



# Seward Nordic News

The quarterly newsletter of the Seward Nordic  
Ski Club

2008-2009 WINTER Second Edition

## Announcements

- We recently mailed membership receipts and our new trail maps to all of our members. If you did not receive these, we may have an incorrect address on file for you. Please email us at [sewardnordicski@gmail.com](mailto:sewardnordicski@gmail.com) to make any additions or corrections. We've had a record number of memberships this year! Thanks for all of your support.
- Our newsletter has gone electronic! If you are still receiving a printed copy of the newsletter but would prefer to receive it via email instead, contact us at [sewardnordicski@gmail.com](mailto:sewardnordicski@gmail.com). The newsletter is delivered in a PDF format and is typically easy to print.
- We have new trail names to announce! The Mile 12 Ski Area will now be called its original, historic name: The **Divide Ski Area**. Within this area, we have 5 new names. The two main loops have been renamed via our contest, with the names chosen by the Board from several excellent entries. The Green Loop will now be called the **Luna Loop** (name submitted by Lori Angove) and the Gold Loop will now be called the **Paradise Loop** (name submitted by Joy Michaud). The small connector trail, which drops parallel along the highway to the parking area, will be called **The Sitzmark**, named by Mark Luttrell. In honor of Dan and Madelyn Walker and all their hard work and contributions to the Ski Club over the years, the meadow will now be called **Madelyn's Meadow** and the area used as a sledding hill **Dan's Drop**. Thanks to all who submitted suggestions and ideas!

## Upcoming Events

**Seward Community Ski Day:** Our annual Ski Day is set for Saturday, March 7. Preliminary plans include a community-wide ski race and ski clinics. The skijor race will likely happen later in the season. We'll keep you posted as the details unfold!

**Seward Winter Film Series, January:** "The Bering Strait Odyssey", AVTEC Auditorium Tues. Jan. 20, 7-9pm. Join world adventurer Troy Henkels as he shares the journey he and fellow traveler Dixie Dansercoer made in their 2005 attempt to go from Alaska to Russia and back across the Bering Strait.

## Calendar

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month** - *Seward Winter Film Series*, AVTEC auditorium 7pm-9pm

**February 1** - Ski for Women 4K, Anchorage

**February 28** - Ski for Kids, Anchorage

**March 5-8** - National Master's Cup Series, Anchorage

**March 7** – Seward Community Ski Day

**March 8** - Tour of Anchorage 25K/40K/50K

**March 14** - Kachemak Bay Ski Marathon 25K/40K, Homer

**March 15** - Oosik Classic ski race 25K/50K classic, Talkeetna

**March 21** - Ski Train to Curry

**March 29** - Ski to Sea Triathlon 5K Run/7K Bike/5K Ski, Homer

## News

**Trail Map and Divide Ski Area History:** Mark Luttrell has unveiled the first edition of the Seward Area Ski Trails map and the detailed Divide Ski Area map. The Mile 12 Ski Area was originally known as the Divide Ski Area, given that name in 1939 because it is the watershed divide between the Resurrection and Kenai River drainages. Check out an interesting website about the history of the ski area at Mile 12: <http://www.alsap.org/Divide/Divide.htm>. The new maps were distributed at the General Membership Meeting, and were mailed to all Ski Club members. This was the culmination of countless hours of work. A huge thanks to Mark!

**Moonlight Ski:** Seward area skiers howled at the moon on a frigid Friday Dec. 12 for our first Moonlight Ski of the season. Sam Young groomed a trail along the shore of Kenai Lake from the Primrose Trailhead area, and a bonfire kept everyone toasty. There was a great turnout, and we're hoping to have another Moonlight Ski Event for the full moon in February. Watch your email for details as the date approaches.

**New board members:** At the General Membership Meeting held December 16, new board members were elected. The new board will consist of: Bob Barnwell, MaryLynn Barnwell, Darin Bell, Jennifer Bell, Catherine Bodry, Duane Chase, Ann Ghicadus, Tom Gillespie, Jen Haugh, Carlyn Nichols, Dennis Perry, Julie Robinson, Ray Robinson, and Herb Wottlin. The officers will remain the same.

**New Rental Ski Equipment:** The Ski Club has purchased \$6000 in new cross-country ski equipment for elementary through high-school aged students. The new equipment is in a variety of sizes, and includes both classic and skate gear. We were fortunate to receive a \$3000 grant from the Alaska Ski Educational Foundation for this, and matching funds were obtained from the Seahawk's Boosters Club and the City of Seward. The Club has leased a storage facility to keep this gear secure, and will ask for an \$80 deposit on this new rental gear, as opposed to the usual \$40 deposit. Thanks to the groups funding this, and to Barney's Sports Chalet for giving us a great deal on the equipment. Extra special thanks go out to Carlyn Nichols, MaryLynn Barnwell, and Ann Ghicadus for their dedication to purchasing the equipment and organizing the storage location.

