



Seward Nordic News

The quarterly newsletter of the Seward Nordic
Ski Club

WINTER 2007-08 SECOND EDITION

Announcements

- We will be having a **Seward Community Ski Day** on Saturday, January 26. Information is listed below under “Upcoming Events,” with more details to follow in the next week via email. Mark your calendars!
- Our trail update email forum is up and running. All members should have received an email invitation to join the forum. If you did not receive the email, or are having trouble signing up, please email us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com. For more information about the forum, see the “News” section.
- If you are not receiving emails from the Club, or would like to change or add an email address, please email us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com.
- Interested in writing an article or submitting photos for our newsletter? We are always looking for contributors. Anyone interested, please send an email to the Club.

Upcoming Events

- **January 26 – Seward Community Ski Day!** **Location:** Bear Lake. **Time:** Ski Clinics 10am-12noon. Community Ski Race 1pm. **Cost:** Ski Race will be free to everyone. The Ski Clinics will be \$10, and free to SNSC Club Trail User and Trail Meister members. Two different clinic options will be offered: Skate Technique Clinic and an Introductory Skijor Clinic (no dog required- they will be provided). Details to be announced – watch for emails.
- **January 26 - Avalanche Awareness Class** **Time:** 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. **Location:** Begins at AVTECH Auditorium. **Cost:** Free! This class will cover: Avalanche Hazards/Safety, Weather, Terrain & Snowpack, Avalanche Rescue, and Avalanche Beacon Use. It is being offered by the US Forest Service. This will be a great opportunity to learn about safe travel in the backcountry or a day to refresh your memory on Avalanche Safety! For further information/class registration please contact Alex McLain at 288-7710.
- **February 3 - Iditarod Skijor Race.** It'll be a 5 K, one dog race, complete with mail drops! Begins at 10:00 am, with registration at 9:30 am. Location TBA - either Exit Glacier or Bear Lake, depending on conditions. Cost: \$10, free for SNSC members. Contact Dan or Madelyn Walker 224-3848 or sixmilebb@alaska.com.

Year-at-a-Glance

- **Third Tuesday of every month- Seward Winter Film Series,** AVTEC auditorium, 7-9pm
This month Jan. 15: Local Adventures George Peck, Matt & Harold Faust will share pictures & stories from their first ascent climb of Mount Godwin last spring.
- **January 26 – Seward Community Nordic Ski Day**
- **January 27- Pia's classic ski race, 5k/15k/30k, Kincaid park**
<http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/Racing/AnchorageCup/index.htm>
- **February – date TBA - High School Boroughs Race, Seward**
- **February 2-3 – Iditarod Days, Seward**
- **February 3 – Alaska Ski for Women,** <http://www.alaskaskiforwomen.org>

- February 17- *Sven Johanson freestyle ski race, 10K/30K, Kincaid park* <http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/Racing/AnchorageCup/index.htm>
- March 2- *Tour of Anchorage*, <http://www.tourofanchorage.com>
- March 15- *Oosik Classic, 25k/50k, Talkeetna* <http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/Events/oosik.htm>
- March 22- *NSAA Ski Train to Curry*, <http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/Programs/skitrain.htm>

News

GROOMING – Our Ginzu Groomer arrived last month, and we are excited to put it into action. Unfortunately, we’ve still been having mechanical difficulties with the Pisten Bully, which is needed to pull the new groomer. When the Pisten Bully is fixed, we will keep the Ginzu at Mile 12 and will be able to groom there more efficiently. While awaiting this big upgrade in grooming equipment, our groomers have been working hard at keeping Mile 12 in good shape. A big thanks to Duane Chase, Tom Gillespie, Herb Wottlin, Dan Walker, and Bob Barnwell for their hard work.

Fixing the Pisten Bully will free up the Bearcat (generously donated by Craig Turnbull) and the current groomer at Mile 12, so that we can work more on other trails. Currently the Park Service is helping groom Exit Glacier Road. Tom Gillespie will be working on Bear Lake, which was not ready until recently due to thin ice and overflow. The other area consistently groomed is Trail River Campground road, which has been kept in great shape by Jason Aigeldinger and Dave Lindquist.

Several Club members volunteered to help with grooming this winter. Soon we will be able to use your help. Anyone still available to help with grooming, please call Tom Gillespie at 224-3834 or Duane Chase at 224-3261. Thank you!

TRAIL CONDITIONS UPDATES – Each week, SNSC members receive an email summarizing grooming and trail conditions. For the dedicated skier wishing to follow conditions at multiple locations more frequently, SNSC now offers a trail update email forum, which allows members to receive daily updates as they are posted. The updates include recent trail grooming, conditions on touring trails, and backcountry skiing conditions at popular places such as Marathon Bowl, Summit Lake, and Manitoba Mountain. This is especially helpful in the Seward area, where conditions change almost daily. Many members have signed up, and on average there are one or two postings per day. You should have received an email invite to join this group, and if you need another invitation or are having any difficulties signing up, please email us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com. Thanks to all those members who have been posting updates and keeping everyone up-to-date with conditions.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – Our general membership meeting was held December 12 at The Legions. We shared updates on the Club and passed a new set of bylaws. Thanks to Janette Gillespie and Deborah Dixon for their hard work on drafting the bylaws.

