



# The Easy Glider

Kick 'n Gliders Nordic Ski Club

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Issue: January, 2009

## President's Corner

by Bill Stine

How do the years pass so fast? It seems like I just got the skis put away and we're already into another ski season. Wax, wax, wax ... I really must be getting old! Already Craftsbury is history; a fine episode, to be sure. The Tug Hill area sports lots of snow cover and there should be a frosting of fresh stuff just in time for the Port Leyden trip that will begin just after I complete writing this article.

I hope you made your own plans early because many of the trips are already filled. There are, however, still some openings if you're so inclined. Among those trips with space remaining are Highland Forest (Jan 30-Feb 1), Lapland Lake (Feb 20-22), and Pulaski-II (Mar 6-9). Of course, cancellations do occur so, so if you're interested in one of the other trips get a deposit check to our treasurer so

you'll get the first call if someone has to cancel. We'd love to have your company!

Don't forget day trips, either. There is never a limit on attendance and the price is right! Scheduled day trips are listed in your Season Guide and on the website. Just give the trip leader a call to give them a heads-up about your intentions and to make rendezvous and travel arrangements.

Finally, if you want get a gang together for an impromptu day of skiing, you can always e-mail your ski club buddies by sending your message out to the entire club membership. Go for it!

I'm looking forward to seeing you on the trails. You can be sure I'll be there!



## Christmas Party Report

by Bill Stine

Sandy and I were delighted to again host the annual Christmas Holiday party. We'd been pretty busy the previous month or so doing a makeover of a few of the rooms in our house. But, the goal was to have them done and to have the house decorated before the holidays and the Club's party was our first holiday event. Yeah, we got done, but just barely in time!

Of course no gathering of Kick 'n Gliders would be complete without a bit of rain (remember this year's Ox Roast?) but that didn't deter this crowd. Nearly fifty members showed up and we had a "jolly old Saint Nicholas" time! Kitchen counters and the dining room table groaned under the weight of all the goodies members brought to share. And the drizzly weather didn't seem to deter revelers from helping themselves to beverages served up on the patio table.

Folks made carpool plans for trips and compared notes on the latest intelligence about our skiing destinations. Mike handed out the latest "*People to Ski With*" publication. Later, as people prepared for the drive home, we hugged and wished each other our best for the holidays and the coming year.

And so, as we wished each other, Sandy and hope your year was a happy and healthy one. And, we wish all the best for you and yours in the year to come!

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### Craftsbury Trip Report By Dave Leroy

On December 30, 27 Kick 'n Gliders started their two day journey to the wilds of northern Vermont.

Arriving on the morning of the following day, they lugged their luggage to the second floor of the Cedar Lodge at Craftsbury Outdoor Center. Then we headed to the Dining Hall for lunch – the first of 21 fantastic, gourmet, nutritious meals. The temperature was about 10 degrees Fahrenheit and there was plenty of snow on the well-groomed trails, so they headed out onto the trail system. The

temperature and snow conditions remained about like this for the next 4 days, so the skiing was



ideal. We were told that this facility has been sold (hopefully to help ensure that it will remain the great unspoiled place that we have always found it to be)



but the differences were barely perceptible. We did find the trail on Elinor's Hill to be a little nicer (tamer) and this hill is now in the possession of the



new owners. The rental rates had been reduced and we were offered a free skiing lesson. About 10 Kick 'n Gliders showed up for the lesson and found it

to be quite helpful with the usual abundant praise and encouragement.

Of course, New Years Eve was fun as usual, with a big bonfire and champagne at midnight and by then it was well below zero. On Friday, after skiing on the trails near the ski center, several of us skied into town (Craftsbury Village). Actually we drove to town and skied back to the ski



center; then turned around and skied back to town; that way we did the climbing first! One group got a ride to Highland Lodge, a neighboring ski



center, and skied back to Craftsbury and another drove to Highland and skied on their trail system.

