Youth Coordinator Richard Stone rcstone1@msn.com 406-642-9648	Communications: Publicity & Newsletter Nan Christianson nkcmontana@gmail.com 406-369-0793	Trailhead Sign-in Sheets Coordinators Karla Schiever kjschiever@g.com 406-961-3956 and Patrice Loucks Patrice.loucks@gmail.com 406-363-1919

Membership Renewals & Dues

Annual Memberships Expire on November 1st of each year - Please renew your membership

Hardcopy Renewals – just complete the form below and mail it and your check to:
 Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club
 PO Box 431
 Corvallis, MT 59828-0431

Online Renewals – simple as clicking this link:

<http://bitterrootxcskiclub.net/membership/>

You can pay with Paypal, or a credit card.

Names (families, please include children's names)	
Mailing Address	
Email Address (for monthly newsletter) & Phone Number	

Check Type of Membership ___ Family - \$25 ___ Supporting Family - \$40 ___ Individual - \$15 ___ Supporting Individual - \$30	Amount Enclosed