



SKI TRACKS

Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

April 2018 — Volume 16 — Number 4

President's Message

Program Features Skip Horner's:

Exploration of Mountains of the World

Heads up on:

Montana Wilderness Association's

Discover Wild Montana programs

Douglas Lorain's booksigning Chapter One on April 19th

100 Classic Hikes: Montana

photo from Skip Horner

President's Message, April 2018

Greetings to all of you faithful Bitterroot XC Ski Club Members!

The ski season is winding down, but there is still a ton of snow at the pass, so if you haven't transitioned to your mud-season routines, there's plenty of skiing to be had. We are removing some of the club equipment and bringing it down to the valley for off-season storage and maintenance. Our grooming operations have ended for the season, but that's no reason not to take advantage of spring skiing!

Chief Joseph Pass experienced another epic year of snow, and we are lucky that so many of you have joined as members of the club. We have 243 memberships, which represents 364 people. This is a small increase from last year, and shows the willingness of all of you to contribute to support outdoor recreation at the pass. We had 3638 total documented users sign in at the trailheads, which is up 732 from last year. We know that there are many, many users who use the area and do not sign in, so we feel confident that the total skier days continue to be impressive – likely in the 10,000 – 12,000 range.



This is all great news as this info helps us secure grants for ongoing maintenance and grooming. Comments received on the sign in sheet, and on our other communication channels were overwhelmingly positive. Folks were thankful for the efforts of all of the groomers, and all the various little things that volunteers take on to make the area what it is. We had some challenging times with the grooming occasionally – we got so much snow over the extremely popular holiday week that even the piston bully could not keep up. Later in the season, Lost Trail's Piston Bully had a mechanical issue that caused several weeks of down time. In the meantime, our volunteer groomer crew did an impressive job keeping things going. Our volunteers put in over 1300 hours of grooming, and that does not count travel to and from the pass! One thing we will work on for next year is to brainstorm ways to communicate grooming reports in a timely fashion.

We are meeting with and working closely with the Forest Service in Wisdom to formalize our volunteer agreement with them. Our volunteers contribute hundreds of hours of volunteer service every season to maintain the trails for user safety and groomer operations. The FS is very concerned about potential liability issues with club members using chainsaws, despite the fact that our sawyers attend first aid and FS sponsored chainsaw certifications. We are working on this and a few more issues that have come up, but we're confident we can find a good resolution to any issues and maintain our partnership.

We have applied for another RTP (Recreational Trails Grant) to fund operations for next year. This grant has been a huge part of our operating budget the last few years. We believe it will continue to be an option in the future but ongoing funding is always a bit uncertain. If we find out those funds might go away sometime, we'll work hard to find alternative sources.

Thank you all again for your support of the club, and especially thank you to our loyal volunteers. We can always use more – especially those newer members who can bring extra energy and ideas to the club. Reach out anytime, and we'll put your talents to good use.

We will have a few volunteer days this summer – hope to see you there! Cheers on another great season!

Norman Singley
President Normsingley@gmail.com – 406 370 3739



April Program:

Skip
Horner's
"High
Resolution:
Guiding
Great
Mountains
Around the
World"



Of Potential Interest to Members

An evening with the Montana Wilderness Association.

→ Learn about MWA's 2018 Discover Wild Montana programs, including Wilderness Walks, volunteer trail projects, and citizen science opportunities.

→ Enjoy a presentation of classic hikes in Montana by Doug Lorain and readings from his book [The Best 100 Hikes in Montana](#)

→ Meet other outdoor enthusiasts and check out our summer line-up while supporting our wild, open spaces.

→ And test your luck –with a raffle! Enter to win a 2.8-pound Scout packraft courtesy of Alpaca Raft. Tickets will be for sale at the event. Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to sign up for some great door prizes from some of our sponsors.

April 19th 6 - 8 at Chapter One Bookstore.

