

Oregon Nordic Club
Willamette Chapter

oncwillamette.org

P.O. Box 181
Salem, OR 97308



Newsletter
February 2026



by Jim Todd

As predicted a month ago, the Cascades did receive feet (2) of new snow in early January. Sadly this was followed by temperatures reaching into the 60's and periodic rains. Though there was a brief stretch of decent skiing, the Pass now has just a thin layer of hard crust and intermittent patches of bare ground. The skiing, if any, is suboptimal. But there is still plenty of winter left (whatever the groundhog has concluded) and patience may yet be rewarded. Keep your skis handy and be ready to head for the mountains as soon as snow falls.

TOUR REPORTS:

January 10, Saturday: Park Creek.

by Jim Todd

With deep, fresh snow on the Pass and only three trail breakers signed up, we decided to bail on the Benson/Little Nash Traverse. Instead Bob, Jeff and I stopped off at Big Springs and took the snowmobile route to Park Creek. Trail breaking was a bit rough in places,



but views of the Parks and South Pyramid were great.

January 11, Sunday: Big Lake

by John Hortsch

Tim, Roger, Peggy and I headed up to Ray Benson. I was up there a few days before and thought the conditions would not be great. The weather had been clear and there had not been any new snow. We circled the SnoPark parking lot, and at the entrance to the North Loop there were about 8 people heading out; but I didn't think the trails would be any good. Instead, we skied along the road to Big Lake. To our surprise, the campground loop had nice fluffy snow.



Trail breaking was pretty easy. We skied to the west end of the lake, found a picnic table that should have been buried in snow this time of year, had lunch and retraced our tracks. The snow was far better than I expected. We had a great time.

January 18, Sunday: Two Buttes Cutoff

by Jim Todd

If you didn't ski this weekend, you missed some beautiful weather; and intriguing snow conditions. Leading up to the weekend the Pass had highs in the 60's Tuesday and Wednesday with lows in the 20's Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The surface should have been rock hard ice, right? Wrong! Though the south facing slopes were solid, there was still enough give to the surface for decent grip. North facing slopes and shady areas had light, dry snow where we were sinking 2-4". I could scoop up a hand full of snow in the shade and blow it off my glove like feathers. Go figure.

Bob, Jeanne and I had great skiing, even though the pack was less than 2' deep. The only problem was the marked trails where traffic compaction and melt/freeze had left hard, unpleasant ruts. As a result we spent most of the day rambling off trail. From near the entrance to the North Loop we headed NW, then turned east and crossed both legs of the North Loop. We found an open ridge just south of the South Leg of the North Loop and followed it east to hit Two Buttes Cutoff near its junction with the North Loop. Along the way we found some great hilltop viewpoints.

Two Buttes was untracked so we turned south and followed it to Claypool Buttes. There was one new tree down across the trail and a couple of tricky water hazards but otherwise a good challenging ski. From there we turned west parallel to the Claypool Buttes trail, skied across the South Loop, turned north and skied parallel to Big Lake Rd. back the SnoPark. The best skiing so far this winter.



January 26, Monday: Lava Lake SnoPark

by Frank Hoffman

I did a trip to Lava Lake snopark, but to call it a ski is a stretch—it was mostly walking and carrying the skis. I skied the part of Pumice Loop that we'd worked on: it was clear and well defined and had nearly continuous if rock-hard snow. From the Pumice-Lava View jct, I headed SW on a section of the Lava View trail to it's connection with the 30 Snowmobile route. I walked it west to the gully where the road previously washed out; it's showing some erosion once again. I was actually able to put skis on for a couple of stretches on Rt 30 headed east back to the SnoPark. Again frozen hard, but skiable with skins. Clear, sunny, 26F early, overcast later, mostly calm wind.



January 31, Saturday: Hoodoo's Nordic Tracks

by Jim Todd

I must say Hoodoo's groomers were doing an exceptional job considering only a 16" base, warm temps, periodic rains and no significant snowfall for three weeks. But it isn't the snow you see in our Ski School poster. While some stretches look decent it's too shallow to set tracks and they are scraping the dirt in places. There isn't enough snow cover to get the groomer across the creek so they are only grooming the south ends of Hoodoo Mdw trail and Hayrick Glade trail and Sheep Springs Loop--about a third of the Lower Trails. Also our melt/freeze cycle creates more problems. The surface softened in the afternoon (50F), but in the morning (35F) it was hard, lumpy and slippery. I had poor grip and wouldn't have wanted a novice to begin on that sort of snow. Still, I skied all the trails 2-3 times and had a certain amount of fun; just needs a bit of fresh on top.



