

Oregon Nordic Club

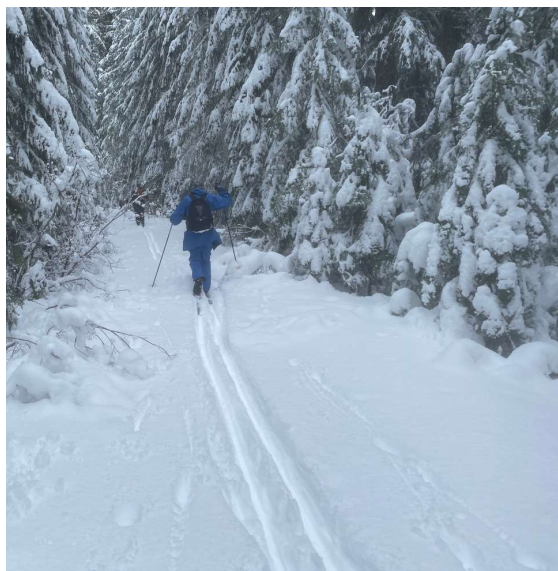
Willamette Chapter

oncwillamette.org

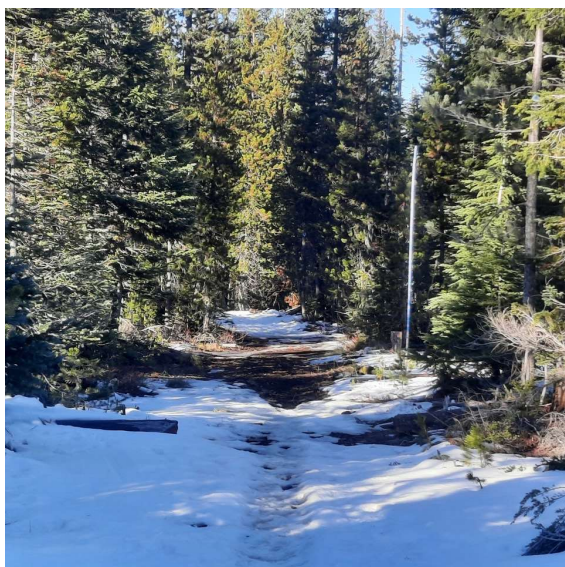
P.O. Box 181
Salem, OR 97308

Newsletter

January 2024



12/09/2023



12/20/2023

Thus far it has been a season of brief snow dumps followed by rapid melting. Those who headed for the slopes at the first sign of snow have skied; those who waited for a “good” day have been largely disappointed. The snowpack is negligible to nonexistent at Santiam Pass on

New Year's Day. What can the desperate skier do? Here are three possible means of addressing your ski deficit.

A. Travel Further. Other locations have been more fortunate with respect to snowfall. Mt. Bachelor's Nordic trails are open. If groomed snow attracts you, visit <https://www.mtbachelor.co/plan-your-trip/nordic/overview> to check out the corduroy.

B. Lower Your Standards. While good snow may be impossible to find at Santiam Pass, there is still snow (in patches). Even at Big Springs (3700') we found skiable snow on Dec. 27; though you had to carry skis across the occasional bare patch to reach it. The best bet for snow locally is the plateau west of Hoodoo's ski runs. Just hike up Blue Valley and head west on road #814. It won't be good skiing, but most of us think any skiing is better than none at all.

C. Wait. Winter is not over; more snow will fall. Wax the skis, stash them by the door, exercise patience and view a few ski videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHtByDsDM24> Alaska

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4G_UPxYurk Wyoming

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB_-nxLbTic Norway

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:

Please renew your membership for the 2023-2024 season. For only \$20 you receive access to all the inside club news, Ski School, Overnight Trips and the satisfaction of supporting our efforts to promote and improve cross-country skiing for everyone. You can download a renewal form at oncwillamette.org/membership. Join us for a great season on the snow.

