

# SKI TRACKS

## Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

January 2018 — Volume 16 — Number 1

### January Program Features: Bitterroot Land Trust

**New Maps Available**

**Local XC Ski Options in addition to Chief Joe**

**New Volunteers Needed:**

**Grant Writer, Program Coordinator,  
School Ski Days, and Membership Coordinator**

photo by Annie!



## President's Message, Jan 2018.

Greetings and Happy New Year!

I hope many of you celebrated the holidays with a trip up to Chief Joe, or found your own secret stash of snow somewhere in the Valley. We're a solid month into this winter's xc ski season now and there are many options. There's always Chief Joe, but with great snow conditions we've got, you'll find groomed trails up Skalkaho and Lake Como. If conditions permit, we'll also groom trails at the Fairgrounds in Hamilton.

Clearly the snow is piling up at the pass. To say we have a good base would be seriously underselling it. In fact we got so much snow the week before New Year's the groomers could hardly keep up. Even with the piston bully, it was tough to keep the trails in shape. I heard reports of up to 7 feet of snow at the pass that week. Thanks for understanding that when the snow falls like that, keeping up is a challenge. Now that storm system is gone, we can catch up and should be able to keep the trails in fine shape from here on out.

The importance of the efforts of key Club Members/Volunteers in making all of this possible can't be overstated. And, with the new year, some of our long-standing volunteers are planning to step down. The good news is that you don't have to be willing to get up at 4:00 a.m. and drive to the Pass to groom trails, to help us out! We need a variety of skills and interests, but Need You We Do! The Club is only as effective as our Volunteers. Please consider helping!

Our new maps have arrived, and we're beginning to distribute them. Pick one up, and thank our sponsors when you visit their establishments. Their contributions are a crucial part of our club's funding.

The club was recently featured in "[American Trails](#)" winter magazine – focusing in the volunteer efforts of the club, and a nice bit of history and current information. Check it out. We also made an appearance in the most recent "[Visit the Bitterroot Valley](#)" promo video.

Please direct any and all questions or concerns about the club or the pass to me. And, contact me if you are able & willing to volunteer for one of our key vacancies. Minutes from our [December Meeting](#) are posted, if you're curious about the internal workings of our Club.

Renew your membership here: <http://bitterrootxcskiclub.net/membership/> and remember to sign in - skier days correlate directly with grant funding for grooming.

We are looking forward to another fantastic year at the Trails at Chief Joe. I hope to see you up there!

Norman Singley  
President  
[normsingley@gmail.com](mailto:normsingley@gmail.com)  
406 370 3739

### New Volunteers Needed:

- **Grant Writer.** Michael Hoyt will help the new person/people learn to use the computerized on-line system required to make application for the annual RTP grants that the Club relies on to operate. Need to fill this ASAP as next round of grants is due Feb 1<sup>st</sup> so opportunity to train with Mike is January 2018.
- **Membership Coordinator.** Earl Philips has a well-organized system in place and is willing to show someone else the ropes.
- **Program Coordinator.** The Club needs someone to coordinate monthly programs for our members' meetings.



## January Program:

" The Bitterroot Land Trust presents our program this month with a showing of

*On the Shoulders of Giants: The Story of Montana Private Land Conservation.*

Click <https://vimeo.com/200292041> to see a trailer, and to become intrigued. If you love Montana and appreciate its wide, open spaces and beauty, you won't want to miss this phenomenal film. The film is a stunning and inspiring ... 21-minute story about the value of conservation easements to Montana's landscape, economy, and way of life. Several significant scenes are in the Bitterroot. The film will be followed by a short presentation by the Bitterroot Land Trust.

## Abundance of Snow – Expansion of XC Ski trails in the Valley:

Skalkaho Pass - This is a great place to ski! Check out the description on [missoulanordic.org](http://missoulanordic.org) under the "trails" section. Usually, Tony grooms it every Thursday but its weather dependent. Weekdays are usually less busy as far as snowmobiles, but be aware and please keep dogs under control when they need to pass you. Grooming is performed by the non-profit Bitterroot Ridgerunners Snowmobile Club. If you like their grooming program, it is always a good idea to join! \$10 - single, \$15 - family, \$25 - business. P.O. Box 265, Hamilton, MT 59840

Skalkaho/Rye - Another great place to try. Access is not as easy, depending on condition of the road that goes back into the drainage 4 miles. At this point there is a big berm built up to keep wheeled vehicles out. From here the ski touring is absolutely beautiful and climbs to mile marker 10 (measuring from Skalkaho Hwy.), where the terrain mellows and you can go as far as you like. When there is a lot of snow we often drive in 2 miles and park @ Railroad Ck. where there is a wide enough spot to get turned around and ski the last 2 miles before the berm. Just be aware there could be vehicles on this stretch as people often try to drive to the sledding hill which is about 3 miles up the drainage from the Hwy.

Lake Como area - A nice option for scenic touring along forest road 550A (used to be referred to as the lower rd.). You can park @ the boat launch lot and hike 5-10 minutes up through the woods on the short-cut trail to the 550/550A intersection. From here if there is enough snow, you can start skiing up along the side of the road towards Shannon Lake. Once you are past the Forest Service gate, there should be no more wheeled vehicles and you should have the place to yourself!

## Trail Condition Updates:

No need to wait for the once-a-month newsletter for trail updates. As you've surely discovered by now, there are various sites where conditions and grooming status are updated at a far more helpful frequency:

Check Out:

Our Facebook Page: Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

Our Very Own Website: <http://bitterrootxcskiclub.net/category/trailreport/>

Missoula Nordic Ski Club webpage: <https://www.missoulanordic.org/trail-reports/>



## **Membership Chair Needs Help!!! – Past Time to Renew, and your Membership Does Make A Difference!**

The Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club currently has 85 registrations from last year (2016-2017) that have not been renewed this year (2017-2018). You can help the membership chair by renewing your membership at this time and eliminating the need for him to send you a registration status letter.

An individual membership is \$15 and a family membership is \$25. Your membership dollars provide support for maintaining the skiing trails at Chief Joe, the monthly newsletter, and our facebook & website ([www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net](http://www.bitterrootxcskiclub.net)), which provides the latest information on the condition of the xc ski trails. Our membership numbers also give us more credibility when we apply for grants.

Membership renewal information can be found at <http://bitterrootxcskiclub.net/membership/>

If you have questions about your membership status contact:  
Earl Philips

Membership Chair

E-mail: [skihut@montana.com](mailto:skihut@montana.com)

Cell: [\(406\) 369-0073](tel:4063690073)

## **Youth Ski Days**

We have three dates confirmed to host and help area school kids become the next generation of cross-January 10 Corvallis

January 24 Victor

January 30 Darby

Richard needs volunteers to assist with the school groups, and is always looking for extra ski gear for the program.

## **Recognition of Chief Joe Cross-Country Ski Trails:**

In recent weeks, the trails at Chief Joe have been featured in two separate publications –

- article in Western Trails mag <https://content.yudu.com/web/2y3n7/American-Trails/ATWinter2017/html/index.html?page=8&origin=reader>

- Inclusion in Visit Bitterroot Winter Video <http://www.visitbitterrootvalley.com/>