Before dinner each evening, most of the group sat on the floor in the hall of the Lodge, had wine and snacks and the usual

banter. After dinner, we had some great digital slide shows by Ken from New Jersey, who visited Newfoundland this year, and by our own Bill Stine who showed skiing pictures and a re-run of his Tin Tent Tour pictures. Jesse Jepsen had a really interesting video of his nephew who has been winning skiing races without legs – yes that's right, it's a special competition for handicapped folks, but boy did they move! Some of us watched the Rose Bowl, but the less said about it, the better.



All good things must come to an end and we got up early for a continental breakfast on Sunday and headed down the road for the 500 mile plus trip back to reality. We have already made reservations for next year so we can go back and do it all again.



## On the Trail of the Klondike Gold Rush

by Bill Stine

Our January meeting featured slide shows from not one, but two, of Fred & Tanya Richter's recent adventures.

Fred started out by talking about living in 500+ plus inches of snow at Crater Lake National Park last winter. Fred and Tanya were volunteer rangers working in the park during that winter. Photos of the snow levels were astounding. Nothing could be seen of any of the first floors of any of the buildings. All you could see of the two-story A-frame that the Richters lived in was a bit of the roof and a second-story window on the end. Even with huge snowshoes Fred sometimes sunk in to his thighs and walking in them often became impossible. "Roofalanches" were a danger when snow would suddenly slide off a roof into a walkway or road, crushing anything in its path. So don't complain to the Richter's about having to slog to work after a six or twelve-inch snowfall!

Fred's feature presentation followed the history of the 1898 Alaska gold rush and the path would-be miners

had to take to get to the gold fields. It also featured photographs he and Tanya took during their six-day backpacking trek as they followed the gold rush trail over the Chilkoot Pass and then on to the waterways that carried prospectors to the Klondike.

The path most miners followed was about 33 miles long. Not so bad, you say? Well, maybe there were a few issues that would change your mind. First, consider that there was no infrastructure to provide food and housing for the 100,000 or so people who sought to get rich. So, miners were required to carry at least one year's supplies (a ton or so) in with them. Next, consider that the first few miles rose about 3,000 feet. Since a miner could only carry about 50 pounds each trip, they had to make a lot of trips up the "Golden Stairs" as one particular single-file section of that part of the trail was called ... you do the math. Then, of course, it was winter and it snowed almost daily so you had to mark you pile of gear with a tall pole so you could find it when you arrived with your next load!

Then the gear had to be carried another 25 miles or

so until you got to the Yukon headwaters where you had to build a boat to float your stuff the rest of the way to the gold fields. Sadly, nearly all the gold bearing areas were already claimed before the flood of prospectors arrived and only a couple of hundred of the horde actually got rich. The rush was over almost before it started and a railroad rendered nearly all of the settlements, created to make the journey possible, obsolete. All that remains today are a few small ruins and piles of cast-off gear and trash that line the trail.

If you think you're interested in following in Fred & Tanya's tracks, braving bear country, fording icy streams, enduring coastal rainforests, a 3,000 ft, rock hopping climb and snow fields, you might check out the National Park Service web site at <http://www.nps.gov/klgo/>. Or, you might ask Fred & Tanya!

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## Port Leyden Shines

by Tim Musser

On Friday, Jan 9, the Kick 'n Gliders arrived to a "Winter Wonderland" also known as "Tug Hill East". Snow conditions can best

be described as heavenly; with about a two-foot base on top of which was added 5-6" of the lightest, fluffiest powder



imaginable. The BREIA trails at Egypt Road were freshly groomed and provided excellent skiing for day one.

Saturday we woke to temps hovering around 0°F but with clear, blue skies and not even a breeze to speak of. Once again we took advantage of the beautifully manicured BREIA trails; this time on Jackson Hill. After skiing a large loop on top of the hill we stopped for lunch in the newly constructed warming hut. Yeah, I use the word "hut" but it is



anything but a hut. Following a quick bite we finished by skiing down

the hill to the Canal Trail, not once but twice!