**Grooming Update:** The groomers have been focusing their efforts on the Divide Ski Area, preparing it for the High School Boroughs Race that occurred on Saturday, January 10. The Pisten Bully has been put back into action, thanks to efforts from our groomers Tom Gillespie, Terry Federer, Duane Chase, Herb Wottlin and Dan Walker. Many others helped with the repairs, including Dennis Butts at Quality Marine who welded a part, Kent and Lisa Rininger who graciously let us use their shop this fall, and Metco, who once again came through with use of their shop for repairs this winter. Thanks to all!

We've also had problems with our BearCat snowmachine, but hopefully that will be up and running again soon, whipping Bear Lake into shape as the weather finally warms. Jason Aigeldinger out in Moose Pass has been consistently grooming Trail River Campground, as well. Have you hugged a groomer today?

**Ski Club Supports Local Junior Musher:** The Ski Club is proud to support Travis Beals, a junior in high school and avid dog musher. The Club has made a small donation to his efforts, and encourages others to consider supporting him as well. Travis recently competed in the Clamshell Classic, a 40-mile race in Kasilof. His next race will be the Willow Junior (100 miles) on Jan. 30, and then he hopes to run the Jr. Iditarod (180 miles), the Jr. Yukon Quest in Fairbanks (120 miles) and the Tustumena in Soldotna (50 miles). He can be reached at [travis\\_beals@hotmail.com](mailto:travis_beals@hotmail.com), and you can join his email list to follow his progress. Good luck Travis!

**Skate Ski Clinic:** While on the trails, did you ever come across a mob of enthusiastic skate skiers? That was probably MaryLynn Barnwell's skate ski clinic, which recently concluded a highly acclaimed 4-session season. It is rumored that everyone successfully graduated. Thanks MaryLynn for your hard work on this popular clinic!

**Wax clinic:** Bob Barnwell, MaryLynn Barnwell, and Ray Robinson demonstrated hot wax technique to 16 ski club members in late November. The feedback from the participants was very positive, and this clinic will likely be an annual event. Thanks Bob, MaryLynn, and Ray!

**Homer Grooming Clinic:** The Kachemak Ski Club hosted a 2-day statewide grooming clinic Dec. 14 and 15 in Homer. Representing our club was Tom Gillespie, Terry Federer and Jason Aigeldinger. They reported excellent training and are looking forward to trying out some of their new grooming tips. They also picked up some leads for additional funding for the club.

## Member Spotlight: Mark Luttrell



Mark Luttrell was a natural pick for this month's member spotlight, given all his hard work recently on the Trail Maps. That has been a project on the "To Do List" of the Ski Club for many years, and Mark magically appeared this fall with the ambition and dedication to complete the entire project.

Mark moved to Seward in 1984, "to be close to the planet's greatest wilderness". He was already an avid skier at that point, having started backcountry skiing in 1970 in the Wasatch Mountains near Salt Lake City.

Mark is the President of the Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance, and he enjoys sea kayaking, especially in Prince William Sound. As he explains, "It is sort of like backpacking, but I can carry four times as much stuff and get an arm's length away from the intertidal world."

You'll often find Mark out skiing with his partner Ann Ghicadus, and their dog, Sunny.

***Favorite Ski Trail:*** Divide Ski Area

***Favorite Trail Food:*** gorp

***Favorite Post-Ski Drink:*** Tim Johnson's handcrafted IPA – delicious!

# Tech Tips

by Ray Robinson

## *Waxing 101: Basic Glide Wax Technique*

In the last issue we covered the basic tools needed for applying glide wax. Glide wax is applied to the bottoms of all skate skis. On classic skis, glide wax is applied to the front and back portions of the ski, outside of the “kick zone”.

### **Step One: Preparation**

Put on some clothes that you don't mind getting messy, or throw on an old apron. The waxing area needs to be close to room temperature, or some of the harder waxes will cool too quickly and won't cooperate when you try to scrape them. Secure the skis firmly if possible, ideally in a vice. Your brushing and scraping techniques need to be firm, and it can be challenging if the skis are squirring.

### **Step Two: Clean the skis**

At a minimum, remove any dust or residue with a damp cloth first so it doesn't end up in your wax. Many experts recommend a “cleaning wax” first to remove things like dirt, motor oil, pine tar, dog poop, or whatever else that might be embedded in your bases. To perform a cleaning wax, follow all of the next steps, but scrape away all of the wax immediately while it is still warm. Then apply a second layer of wax following the instructions below.

### **Step Three: Brush the skis**

Brush the skis using a brass (recommended) or stiff nylon brush. Do about 10 firm, vigorous strokes from tip to tail across the entire ski. This technique opens up the fibers of the base to accept new wax.

### **Step Four: Apply wax**

When you are new to waxing, I recommend dripping the wax onto the skis. This results in more wax scraped away and lost, but the thicker layer of wax prevents you from burning the base while ironing the wax in. Set the iron to the correct temperature for the desired wax. Once warm, hold the iron over the ski and touch the wax to the iron, allowing the wax to drip onto the base (see photo). Having drops spaced roughly 2 inches apart is good enough coverage.