I know that some of you have gone mostly digital and in support of that I have set up the club's bank account Zelle to receive payments by using the treasurer's email address or phone number. Most banks and credit unions use Zelle and as long as you sign into your bank's Zelle you should be able to use this method of payment. Our bank will notify me of a deposit but you will need to also email me the renewal form so I will know who made the deposit. Give it a try if you want and let me know what you think. (Treasurer, Bob Young)

TOUR REPORTS:

December 9, Saturday: Ray Benson/North Blowout by Bob Young

Another brief window of snow and 6 of us headed up the mountain. Howard and I went to the Ray Benson North Blowout shelter breaking trail in 16" plus powder for the 2 miles in on the south side of the loop. Even small climbs were a real challenge in the deep and slippery snow so we had a good work out. Howard got a good fire going at the shelter where we enjoyed a long relaxing lunch break. About the time we were getting serious about heading back to beat the threatening wave of rain, 4 nice young ladies from Bend came in and they had set trail for us on the north half of the loop. This made for a great, and much easier, trip back. It was cold and breezy though and we just beat the first spit of rain. Well worth the days effort since it's all gone again now. Take it when you can get it!

photos by Bob Young



December 9, Saturday: Big Springs SnoPark

by Jim Todd

Anna, Bill, John and I left the strenuous trail breaking at the Pass to Bob and Howard and stopped off at Big Springs. The fresh snow was thinner there and we were only sinking 6-8". What's more the early morning snow was as close to powder as we get in the Cascades. Skiing was smooth and easy, even though we were leaving a trench behind us. It was a nice ramble around the North Springs and Middle Springs Loops. Sadly, most of the snow melted away the following week, but we are counting on more in the new year.



photo by Jim Todd

WEEKEND DAY TOURS:

Our tour schedule is still sparse due to the disconcerting lack of snow. More tours will be added as the season progresses.

Guests are welcome on Willamette Chapter day tours. Please contact the tour leader for details and to ensure the tour matches your interests and skill level.

We need more tour leaders for weekend tours; please step up and lead a tour to your favorite destination. If you wish to lead a tour, suggest a tour destination or learn more about tour leading, contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

Remember, impromptu tours are always an option. If you yearn for a day on skis, phone Jim, one the leaders below or a skier on the weekday list. Connect with your fellow Club members and get out when it snows.

January 6 or 7, Saturday or Sunday: no tours scheduled and the weather is “inclement”; but at least snow is falling again. Check with Bob Young (503x621x6626) or Jim Todd (503x378x7003) to see if anyone is skiing this weekend.

January 13, Saturday: A Tour, Big Springs or Ray Benson SnoParks. Contact co-leaders Pat Fuhrman (541x690x5575) and Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

January 13 or 14, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

January 20, Saturday: A Tour, Santiam Pass area. Location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Jeff Starr (503x851x8403).

January 20 or 21, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

January 21, Sunday: A Tour, Santiam Pass area. Location depending on snow conditions. Contact John Hortsch (503x807x5727).

January 27, Saturday: Ski School at Hoodoo; don't miss it!

February 3, Saturday: Beginner/A Tour, an easy road tour or a return to Hoodoo's groomed trails. Contact co-leaders Pat Fuhrman (541x690x5575) and Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

February 3 or 4, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

February 24, Saturday: B Tour, the classic Ray Benson/Little Nash Traverse. Contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

Tour Ratings: *A key to the Tour Rating codes:*

“Beginner” = Easy, short distances on flat or gentle slopes; appropriate for first time skiers.

“A” = Easy, distances up to 5 or 6 miles with a few slopes; basic skills are required; some of these may not be suitable for 1st time skiers.

“B” = Intermediate or experienced; distances of 6 to 12 miles or possible elevation gains of 2000 feet; may include steeper sections; some downhill skills are required.

“C” = Advanced, longer with greater elevation gains; includes both trails and off-trail with frequent steep terrain.

“D” = Expert, very difficult or long; possible backcountry travel and/or ski mountaineering.