Sunday morning we found that 4-5" more of the fluffy white stuff had fallen overnight. So we decided to do some backcountry skiing and off to



Whetstone Gulf State Park we drove. The morning ski was a fairly easy jaunt up the gorge, gulf as they call it in this area, along the creek and back again.



This proved to be a nice warm-up for the afternoon trip to HELL! Well, if not hell it was a bit grueling.

The South and North Rim Trails follow the edge of the gorge, with several hundred feet of steep ascents and descents and unbridged creek crossings, and is for "experts only" (no lie). However, the views are worth the work even though one misstep could lead to a several-hundred-foot fall. To quote the brochure, "The

gorge is one of the most spectacular scenic vistas east of the Rocky Mountains”, (no lie).

Our hosts and new Allegro House owners, Char and Denny Rogers, did a great job. Tasty and satisfying meals were provided by Nancy & Victor Martinez and Bill & Sandy Stine and we visited River View Inn on Friday evening for an excellent restaurant meal.



Participants, besides trip leader, Tim Musser, the Martinezes and the Stines included Tom Gibson, Rich Levin and Joel McGuire.

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## Crystal Lake Day Trip Report

by Andrea Hospodar

Ten hearty souls had a great day at Crystal Lake Sat, Jan 17. Well, almost ten... more later.

Arriving about 10:30 with temps a balmy 2 degrees (Fahrenheit!), new club members Lois Froelich, Wendy Hyser and Lou Schollenberger joined

Sandy Stine, Dennis & Beth Majors, Bill Pickering, Emory Ehrenfeld, Rick Begley and me to find trails tracked and groomed with a 12-14" base with a packed powder surface. Though cold, all were dressed for the occasion and tolerated it well. For the AM session we broke into smaller groups based on what each wanted to ski; some took lessons. We skied for about 2 hours breaking around 1:00 for lunch. Though the dining hall has not been opened all season, Anna has worked hard adding tables and chairs, a microwave, toaster oven, some basic microwaveable food items and snacks and hot water for hot drink mixes. By lunch it was getting quite cozy inside. Sadly, when we regrouped, we learned that Bill P had taken a spill and was not feeling too well as a result. He sat out for the PM session. We all hope it is just some bruising that will heal quickly, as Bill will be heading to Pulaski then NH later this week. After putting some food in our tummies and taking the chill off the bones, we headed back out, re-shuffling our groups a bit, and skied another 1-1/2 hours. We all found trails that were quite enjoyable

and it was a winter wonderland, as the fresh snow was still blanketing the trees and laurel. We headed off the mountain between 3:30 - 4:00 and all (almost) had a very enjoyable day!

For those who couldn't make it, so long as it stays cold, skiing should be great there for a good while... don't miss it!!

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## Space Available on Lake Effect II Trip

Yes, that's right. There is still room on this three night trip to Pulaski, NY on March 6 to 9. Ski conditions are still excellent at this time of year. There are skiing opportunities at Salmon Hills Ski Center, Osceola Ski Center, Chateaugay State Forest and Winona Forest Tourathon. We have reservations at the 1880 House in Pulaski. This is one of the best lodging and ski places within a six hour drive of Harrisburg. The total cost is \$260 per person. A deposit of \$130 will hold a space for you. The balance is due on Feb. 19. The price includes three nights lodging, dinner on Saturday & Sunday nights, cooked breakfast on Saturday, Sunday & Monday and all the soup you can eat most of the rest of the time! The only additional cost is gas, trail fees, and trail lunches. Send your deposit to the club treasurer right away! Contact Peg Hampton for more details.

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## Puzzled Over XC Gear?

by Bill Stine

So, you want to get some new ski gear but you're not sure what you should be looking for. Maybe you're new to the sport and just need to get started. Or, maybe you've been skiing infrequently for years and just don't know what's out there. Fool that I am, I often try to field questions from folks who have questions like these. And have to rethink the answer each time. So, following, not quite in a nutshell, are my thoughts on the subject. Maybe it'll help you think through what you should be looking for.

