

# Cross Country Skiing

Weaverville Ranger Station - Shasta-Trinity National Forest



## Introduction

Cross country skiing has become a very popular winter sport for many people. Cross country skiers enjoy a high degree of solitude and physical challenge. It is not an expensive sport and anyone can participate, no matter what their level of experience. There are a number of areas in the Weaverville area that offer good to excellent opportunities for this activity. No attempt is being made, however, to identify all possible cross country ski areas. Cross country skiers are free to go anywhere they choose on the National Forests. Because none of the following areas are marked on the ground, this brochure will guide you to a few areas which you can choose from. These areas were identified with the help of local cross country ski enthusiasts.

## Things to think about before skiing

**Physical condition.** Cross country skiing can be very strenuous. Make sure your body, especially your heart, is up to it. It is wise to know your limitations!

**Skill level.** Don't choose an area that requires more skill or conditioning than you possess. Start out in areas more suited to your capabilities and gradually work up to the more difficult areas that demand higher skill levels.

**Equipment.** Want to have a really lousy time? Cross country skiing with skis or bindings that don't fit properly or which are wrong for the kind of skiing you wish to do can lead to a disastrous day. If you don't know what works and what doesn't, ask someone who does. Cross country

skiers are a notoriously friendly lot and are prone to offer good advice.

Rental shops and retail outlets are good places to ask too. Don't be afraid to explore the possibilities.

**Weather.** Always check on the day's weather forecast before you start out. If you plan to ski in unfamiliar terrain and a storm is imminent, plan on going out another day. Better safe than sorry. Be prepared for any kind of weather; it can change radically in a short time in the mountains, going from one extreme to the other very quickly. Always carry emergency supplies such as food, water, matches and protective gear with you, just in case.

**Hypothermia.** This dangerous condition is brought on by the gradual, and often unnoticed, cooling of the core temperature of the body. It is the result of several factors but most importantly, air temperature, wind chill factor, moisture, caloric intake, and improper clothing. The exertion of cross country skiing can raise the body's temperature and bring on a sweat within minutes often leading people to shed warm clothing quickly. As long as the level of exertion remains fairly constant, hypothermia is usually not a problem. BUT; when the level of physical activity drops off or stops, the core temperature of your body begins to drop in response, trying to keep the extremities warm. The best advice, BEFORE hypothermia sets in, is to dress in layers... layers that wick moisture away from the body. Pay close attention to what your body is telling you and adjust the layers accordingly, as often as need be... especially if you notice your hands and feet becoming cold. Become familiar with the symptoms of hypothermia and the treatment because this condition can be deadly.

**Things to take with you.** *WATER!* Satisfying thirst by eating snow can contribute to the onset of hypothermia, and is courting disaster. Take double the supply of water you think you will need. *SNACKS!* Cross country skiing takes a lot of energy, so never go without lots of high energy food and snacks. *SUN PROTECTION!* Snow can compound the effects of the sun many times over. Always take sun glasses and sun screen.

**Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.** Whether you prefer to go it alone or enjoy going with a group, always let someone know where you plan to ski and when you plan to return home. Be as detailed about your plans as you can be, just in case somebody has to come looking!

The great thing about cross country skiing is that all you need for a great day out in the woods is snow. Whether you enjoy the peace and quiet of skiing by yourself or with a group, all you have to do is drive to wherever the snow begins, step into the bindings, hoist your day pack and set off. There are no lines and there are no crowds... just you and the snow and the mountains.

The Weaverville District has several areas that are popular with cross country skiers and they are the places that we describe below. They have been identified and descriptions made with the help of local cross country skiing enthusiasts... ENJOY!

**NOTE: Numbers correspond to numbers on the map on the back of this brochure**

**Weaver Bally.** This route is best late in the spring when the gate on the access road is unlocked. When the gate is open, drive to the snow. You will ski on an easy to moderate route on an established road bed. Round trip to the Weaver Bally Lookout is approximately 10 miles depending on snow conditions. This route begins at approximately 3500 feet and climbs to 7000 feet.

**Low Gap.** This is a difficult cross country route that does not follow a road or a trail. The best time for this ski is in the late spring when the gate is open on the road to Weaver Bally. Drive to the snow, park, and leave the road at the saddle. You will climb from 4800 feet to 7000 feet on this ridge route.

**Kinney Camp.** Drive to the locked gate on the Kinney Camp road visible from, and just off of, Highway 3. This is a moderately difficult route that follows the road from the gate to Kinney Camp. There are several side roads to explore as well. It is 1 mile long and climbs from 3400 feet to 4000 feet.

**Buckeye Ridge.** This is easy skiing on existing road beds with lots of roads to choose from. You can get there by following Highway 3 to its junction with highway 105 just past the Rush Creek Bridge. The route begins at the summit of Buckeye Ridge on the south side of the highway. Highway 105 is not plowed in the winter but vehicles usually keep the tracks open. The route is described as being 5 miles long but that is only a general guide. The elevation is about 3200 feet.

**Montgomery Ridge.** This easy route begins exactly opposite the Buckeye Ridge route. It is accessed in the same way but begins on the north side of highway 105. You will ski on existing road beds that follow the tops of several ridges. There are 6 miles of roads at about 3200 feet elevation.

**Rainier/East Fork Stuarts Fork.** This is an easy route to ski. It follows a well defined road-bed and can be about 4 miles long depending on snow conditions. The route can be accessed from the south where Rainier Road joins

Highway 3 at the Mule Creek Station, or from the north where the East Fork Stuarts Fork Road joins Highway 3 just north of Guy Covington Drive. Drive to the snow and enjoy. There are lots of side roads to explore.