WEEK DAY SKI TOURS

Why not break the shackles that bind you to the calendar this season? Try a mid-week tour. Contact one of the enthusiasts below and arrange an escape from routine. If you want to be added to this list, send your phone and email to Jim Todd, and we'll include it in the next Newsletter. Likewise, contact Jim, if you want your name removed for this season.

Weekday skiers:

Bill Caldwell	503x385x6494	wbcaldwell1 at q dot com
Chuck Daellenbach	541x928x4256	daellenbachc at comcast dot net
Pat Fuhrman	541x690x5575	pfuhrman2002 at yahoo dot com
Frank Hoffman	541x475x0185	hh_tex at msn dot com
John Hortsch	503x507x5727	riverjohn at msn dot com
Denise Hughes	435x828x2273	salemhughes at gmail dot com
Bill Nelson	503x576x1278	bnelson at pacificomm dot net
Mark Olson	503x559x0728	mark at olson dot us
Foxie Proctor	503x581x0207	foxieproctor at comcast dot net
Denise Sanders	503x859x4597	dsander at wvi dot com
Howard Simon	503x569x4299	hsimon6755 at gmail dot com
Jeff Starr	503x851x8403	jeffstarr3 at gmail dot com
Jim Todd	503x378x7003	toddwac18 at gmail dot com
Jerry Vessello	503x931x6344	jvess at comcast dot net
Bob Wells	307x203x7930	rawells.evts at gmail dot com>
Craig Wojcik	503x931x2705	ccwojcik09 at comcast dot net
Pam Wojcik	971x312x3984	pjwojcik09 at comcast dot net
Bob Young	503x621x6626	arch.byoung at gmail dot

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

The Willamette Chapter has an active volunteer program assisting the Forest Service with ski trail clearing and marking; shelter maintenance; and firewood stocking. Thank you volunteers! For volunteer projects on the Willamette National Forest it is now necessary for volunteers to register individually through Cascade Volunteers at <https://cascadevols.org/volunteer/>. Registered volunteers can earn perks like free NW Forest Passes and are covered by FS Workers Comp insurance. You can call Mark Olson (503x559x0728) or Jim Todd (503x378x7003) for the latest information about our club's volunteer program.

The Forest Service has requested that Willamette Chapter skiers report conditions encountered on winter trails to assist them in deploying their limited staff efficiently. Any information (trail marking, downed trees, parking problems) would be appreciated. Reports can be submitted through Cascade Volunteers at <https://cascadevols.org/usfs-work-report/> or by phoning or emailing your observations to Jim Todd.

Volunteer Reports:

December 12, Tuesday: Maxwell Trail Marking

by Bill Nelson

ONC members Bill Nelson, Jeff Starr and Aaron BreMiller got a leisurely start at about 08:30 toward Maxwell SnoPark on Tues, Dec 12. We did not have much of a sense of the snow conditions that we would find up there. We stopped by Jim Todd's place to pick up diamonds to nail to trees and the nails as well. We had a nice day of weather with a few puffy clouds. The snow was about one foot deep in the open and just a slight crust on the top.

We started from Maxwell sno-park and proceeded northeast to Jct. #1, thence to #2 and 3 on the trail map. Our goal was to monitor the trail markers for ski trail clarity. Two tools that we had along were very handy. One was a Fiskers brand manual pole saw that would extend to about 8' and collapse to about 4' for transport. It allowed us to quickly prune higher wayward branches that blocked trail markers. The other tool that came in very handy was Jeff's custom-made blue diamond hammer, that reached up to about an 8 ft length and could set diamonds and nails at an appropriate height.

We headed North from jct. 3 toward #14. At that junction we encountered an unusual area needing some tree branch pruning and attention. After that we went north to #13 then west to 11, then to 10, 9 and #8 along the "cutoff" back to the sno-park.