### **XC Skiing Techniques:**

There are two broad techniques for propelling yourself on skis. The "classic" or "diagonal stride" method uses skis that have a "kick zone" in the fore-and-aft center portion of the ski. Using the kick zone, you can propel yourself up even relatively steep grades. Of course your poles are also used for propulsion, generally providing about a third of your propulsive force.

- The kick zone may be "waxless" where an embossed or machined texture engages the snow surface when you apply your full weight to the ski so that you can propel yourself forward. This type kick zone is most common in places like PA where you often ski less frequently and where skiing temperatures are often near the freezing mark or higher.
- Or, the kick zone may be "waxable". In that case the center of the ski has no texture to engage the snow surface. Instead, special kinds of waxes are used to coat the kick zone to provide the grip needed for propulsion. The selection and application of kick waxes is simpler in colder temperatures and is more commonly seen in areas like Vermont and New Hampshire where folks can be pickier about the days they choose to ski and where the temps are colder.
- With classic technique, it is very easy to learn the basics and you can have fun on easy trails on your first outing. At higher levels, the techniques can become very refined and good skiers can move very fast.

The other main technique for propelling yourself is called "skating".

- Skate skis have no kick zone relying, instead, on using a skating motion loosely similar to the motion you'd use with ice skates. Since there is no way for the ski to grip the snow surface, you must even skate up hills.
- Because you rely on a fast gliding surface to propel yourself and need wide trails to use the technique, skating is pretty much restricted to places where there are wide, carefully groomed trails.
- Skating is definitely cool. Good skate skiers move very fast and the motion of an accomplished skier is very graceful. However, the technique also requires more refined skills to be successful and requires more athletic ability at the minimum level for success than does the classic technique.

A third technique is called telemark. Telemark is a whole different beast. It's most often used for steep descents and you most often see it demonstrated in downhill skiing areas.

### **XC Skiing Gear:**

Believe it or not, boots are your most critical piece of gear. If they don't fit you'll get blisters and that can make your life hell. Better to put money into a good-fitting boot and pay less for the skis and bindings. I can't stress this enough!

- Some boots are designed mainly for classical technique, some for skating. “Combi” boots are supposed to be suitable for both techniques. Choose boots appropriate to the kind of skiing you’ll be doing.
- Try on different models of boots. Look for ones that provide support but are still comfortable after walking around in them in the store for half an hour or so. The boot should keep your heel from lifting up too much. Lifting heels are a leading cause of blisters. Look at other boots if you begin to notice heel lifting or hard spots.
- Look for boots that support your ankles. Boots that extend above the ankles increase your ability to control the ski and reduce loss of control as you tire.
- Make sure you try boots on with the kind of socks you intend to wear when you ski. Too tight and your feet will get cold. Too loose and your feet will slide around, causing blisters and causing you to have poor control of your skis.

You should know that skis come in levels of "goodness", from basic to highly refined. Some are meant for general, recreational skiers. Other gear is designed for the more serious, frequent skier and usually costs more. It may be more durable, have more sophisticated, light-weight construction or use a fancier base material. Other gear is meant for racing. It would probably work fine for recreational skiing but you’d probably be paying for characteristics that won't reward most recreational skiers.

#### **Skis need to fit the skier.**

- Within a particular model, the manufacturer usually makes the skis in 3 - 6 different lengths. The manufacturer will recommend a length for a particular model based on the WEIGHT of the skier, NOT their height! (This is based on how much weight must be applied to the ski for the kick zone to engage the snow surface. The longer the ski, the more weight is needed.) When you purchase skis, don't take the salesperson's word for the length you need. Ask to see the weight chart for that model of ski. Be polite but insistent.
- If you are a new skier and in doubt about which size ski to purchase because you're near the cut-off for a particular weight range, go with the shorter of the recommended ski lengths. You'll be glad you made that decision when you are climbing hills as it's easier to get the skis to grip the snow, especially in deep snow or when conditions are a bit icy. True, the longer ski may get you a tiny bit better glide but being unable to climb effectively really screws up your day! Experienced, more aggressive skiers who stick to harder, groomed trails will be able to more effectively set the kick zone and can go with the longer ski.
- Try not to let your head or your salesperson oversell you on expensive, heavy-duty gear. You probably don't need it and heavy-duty gear can actually make it more difficult to learn.