WEBSITE – Bob Barnwell has been doing a great job of adding content to our website, and Britta-Lis Perry in Hawaii continues to play an active role in overseeing the technical aspects. Thanks to both for their hard work. If you have not already done so, please register on the website during your next visit. This will give you access to additional content. The address is <http://www.sewardnordicskiclub.org>.

Seward Seahawks Nordic News

The High School team has been having a good year under the new coaches, MaryLynn Barnwell and Bob Barnwell. Before Christmas break, they did well in a freestyle (skate) race in Homer, and will return this upcoming weekend to Homer for skate ski relays. On January 12, they performed quite well in the Kenai Klassic, held in Soldotna. Both the Varsity Boys and Girls teams placed 4th out of 6 teams. The girls’ race was a 7.5K Classic, and the top finishers for the Seahawks were Allison Barnwell (12th), MacKenzie Barnwell (14th) and Meghan O’Leary (15th). The boys’ race was a 10K Classic, and the top finishers were

Mark Chase (14th), Mike Zweifel (20th) and Aaron Sarka (22nd). Matt Nyholm did great for JV, placing 5th, and will be moved up to Varsity for the next meet. Tori Feemster also did a great job for the JV team, placing 9th. Great job Seahawks!

The Middle School team is being coached by Carlyn Nichols, and they will have their first meet in Homer January 18. The Elementary School team is being coached by Mark Fraad and Lana Esposito and their season starts January 17.

Member Spotlight: Dennis Perry

Our member spotlight column features one of our club members. This is the first month we are running this column, and Dennis Perry is our obvious first choice because his name is synonymous with Seward nordic skiing. He has been an active board member in the Ski Club and was the High School Ski Coach for 15 years. Dennis grew up in Southern California, and lived in the Mojave Desert for 14 years before moving to Alaska 20 years ago. He has a variety of interests, and has been a pilot since 1978. He works as a psychologist and a teacher of psychology at UAA. Dennis' daughter, Britta-Lis, has designed the Club website. His other daughter, Joslyn, lives in Girdwood.

Favorite Trail Food: cheese and crackers

Favorite Post-Ski Drink: Neuro Drink

Favorite Ski Trail: Mile 12 for general training; Trail River for extended training sessions; Bear Lake for late season training.



Trail Profile

by Heather Shank

Local touring options for beginner/intermediate skiers

Short on time or looking to save gas? There are lots of places to explore on skis close to Seward.

The main to ski include the high school course, Exit Glacier Road, Bear Lake, and Mile 12. All of these locations may be groomed depending on snow conditions and availability of groomers. Here are some additional options, which you may find packed by snowmachines, tracked by a previous skier or snowshoer, or blanketed with fresh snow:

Iditarod Trail & side trails

The south trailhead is at approximately Mile 2 Nash Road; watch for the small pullout with the Iditarod "I" trail marker on the left just after crossing a bridge. The first mile or so meanders alongside Sawmill Creek and is a gentle enough uphill that it's easy going in, but a fast ski back out. Once you hit Sawmill Creek, you can either ski across the creek continuing north on the Iditarod Trail, or ski east up the creek exploring the canyon.

The Iditarod Trail can also be accessed from various points in Bear Lake Subdivision. One access point is from the end of Tiehacker Road, which is the first right after the fish weir. Take the trail leading into the woods and ski to the right for a short ski out to Glacier Creek. The Iditarod Trail is across the creek, slightly upriver. It's approximately 5 miles to the Nash Road trailhead.

A nice loop option from the Tiehacker Road trailhead is to ski left for about a hundred yards and then bear right for a pleasant mile-long ski through the woods, which will also lead out to Glacier Creek. From there either take a short side detour further upriver exploring the canyon, or turn right and ski downriver for about half a mile to the trails leading back into the woods on the right. Once in the woods, bear to the left and it's a short ski back to the trailhead. You can also continue down the creek into Questa Woods.

The Iditarod Trail can also be accessed at the end of Bear Lake. Ski south along the base of Tiehacker Mtn and Little Bear Lake. Ski north across the lake where the trail continues through the woods to Mile 12. This section of trail is heavily wooded and may be difficult to ski due to lack of snow cover or downed trees.

Exit Glacier Road side trail

With sufficient snow cover, there is a trail through the woods paralleling Exit Glacier Road. The trail can be accessed off the right side of the road just across the bridge from the gate. About a mile down the trail you will encounter a pond. You can either ski back up to the road or continue on the trail beyond the pond for another mile or so, although this section of the trail can be slightly confusing as it is not as well-defined and it crosses some old four-wheeler trails.

As always, be sure to use caution, common sense and courtesy when assessing conditions and accessing trails. Skiers with loose dogs should be mindful of winter trapping, which for some species runs as late as April 15.