**Long Canyon.** This is a moderate to difficult ski that follows the Long Canyon Trail. You access it from the East Fork Stuarts Fork Road. Being familiar with the trail and how it lays during good weather is a definite plus unless there are ski tracks to follow. You will climb from 3700 feet to about 7000 feet over about 5 miles. There are excellent snow camping possibilities here.

**Bowerman Ridge.** This is an easy route that follows an existing road bed. The turnoff is signed along Highway 3. Just park along the highway, put on your skis and go. There are about 8 miles of road to follow with lots of cross country options when the snow is good. You will climb from 3000 feet at the Highway to about 4200 feet on the ridge.

**Swift Creek.** The best time to ski this route is in the late spring after the gate is unlocked (the gate is 4 miles up the road). Then you can drive to the snow and go, otherwise you may have to walk to the snow. The skiing is easy along the road but can range to difficult if you opt for skiing up the Swift Creek Trail. The elevation ranges from about 4000' to about 6000', depending on where you turn around. There are excellent opportunities here for snow camping.

**Boulder Ridge.** This is a moderately difficult 5 mile route that follows an established road bed. You access this ski at Goldfield Campground along Coffee Creek Road. The road is gated ¼ mile past the campground. Elevations range from 3000' at the gate to about 5600' at the top. Coffee Creek Road joins Highway 3 in the community of Coffee Creek.

**Coffee Creek.** This is easy skiing along the Coffee Creek Road bed which is not winter maintained beyond the last inhabited houses. Just drive to the snow, put on your skis and go. You can ski all the way to Big Flat if you feel up to it which can be a round trip of about 26 miles. Elevations range from about 3500' to 5000'.

**Union Creek.** The Union Creek Trail joins Coffee Creek Road just past the Coffee Creek Trout Farm. The trailhead is not signed on the road but is visible on the up-hill side of the road. This is an excellent, moderately strenuous, ski that offers all kinds of possibilities for wilderness touring and camping. The first 5 miles is on trail that follows an old road bed which is easily recognizable. The remaining distance is on actual wilderness trail. A good day ski is a round trip to the Two Mile Bridge and back. Elevations range from about 4300' at the trailhead to 5600' 7 miles in. There are lots of excellent opportunities all along the route for winter camping.

**Tangle Blue.** This route offers easy ski access to the Trinity Alps Wilderness. It is accessed at the Tangle Blue Road junction with Highway 3 as you start up Scott Mountain from the Coffee Creek side. Park along the

highway and head out. The route follows an established road bed for quite a ways before the road turns to trail. This is a wonderful area for winter camping. Elevations range from 3700' at the start of the route at Highway 3 to about 5600', depending on where you turn around.

**Masterson Meadow.** This is a moderately strenuous ski along an established road bed that is accessed off of Highway 3 at Dan Rice Creek on Scott Mountain. It is 3 miles long and climbs from 4500' to 5000'. Park along the highway.

**Scott Meadow.** This easy route is accessed at the summit of Scott Mountain on Highway 3. Park along the highway. It is a 2 mile round trip at 5300', unless you opt for tying in to the South Scott Route described next.

**South Scott.** Access to this easy route is the same as 15 described above but follows the Pacific Crest Trail west from the summit. You can tie into the Scott Meadow route with a moderately strenuous cross country ski over the ridge. The South Scott Route is described as being 4 miles long but, in actuality, you can ski as far west on the PCT as you would like or are capable of. Elevations remain fairly steady at 5300' along the suggested 4 mile route.

**Scott Mountain.** There are actually two routes here, both beginning in the same spot. Both routes are accessed from Highway 3 at Scott Mountain Summit. Park along the highway. The moderately strenuous route leaves the highway Scott Mountain Summit and climbs to the top of Scott Mountain following the Big Carmen route (described below) on an established road bed for 1 mile. After 1 mile, you climb on or very near the top of the ridge to the top of the mountain. The difficult route takes you 1/4 mile up the Big Carmen route on established road bed at which point you aim the skis uphill and follow the most open route to the top. It is steep all the way! Elevations range from 5300' at the highway to 6800' at the top of Scott Mountain.

**Big Carmen.** This is an easy ski, about 4 miles long. It is accessed from Highway 3 at Scott Mountain Summit. You ski on an established road bed at an elevation of about 5300'.

For information about other recreation opportunities, contact the Shasta-Trinity National Forest on the Internet at: [www.fs.usda.gov/stnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/stnf)

## Winter Camping

**Winter camping can be a marvelous experience if you know what you're doing and if you have the proper equipment.**

- If you have never been, take the time to develop adequate skills. Go with someone who has lots of experience, ask questions and get prepared.
- Invest in the proper equipment, especially warm clothing, an extra warm sleeping bag, an insulating ground pad, a stove that
- operates well in low temperatures and at high altitudes, and a good four season tent.
- Be prepared for severe weather with extra food, batteries for flashlights, and a good book.
- Know how to recognize, prevent and deal with hypothermia.
- Know where you are, memorize the lay of the land and know your escape routes.
- Learn about avalanche safety. Avoid areas that are particularly prone to avalanches. A full blown avalanche is almost impossible to outrun.
- Let someone know where you are going and how long you plan to stay.

## All Are Welcome

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## Cross Country Ski Areas in the Weaverville - Trinity Center Area

This is only a general guide. You will need a Map of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest or a commercially available topographic map of those areas in which you would like to ski. Forest maps are available at the Weaverville Ranger Station.