Bindings connect your boot to the ski. In Nordic skiing, the front of the boot fastens to the ski and the heel of the boot is free to lift. There are several kinds of binding systems. The boot you choose will determine which kind of binding you must use. They ARE NOT interchangeable! Best to choose the boot first. If you anticipate eventually purchasing more skis, it is nice to try to maintain a single kind of binding on all of your skis.

- NNN is the most common kind of binding. They come in step-in and manual versions. It may surprise you that the manual version costs more but it does a better job of connecting the boot to your ski. The BC (backcountry) version of NNN is heavier and more rugged and, of course, fits only boots designed for NNN BC bindings.
- SNS is similar to NNN and has a BC version as well. (NNN and SNS are NOT interchangeable!) At this writing, they are in the process to changing from the so-called Profile version of this binding to the Pilot version. You can use a Pilot boot (it has two pins

in the sole) on a Profile binding but not the reverse. There's still a lot of old equipment for sale so be aware.

- 75 mm 3-pin bindings have been around the longest of the types currently available. As with NNN and SNS, you must use these bindings with 3-pin boots. You rarely see them promoted for general recreational use anymore; they're fine, just not common. 3-pin boots are usually designed to be used with heavy-duty, backcountry skis or with telemark skis. The boots often appear similar to heavy hiking boots or downhill ski boots with latches instead of laces. Beginning cross country skiers will probably not need these.

Poles are used to help propel you along the trail.

- What length to get is the main question? Traditionally, it was recommended that poles come up to about your armpit. Today, for classic skiing, it's usually recommended that poles come to half-way between your armpit and the top of your shoulder or to the top of your shoulder depending on your preference. For skating, poles should come to at least the top of your shoulder.
- Baskets are the round or oval plastic things near the pointy end of the pole. They prevent the pointy end from sinking deep into the snow. Some are tiny, designed to be used on hard, groomed surfaces. They can be nearly useless in soft, deep snow. Baskets up to nearly six inches are occasionally seen, designed for soft, deep snow. Most folks will want average baskets, about three inches in their largest dimension.
- The poles themselves are usually made from aluminum, fiberglass or a fancy composite. They need to be rigid enough to take hard use and flexible enough to spring back from minor bending forces. Lightweight, fancy composite poles are great but can be very expensive.

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### **Places to Ski & Associated Equipment:**

Touring centers are the most popular places to ski. Here, established trails are groomed and "track-set". Track-set is when a grooming machine makes grooves that your skis fit in to help keep you on course. Touring centers are usually commercial ventures where you have to pay for the privilege of skiing and where rental gear and lessons are commonly available.

- Suitable gear includes general purpose "touring" skis which would include most basic, entry level equipment. Of course, better quality/higher priced touring gear is also available.
- Other skis are termed "track" skis. As the name implies these are best used on groomed, track-set trails. They are usually narrower than touring skis and need packed snow to support your weight.
- Finally, ski centers are pretty much what you're limited to if you want to skate ski.

Backcountry skiing is skiing on established trails that are suitable for skiing but that are not groomed. Of course, other skiers may have used the trail leaving tracks that you can follow in.

- These are usually narrow, single-track trails on public lands like state parks or forests and there is usually no fee. They can be easy or difficult; it's best to determine which before you set out.
- You can use general purpose touring skis on most of these trails.
- They also make special purpose "backcountry" skis that combine one or more of the following characteristics:
  - If the snow is particularly deep and fluffy it can be helpful to have wider and/or longer skis to provide better flotation in the deep snow. Be aware, however, that wide skis are not good for skiing on track-set, groomed trails because they are too wide to fit the track and are even banned at some ski centers.