An alternate technique for applying wax results in less wasted wax. Touch the edge of the wax to the iron until melted, and rub the melted edge against the base to “crayon” the wax to the base. You should avoid using this technique until you have some experience because you are more likely to burn your base when spreading the wax in the next step. I also recommend against using this method for cold (green) wax, because the iron is set at a higher temperature and can more easily damage the base.



#### **Step Five: Iron in the wax**

Keeping the iron at the same temperature, rub the iron back and forth along the base using smooth, broad strokes until the wax becomes completely liquid and transparent. Always keep the iron moving, or you will burn the base. Once all of the wax has been melted, run the iron from tip to tail in a couple of long, broad strokes to smooth out any remaining bumps or ridges.

#### **Step Six: Allow wax to cool**

You want the wax to harden before brushing and polishing.

A typical cool down time at room temperature is 10-15 minutes. Some skiers put their skis outside to speed up the cooling to a few minutes.



#### **Step Seven: Scrape off excess wax**

Holding the plexiglass scraper perpendicular to the ski base, pull the scraper from tip to tail to scrape off excess wax. The wax will come off in fine shavings. Repeat this process until little or no shavings come off. It is not possible to take off too much wax with the scraper. In fact, it is a common error with novice waxers to leave too much wax behind.

#### **Step Eight: Clean the edges and grooves**

As shown in the photos on the next page, the wax must be removed from the central groove using a plastic tool designed for this purpose.

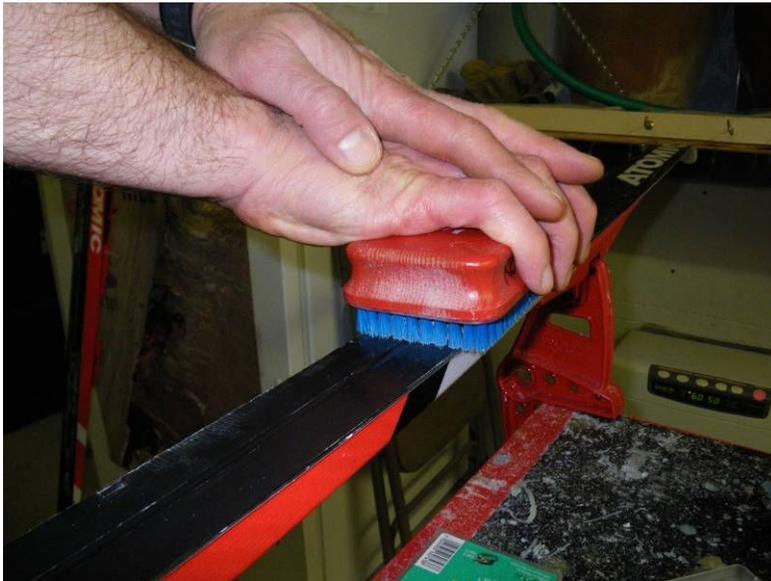
The same is true of excess wax that has run over the ski edges. If you forget to remove the wax from the edges, you will have difficulty controlling your ski.



### Step Nine: Brush and polish

The remaining excess wax is brushed away to expose the “structure”, or the textured arrangement of the tiny fibers in the ski base. This is also a technique that is often performed incompletely by novice waxers due to concerns that all of the wax is being brushed away. However, if even a tiny layer of wax remains covering the structure, you end up with more surface area of the ski in contact with the snow, and therefore, a slower ski. When brushed properly, the tiny, exposed, waxed ridges of the structure slide over the snow like little greased rails, and you have a fast ski.

Begin with, ideally, a brass brush. Press firmly with two hands against the ski base, and brush from tip to tail with 5-10 strokes that run the entire length of the ski. The harder (colder) the wax, the harder you need to press, and the greater number of strokes that are necessary to remove all of the excess. You will notice that more wax comes up in the form of a fine dust. A stiff nylon brush can be used in place of a brass brush, but it will require more strokes.



There are many variations at this point, but I tend to follow the brass brush by roughly a dozen strokes with a stiff nylon brush, then a dozen strokes with a soft nylon brush. After that, I polish the surface using about a dozen strokes with a fine brillo pad. The polishing is most important with the colder, harder waxes. Note that the differences seen with different techniques are very subtle here. Various brushes and brillo pads are available in the waxing section of your favorite ski shop, but there is no reason why you can't just keep it simple.

Examine the bases after you have finished. You should see no visible wax, but the bases will have a very shiny appearance when held up to a light source. Have a great ski!

To see these techniques in action, check out the **Swix School** at <http://www.swixschool.com>.

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Jen Haugh  
Carlyn Nichols – Ski Rental Program  
Dennis Perry – Honorary Board Member  
Ray Robinson – Membership, Newsletter  
Herb Wottlin - Grooming

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World Cup

Any businesses interested in sponsoring the Ski Club, contact [sewardnordicski@gmail.com](mailto:sewardnordicski@gmail.com). Thank you for your interest!

## 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.

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