

Oregon Nordic Club

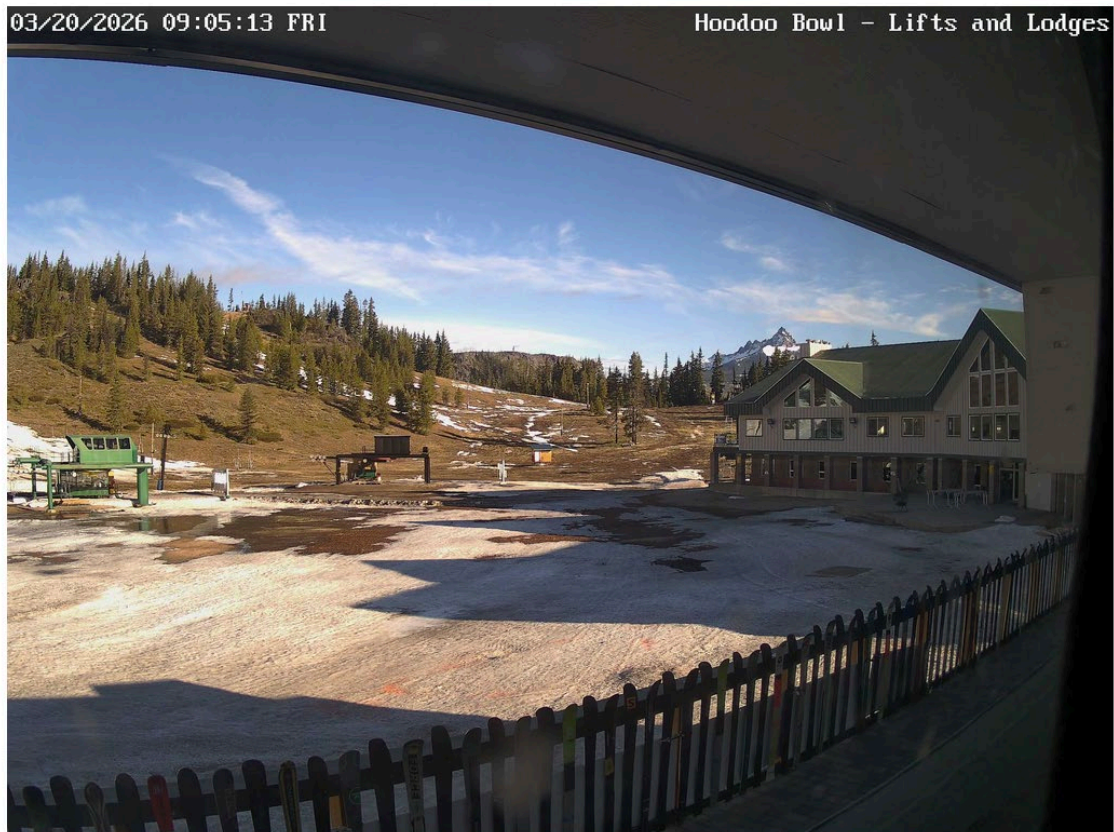
Willamette Chapter

oncwillamette.org
P.O. Box 181
Salem, OR 97308



Newsletter

April 2026



BASE AREA

It has been a ski season for the record book in the worst way: Ski School was canceled due to lack of snow (only the second time in 30 years), skiing essentially ended by mid-March and Willamette Basin snowpack was 5% of normal on April 1. But take the long view and remember we skied until May just a year ago. Be cheerful--it's only eight months to the next ski season. And if you look at NOAA for the pass Tuesday night and Wednesday could see 11" to 19" of snow. That's enough for a road ski if a window opens before it melts away. Don't give up!

PIZZA FEED

It's time again to get together and share the trips we did get, the ones we missed, and our hopes for next year. Let's try for Friday May 1, 5:30 at the usual spot. Paddington's Pizza 410 Pine St. NE, Salem 97301. Please let me know if you can join us so I can order enough pizza.
Bob Young - arch.byoung@gmail.com or 503-621-6626

TOUR REPORTS

February 21, Saturday: Skyline Trail

by Bob Young

I forgot to submit this report last month and it's noteworthy now because it ended up being the only skiing we got on the north side of Santiam Pass this season.

