



**Forest Service**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Snowshoeing on Naches Ranger District

## Snowshoeing basics

The primary concern for snowshoers, as well as all winter travelers, is being aware of your own abilities and limitations, as well as weather and avalanche conditions. Never travel in areas you are not familiar with, show evidence of avalanche activity, have obvious avalanche chutes, or steep slopes with heavy snow overhangs. Traveling in areas with heavy snowfall and adverse weather conditions should also be avoided. Before leaving home check the local weather and avalanche conditions by calling the Northwest Avalanche Center at 206-526-6677, or check out their web site at **[www.NWAC.us](http://www.NWAC.us)**.

Be familiar with avalanche warning signs and winter survival techniques and procedures. Take someone with you; the dangers of hiking alone are greatly magnified in winter. It is also important to dress properly and to know the signs for hypothermia.

Leave an itinerary, including a map, of where you plan to go. Give precise trailhead and trail descriptions and approximate times for arrival and departure, names of those in your party with phone numbers and addresses and vehicle descriptions. Make sure someone knows where this itinerary can be found. Stick to it.

### Plan your trip:

Maps may be downloaded onto your smart phone through a number of programs, such as All-Trails, Avenza, or Gaia. Most of the Washington State SnoParks maps have geo-imbedded data and are free to download from the WA State Parks Winter Recreation website. You must download the maps into the free app where you have an internet connection. Once at the snowshoeing site, you can activate the app, and it will show where on that map you are, using your phone's GPS system; while in use in this way, you do not need cell phone reception. Many handheld GPS units will allow you to do the same thing. Always carry a topographic map and compass as a backup.

**Check before leaving to make sure you have the proper permit, if required, such as a SnoPark permit if your plans include parking at a designated SnoPark. See SnoPark information on back page.**

### On your trip:

Concerning trail etiquette: Many of the trails you will travel in this guide will be ones that are shared with cross-country skiers, either at designated WA SnoParks or on some of the more dispersed trails. Cross-country skiing can be at least as physically demanding as is snowshoeing. Skiers lay down tracks as they go out, breaking through the snow and leaving the track. In wet, fresh snow, this can be an incredible amount of work. The skiers hope on the return trip that they can ski back on the tracks they've left, which makes it much easier and is the payoff for breaking trail on the way out. **If at all possible, Nordic trail etiquette says that snowshoers should try not to trample the ski tracks.**