If you have a favorite local ski trail not mentioned, please email us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com. Next month: touring options between Mile 12 and Moose Pass.

Coaches Corner

by Ray Robinson

Seward skate skiing secrets

As a freestyle (skate) skier, it is at times hard to avoid being jealous of the long, lighted, groomed trails in the big city up north. However, if you know where to look, good places to skate ski can be found on most days of the winter here in the Seward area. Below are some strategies to keep you on your skis.

Subdivision skiing

On the day of a storm with heavy snowfall, good skate skiing can often be found in the Lost Lake, Questa Woods, Bear Lake, and Old Mill subdivisions. The key is timing your ski just after the roads have been packed by traffic, but before they have been scraped away or sanded by the plows. A plowed road is also really good after an additional 2-4 inches of snow has fallen.



Ray and Lars Robinson in Questa Woods Subdivision, New Years Day 2007

If the storm is cold enough to dump snow ocean-side, Lowell Point road can be equally good. A word of caution on road skiing: little bits of road debris can get into the wax and pores of your skis, which can really interfere with future wax applications and performance. Before applying your next round of glide wax, first perform a “cleaning wax” by ironing in a warm wax such as Swix yellow or red and scraping away immediately before the wax cools.

Synchronize to the storm cycle

The best place to skate ski follows a predictable pattern after each fresh snowfall. If less than 5 inches falls, you can probably ski just about anywhere that has a packed base. If greater than 5 inches fall, stick to the roads on the storm day and possibly the day after. Next, areas that receive consistent snowmachine traffic, such as Exit Glacier road, Bear Lake, and Trail River Campground road, typically come into shape. Finally, by a couple of days after the storm, areas that rely mainly on grooming, such as Mile 12 and the high school, will usually be ready.

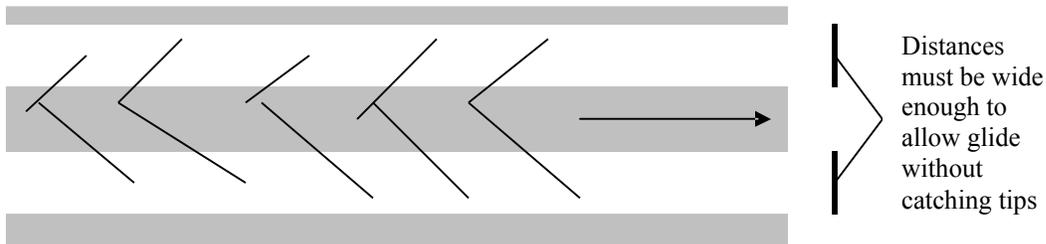
If rain comes along, get out your skis! Some of the fastest, most fun skate skiing occurs when the snow surface is warmed and moistened. The skiing will continue to be good until too much rain turns the snow to slush (often at least a day or two of rain), or a freeze comes along. Re-frozen snow is basically useless until it is milled again by groomers or snowmachines.

Follow the trail reports

One can really get a feel for how conditions change daily by sharing info with other skiers. If you wish to join our trail update forum and receive nearly daily conditions reports from other members, email us at sewardnordicski@gmail.com and we'll get you signed up! It really helps to avoid the guesswork and save on time and gas.

Learn to manage ridges and ruts

A good skill to have that will increase your number of potential ski days is to learn how to negotiate the ridges that remain after a few snowmachines or vehicles have passed through your intended route. Simply straddle the ridge that has the most flat space on either side of it. It is easy to lift your tails and set them back down on the ridge, and one leg glides off each side of the ridge (see figure below). If there is not enough room to glide without your tips going into an adjacent ridge, don't bother trying to skate ski. It is very difficult and frustrating to ski if your tips are getting caught.



Skate skiing over ridges. The gray boxes represent ridges. Straddle the ridge with one ski gliding off each side, and make sure there is enough distance to glide without catching your tips in the adjacent ridges.

Use a headlamp

The emergence of LED headlamps in the last 5 years has revolutionized what can be done in the dark months of the year. The headlamps are now bright, lightweight, and energy efficient enough to perform without head or neck discomfort. To see the surface of the snow with pretty good detail, I would recommend a headlamp that delivers 3 watts. Considering how many dark nights we have after work in our winter, a good headlamp is well worth the investment.

Your enemies: wind and cold

Once the temperature drops below 10 degrees, glide is significantly impaired. On cold days, apply hard cold wax like Swix green and wait until the afternoon for the snow surface to warm a bit. Gliding comes to a halt below zero degrees. On highly windy days, stick to areas in the trees such as Mile 12 and Trail River Campground.

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Any businesses interested in sponsoring the Ski Club, contact sewardnordicski@gmail.com. Thank you for your interest! Your donation is tax-deductible.

Mission Statement

The Seward Nordic Ski Club is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting Nordic skiing for all ages, developing and maintaining a network of groomed trails, and sponsoring community ski activities and educational opportunities.

The Seward Nordic Ski Club * PO Box 2082, Seward AK 99664 * sewardnordicski@gmail.com
<http://sewardnordicskiclub.org>