- If there are many twists or turns in the trail or if you are bushwhacking through the woods it can be helpful to have short skis that are easier to maneuver in tight spots.
  - Metal edges can be useful for control on trails that are icy.
  - Especially aggressive kick zone lengths and textures can be useful for climbing extra steep terrain. They even make removable "skins" to attach to the bottoms of skis to help in making long, difficult climbs. Be aware, however, that long kick zones don't make for easy gliding on the down hills you earned on your climb or for level sections of trail.
  - Telemark gear (and technique) may be desirable when long, steep descents are involved.
- For most folks, general-purpose touring skis are just fine for most backcountry skiing. There are also golf courses, city parks, back yards, etc, where skiing may not be an established use but that may be perfectly suitable for your skiing enjoyment.
  - Be certain to ask permission if you want to ski a golf course or someone else's back yard.
  - Touring or even backcountry types of skis are suitable for these venues.
- Wow. "Not quite in a nutshell" was an understatement! Hopefully the advice will be useful next time you head out the ski shop.  
Happy skiing!

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## Upcoming extended trips:

<a href="#">North Conway, NH</a>	Jan 26-Feb 1*
<a href="#">Highland Forest, NY</a>	Jan 30-Feb 1*
<a href="#">Pioneer Lodge, Turin, NY</a>	Feb 6-9*
<a href="#">Lake Placid, NY</a> ‡	Feb 13-17*
<a href="#">Laurel Highlands, PA</a>	Feb 14-15*
<a href="#">Lapland Lake, Northville, NY</a>	Feb 20-22*
<a href="#">Laurentian Mtns, Quebec, Canada</a>	Feb 20-27*
<a href="#">Rocky Point, Inlet, NY</a>	Feb 27-Mar 2*
<a href="#">Lake Effect Trip II, Pulaski, NY</a>	Mar 6-9*

\* The last date on the trips is the day of departure.

‡ President's Day Holiday Weekend

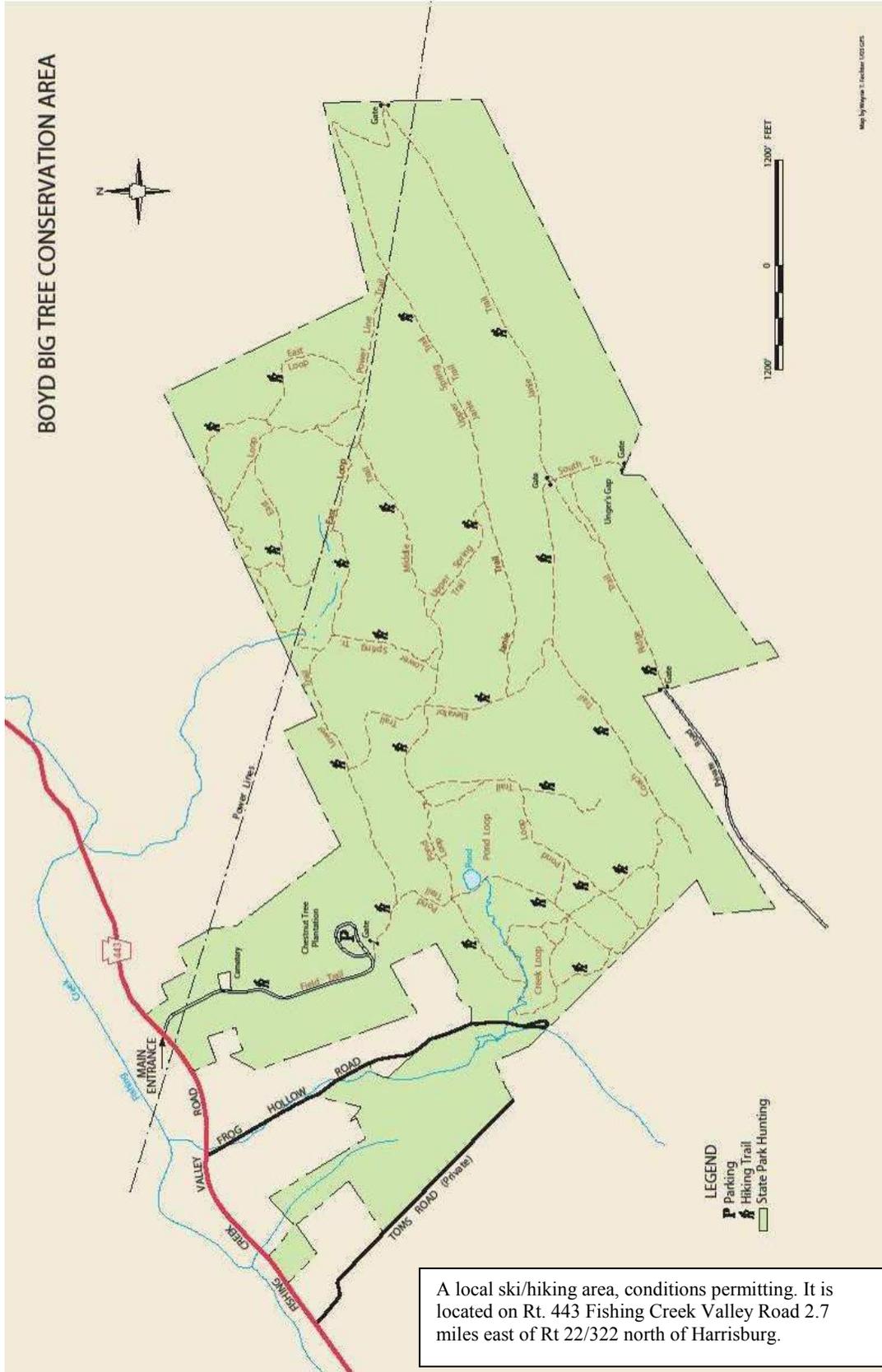
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## 2009 Meeting Schedule:

Date	Event
7:00 pm, Tue, <b>Feb 3</b>	<p>Membership Mtg: <b>Ski Patrol: Wilderness Medicine Cases</b></p> <p>Dr. Matt Silvis, having worked in the field of wilderness medicine in Alaska and Wyoming, has seen a lot. He'll focus on injuries/exposures that skiers encounter relating real-life examples from his experiences.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Wildware Backcountry</i></p>
7:00 pm, Wed, <b>Feb 18</b>	<p>Dinner Social: <b>The Pizza Grill</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>901 State St, Lemoyne, PA</i></p>
7:00 pm, Tue, <b>Mar 3</b>	<p>Membership Mtg: <b>Biking the San Juan and Gulf Islands</b></p> <p>Beth &amp; Dennis Major will give a slide show of their September 2008 bike and road trip exploring Washington state's Olympic Peninsula, the San Juan Islands and British Columbia's Gulf Islands.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Wildware Backcountry</i></p>
7:00 pm, Wed, <b>Mar 18</b>	<p>Dinner Social: <b>The Chocolate Avenue Grill</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>114 W Chocolate Ave, Hershey, PA</i></p>
7:00 pm, Tue, <b>Apr 7</b>	<p>Membership Mtg: <b>Elections and Trip Planing</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Wildware Backcountry</i></p> <p>Do you have some ideas for cross country ski trips that you would like the club to schedule for next season? If so, please research the location, costs, nearby x-c ski venues, etc., and bring the information to the April 1 meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Wildware Backcountry.</p> <p>If you have any questions, please contact <a href="#">Nancy Borremans</a> or <a href="#">Bill Stine</a>.</p>
7:00 pm, Wed, <b>Apr 22</b>	<p>Dinner Social: <b>Outback Steak House</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>3527 Union Deposit Rd, Harrisburg, PA</i></p>

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# BOYD BIG TREE CONSERVATION AREA



- LEGEND**
- Parking
  - Hiking Trail
  - State Park Hunting

A local ski/hiking area, conditions permitting. It is located on Rt. 443 Fishing Creek Valley Road 2.7 miles east of Rt 22/322 north of Harrisburg.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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