SKI GEAR REPLACEMENT DRIVE:

Generous members of the Willamette and Portland chapters donated skis, poles and bindings to replace equipment burned up in the McKenzie River RD warehouse fire last summer. Abe Quihuis, retired Wilderness Ranger from the Detroit RD also donated a pair of skis; and Next Adventure in Portland donated bindings and a pair of boots while Berg's Ski & Board Shop in Eugene fitted boots, gave us a substantial discount on new boots and shipped the boots to the Ranger Station for free. Thanks to everyone for stepping up and helping make our drive a success. Trails Coordinator, Riley McManus, will be skiing on the new gear at Santiam Pass this weekend.



Jim & Bob delivering skis to Trails Coordinator, Riley McManus at Ray Benson SnoPark.

Jan. 18, 2026

by Jeanne Miller

SKI SCHOOL:

In a bid for better snow and greater turn out, our Ski School was postponed from Jan. 24 to Feb. 7. Sadly the better snow did not materialize. Instead the pack has shrunk and turned rough and icy due to warm, sunny days and freezing nights. The snow is so thin Hoodoo has closed until more snow arrives. Thus we must postpone Ski School again. But do not despair. When snow falls and Hoodoo reopens, Ski School will be rescheduled. In the meantime, if you are a beginner or novice, consider joining us for one of our A Tours. Our tour leaders can accommodate any level of expertise and you can begin experiencing the joy of skiing.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI RACING:

Racing is not a primary focus of the Willamette Chapter, but the Winter Olympics begin this weekend with the first cross-country race on Saturday, Feb. 7. Jessie Diggins of Minnesota, current World Cup points leader, will compete in her fourth and final Winter Olympics--hoping to add to her three Olympic medals. On the men's side the US has a respectable team, with Gus Schumacher winning gold in a World Cup race earlier this season. And be sure to watch Jóhannes Hoesflot Klaebo of Norway--possibly the finest skier of all time. This season he's won gold in the Tour de Ski and is the current World Cup points leader. Last year he won gold in all six events at the 2025 World Championships--something no skier had done before.

For Winter Olympics visit:

<https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026>

and for World Cup skiing:

<https://www.fis-ski.com/cross-country>

WEEKEND DAY TOURS:

Snow has been scarce so far this season, but we are still trying to maintain a tour schedule. Check with the tour leaders listed below to see if they are headed to the mountains.

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.

February 7, Saturday: B Tour, north of Santiam Pass. Contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

February 8, Sunday: A Tour, Santiam Pass area. Contact Jeanne Miller (503x588x0473).

February 14, Saturday: Beginner/A Tour, wherever there is snow on easy terrain. Contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

February 14-15, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

February 21, Saturday: A Tour, location depending on snow conditions. Contact Jeff Starr (503x851x8403).

February 21-22, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

February 28, Saturday: A Tour, Santiam Pass area. Contact Jeanne Miller (503x588x0473).

February 28 or March 1, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, Ray Benson/Little Nash Traverse. Contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

March 7-8, Saturday or Sunday: B Tour, date and location depending on snow conditions and group interest. Contact Bob Young (503x621x6626).

March 8, Sunday: A Tour, Santiam Pass area. Contact John Hortsch (503x507x5727).

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 1 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
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
Peggy Mansfield	503x428x2475	pegevtay2@comcast.net
Bill Nelson	503x576x1278	bnelson at pacificomm dot net
John Peterson	406x381x9185	jpmountaingoat at gmail dot com
Foxie Proctor	503x581x0207	foxieproctor at comcast dot net
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 com

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:

Winter is sure to come back and we hope you do as well. Please renew your membership.

SNO-PARK PERMITS:

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.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI RENTALS:

There is a limited supply of rental equipment for XC skiing in the Willamette Valley. Current sources and prices are listed below. Please send us an email, if you know of other local sources for rental gear. We will include it in a future Newsletter.

Hoodoo Ski Bowl 541-822-3799 https://skihoodoo.com/rates/rentals/	\$25/day	Rossignol no-wax touring skis
Peak Sports 207 NW 2nd St Corvallis, OR 97330 541-754-6444 https://www.peaksportscorvallis.com/products/snowsports-rentals-pg252.htm	\$25/48 hr \$30/48 hr	Rossignol no-wax touring skis Rossignol metal-edged backcountry skis
Berg's Ski & Snowboard Shop 367 W 13th Ave Eugene, OR 97401 541-683-1300 https://www.bergsskishop.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQi-A7qP9BRCLARIbADaZzhpIPR5kCINoWrmO-LAwXP_hbuZImART_5XUvDSUPJbWu_LK6fTylzA-aAt2sEALw_wcB	\$15/day, \$10 2nd day \$25/day, \$15 2nd day \$40/day, \$30 2nd day	No-wax touring skis Skate ski package AT Package: skis, boots, poles & skins

Mountain Shop 1510 NE 37th Avenue Portland, OR 97232 503-288-6768 https://www.mountainshop.net/rentals/nordic.html	\$30/ two nights \$20/ two nights \$35 / two nights	No-wax touring skis Kid's touring skis Metal-edged backcountry skis
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2025-2026 OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS:

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