All in-all a very nice day of skiing and setting blue diamonds!



photo by Bill Nelson

December 27, Wednesday: Big Springs trail marking

by Jim Todd

Jeff, John and I joined Eric Gjønnes, Louise Harbick and Jordan Gilbreth of the Detroit RD at Big Springs SnoPark. Our goal was to correct a trail marking problem and add more blue diamonds to make trails easier to follow. A short hike on a thin layer of snow took us to Jct. A and H on the Middle Springs Loop where the trail was difficult to follow. Using a light aluminum ladder the FS crew removed 10 blue diamonds from an off-trail route while Jeff, John and I added a couple dozen diamonds along the correct route. Jeff's new blue diamond hammer proved invaluable for easily placing diamonds at the correct height. The trails from A to H to G and from H to J are now much easier to follow. Check them out when more snow falls.

Editor's Note: if these trail descriptions are confusing, download the new Maxwell/Big Springs map at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd860358.pdf or by scanning the QR code on the signs at the SnoPark.

The New Blue Diamond Hammer (trail marking made easy)

Have you wondered how those blue diamonds marking our ski trails were placed so high above the ground? Absent deep snow to stand on, FS staff and club volunteers have resorted to hauling ladders along the trails. I've skied the trails dragging a ladder and it wasn't much fun. Fortunately, 15 years ago a creative member, George Susbauer, invented the original Blue Diamond Hammer. This clever device allows us to nail diamonds high on the tree trunks while standing on bare ground. It has made trail marking much easier in the summertime, but is so heavy no one wishes to pack it down the trail on skis in winter. Now a new creative spirit in our club has produced an improved version. Jeff Starr's Ultralight Blue Diamond Hammer is great for winter use. With its steel-faced wood block head and telescoping handle it is sturdy enough for driving nails and reaches high enough to place diamonds above the snow line. It's also light weight and can be carried easily in a pack. The new hammer proved its worth on marking projects last month and Jeff has even donated one to the Detroit Ranger District.



George Susbauer 1/03/2007



Jeff Starr 12/27/2023



SANTIAM PASS SKI LODGE:

Dwight and Susan Sheets and the Friends of Santiam Pass Ski Lodge are doing a fantastic job restoring the old ski lodge on the north side of Hwy 20 at the Pass. The lodge will open to the public within a year, if current progress continues. Here is a link to their latest annual report. It includes a historical note on the lodge from Willamette Chapter founder, Jack Hande:

<https://mailchi.mp/6dacb3b707b9/end-of-year-newsletter-13880862?e=4cdc4b8492>

SKI SCHOOL:

Our annual Ski School will be held Saturday, January 27, on Hoodoo's groomed nordic trails. There will be lessons in the morning and practice in the afternoon with mentoring by the club's experienced skiers. Whether you are a complete novice or experienced skier this is a great start to your ski season. Learn new skills, polish your technique or just enjoy a cruise on smooth snow. See you on the 27th.

SNO-PARK PERMITS

The Willamette Chapter will not sell Sno Park permits in the absence of our regular monthly meetings. Sno Park permits may be purchased online at the Oregon DMV: <https://dmv2u.oregon.gov/eServices/>. Annual permits purchased directly from DMV cost \$25 —no handling fee. The process takes only a few minutes and includes a downloadable copy you can print and use immediately while waiting for your permit to arrive in the mail. Buy a permit and support Sno Park plowing.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

John Hortsch has volunteered to take a more active role in the club's affairs and has been approved by the Board as our newest Board Member at large. Welcome to the Board, John. We look forward to your input on the club's decisions.

2023-2024 OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS:

Vacant	President
Jeanne Miller	Vice President
Bob Young	Treasurer & Membership
Vacant	Webmeister
Vacant	Newsletter Editor
Jim Todd	Day Tour Chair
David Forkner	ONC State Board Rep & Board Member
Pam Wojcik	Overnight Trip Coordinator & Board Member
Mark Olson	Volunteer Coordinator & Board Member
Christine Young	Board Member
John Hortsch	Board Member