It was cold and windy and snowing pretty hard when Howard, Kim, and I set off to see if we could ski the north side of Santiam Pass for the first time this year. Just getting across the creek getting out of the sno-park was a challenge. A single log bridge, barely 2 skis wide was a precarious crossing. Logs and brush then tried to deter us but once we got to the Skyline trail it got better with just a few new downed trees to step over or duck under – offering an additional challenge for the return coming downhill. The snow did eventually stop but the wind was persistent. The snow though was fabulous and we had a couple of skiers out ahead of us so we didn't have to break trail the whole time. Staying on the west side of the ridge, due to the east wind, we caught up to the other skiers about noon and used their spot sheltered from the wind in the trees for a lunch break. Continuing on was getting into more small tree tangles so we decided to make our way back to maybe play on some of the more open slopes. Scantly covered logs, bear grass stocks, and manzanita had to be dodged but there were paths with 5" of 6" of soft snow that was very forgiving for lazy turns and it felt good to be out there getting a good workout. I'd say that the snotel report of 24" is a bare minimum to ski out here.



My hopes to get out on the north side of Santiam Pass for a second time this season were quenched by the week's rain and lots of exposed brush, downed trees, and rocks; so Jim and Howard joined me for a ski on the couple of inches of new wet snow out of Ray Benson. Starting parallel to the South Loop we skied around the south side of Hayrick and Hoodoo, basically following the route we use for the Little Nash traverse. The 4900' high point we normally cross and start skiing down was where we had to divert to stay on snow. The photos show this spot in 2019 with half the normal snowfall and this trip's sad lack of a skiable route. With a bit of bush-whacking we were able to reach road #858, followed it down to #860 and continued on roads for the remainder of the tour. Our diversion did however suggest that road #863 (which we have been using to get to the high point) connects to #858. The maps don't show these roads connecting, but we'll check this out on another exploration. Once back on roads we continued around the west side of Hoodoo and climbed up to their Skyline cross country trails. Since Hoodoo has not been using this area this year the snowmobiles have helped themselves to most of this terrain. We did have a nice spot for lunch where the sun almost came out and we got some nice views of Washington peaking through the clouds. Most of the trip was setting track about 2" to 3" deep. From here we decided to take the shorter route by continuing north to the Manzanita lift and Hoodoo downhill runs. After reaching the Hoodoo Bowl we crossed Big Lake Rd. and wandered our way back to Ray Benson. The day was a little over 8 miles, a good workout, and just good to be on the snow.



2026



2019

ski anywhere you like

A foot of snow predicted at Santiam Pass for April 1 and 2. Was this to be an April fools prank? No, it really happened and provided a one day window for perhaps the last ski of the season, so I took the opportunity. It was a beautiful day, lots of sun and great views of Three Finger Jack and Jefferson. Starting out from Hoodoo I climbed up the Over Easy run and cut off on NF 814 an 818, heading around the NW side of Hoodoo towards the Hodag lift. In the trees and shade the snow was fluffy and I was setting a 4" track. In the sun, which was a lot of the trail, the surface was stiffer and only set a 2" track. Not bad skiing at all, but by the time I was heading back there were a few puddles in low spots and everything was getting soft. There were a few people climbing Hoodoo and struggling to find a way back down and one skier and her dog coming out my track as I returned. I mostly followed my track back as it was easier in the softening condition. Turns coming down Over Easy were problematic and after a couple of falls and concern for the barely covered rocks I abandoned that effort and walked a section before returning to skis for the final bit back to the lodge. Definitely worth the drive for a long relaxing lunch enjoying the sun and views. Looking at Hoodoo cameras on Saturday, yeah snow was mostly gone. The last ski for the season?



WEEKEND or WEEK DAY SKI TOURS:

Skiing may have ended for the season, but the mountains are still there and can be traveled by other means. Try our weekday skier list if you need companions for an outing.

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
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 com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

by Bob Young

As winter wanes and spring is in full bloom there's plenty to be done to enjoy the outdoors and keep the body and our trails in shape for next winter. Many trails need to be scouted to determine where the most work needs done. The Salamanders and other Cascade Volunteer groups are busy trying to open trails that have been closed since the fires in Santiam canyon. Many of us are already signed in to Cascade Volunteers and if you are not it's pretty easy. They have all the scheduled projects listed and posted on a calendar making it easy to sign on. On March 31, I joined a crew working on a Little North Santiam trail bridge replacement. As I followed some of these bridge projects I've been trying to fit one into my schedule and finally did. The trail is still officially closed to the public and this was an opportunity to get out there, enjoy the river which is still beautiful, see the forest condition with new trees coming back, and work on a new task for me. These people are fun to work with. The work was hard and I was exhausted by the end of the day but it was so rewarding. You just need to try it and see how good it feels. Visit <https://cascadevol.org/> for more information.



Little North Fork Santiam River

Single stringer bridge in progress, cedar cut, hauled to the site, and stripped with draw knives for railing (next phase of the job)

The Willamette Chapter also has an active volunteer program focused on ski trail clearing and marking; shelter construction and maintenance; and firewood stocking. Thank you volunteers! The club will be scouting and clearing ski trails this summer and fall. If you have questions about our volunteer projects or would like to join one, contact Jim Todd (503x378x7003).

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