# White Pass Snowshoeing

All descriptions assume you are driving west on US12 from the Naches area

Location/Name	Parking	Permit	Description
<b>N. Fork Tieton (Options 1 &amp; 2 easy, option 3 intermediate)</b>	N. Fork Tieton SnoPark	WA SnoPark	<p><b>1.</b> The trail runs northwest through the forest from the parking lot; joining the N. Fork Tieton road (1207) in about 1 mile. Continue onto FS 521, which crosses the Tieton river and then bear left to follow the road to an old logging storage area. Backtrack to return; there is no trail or route from the storage area back to the Tieton Road.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Leave the parking lot, headed east along the Tieton Road for about 25 yards. The trail then runs through the forest, crossing Round Mountain Road, and continues for about 3/4 mile. Cross the Tieton Road and continue into the Clear Lake Day use area, which includes two small loops that provide access to wildlife viewing shelters. Backtrack to return.</p> <p><b>3.</b> Round Mountain Road (FS 830). Proceed as above, but turn left and follow this road about 4.5 miles to the Round Mountain Trailhead. Again, an out and back trip. Spectacular views of the Goat Rocks on a clear day.</p>
<b>White Pass/PCT (intermediate)</b>	At the far eastern end of the White Pass Ski Area parking lot	None	This is the winter trailhead for the Pacific Crest Trail. Park at the far east end of the lot (just west of the bridge) , and go north...there are usually some tracks to follow. You will have to go across and along the groomed Nordic trails that are part of the White Pass Ski Area. You do not need a Nordic trail pass to use this 1/4 mile portion of the groomed trails to reach the PCT, but you do need a pass for any other parts of the groomed trails. Stay as far out of the groomed ski tracks as you can. Heading generally north , after a short bit you will enter the Leech Lake campground, and then soon hit the summer parking area for the PCT. Turn right (north) onto the PCT and follow the blazes/markers, or most often the well trod trail that leads to Deer Lake in a little over two miles, and continues on to Sand Lake in another half-mile or so. If you are up for it, from here you can easily explore the Tumac plateau, but remember, you have to snowshoe out as well
<b>White Pass maintenance shed road (easy)</b>	Small lot for ~10-15 cars.	None	This is road FR1284, about 3/8 mile west of the White Pass summit, and leads to the Washington DOT maintenance facility. Park, and simply go up the road, which ends in about 3.5 miles at the Sand Lake Trailhead. On a clear day, you have spectacular views of Mt. Rainier at the end. Note: This road does get a lot of snow play use, so expect lots of sledders and users who are walking up it for the first mile. After that, generally there will only be snowshoers and skiers.
<b>White Pass Nordic Ski Center</b>	On north side of US 12, at White Pass Ski Area	White Pass Nordic	Commercial ski area that has both groomed Nordic ski and snowshoe trails. See SkiWhitePass website for details.
<b>Tieton River/ Goose Egg Trail (easy)</b>	Goose Egg SnoPark	WA SnoPark	SnoPark is on Tieton Road (which goes around the back side of Rimrock Reservoir), about 1/4 mile from US 12. Park, and snowshoe on the groomed trail, which meanders through the woods, follows a road (FS 606) which parallels Tieton River, then heads back into the woods, and returns. One nice sidetrip is to continue on FS 715, which is right at the turn-around point, and continue on to old bridge abutments on the Tieton River, adding maybe 2/3 mile to roundtrip.
<b>Lost Lake Road (easy)</b>	Goose Egg SnoPark or Camp Ghormley	WA SnoPark for Goose Egg, none for Ghormley	The road to Lost Lake, FS1201, is generally plowed from the Tieton Road (east end) up to Camp Ghormley, which also plows to allow a couple of cars to park at the entrance to their camp. Park, and follow the FS road as far up as you'd like, which includes going to Lost Lake at about 5 miles, or Long Lake and its rustic shelter at about 7 miles.
<b>Bear Canyon (easy)</b>	Bear Canyon Parking Lot 5 miles past the Oak Creek Feeding Station, mp. 178.8 on US12	Discover Pass	This is an old road (FR1301)/trail leading from the parking lot, north for about 1/2 mile, then takes a sharp left turn to follow the creek for about 2 more miles. It eventually hits a forest service road (FR1401), so you could continue along the road system if you so desire. This canyon runs east-west, and remains in the shadows for most of the day, so that it is fairly cold at times. Also, this is a low elevation trail head (~2000 feet); it may not have enough snow some years for snowshoeing.
<b>Indian Creek (intermediate to advanced)</b>	Park at Indian Creek Road, at the west end of Rimrock Reservoir	None	Carefully park just off US12 at Indian Creek Road. Snowshoe up the road, passing seasonal cottages, and turn left onto FS 1308. Stay on this road until the end, arriving at the Indian Creek Trailhead at about 2.1 miles. This trail is easily passible for the next mile or two, but due to flooding a few years back, gets iffy the farther up you go. Ungroomed, unmaintained, but fairly level with few slopes up to the point where the old mining road veers off to the right (2.4 miles from the actual trailhead), and the trail would lead down into the canyon for a creek crossing (trail in 2020 was fairly impassible at this point).

# Chinook Pass Snowshoeing

All descriptions assume you are driving west on US12 from the Naches area

Location/Name	Parking	Permit	Description
<b>American Ridge Lodge/American River Ski Bowl (easy)</b>	USFS Information Kiosk	None	From WA410, turn left onto the Bumping River Road (FR1800), parking within 100 yards at the information Kiosk on the left. Parking is primarily maintained for users of the American Crossing Cabin and the American Ridge Lodge (both rentable), so be courteous about where you park. Walk on Bumping River Road another 100 yards to FR 318, turning right. Snowshoe up the road about 2/3 of a mile to the old American River Ski Bowl, and the Ridge Lodge. Explore the roads around the lodge, and maybe ask permission of the renters to take a look inside. Backtrack to return.
<b>American Crossing CG (easy)</b>	USFS Information Kiosk	None	Park the same as American Ridge Lodge. Follow the road from the parking lot into and through the campground. At the end of the campground loop there is access to the Cedar Springs Campground, which lets you extend your outing. On the way back, the CCC built covered picnic shelter makes a nice spot for a lunch break.
<b>W. Quartz Creek Falls (easy to Intermediate)</b>	Crow Creek SnoPark	WA SnoPark	Turn onto the Little Naches road (FR1900) from WA410, go about 3 miles to FR1902, turning left towards Raven's Roost. Go about 3/8 mile to the Crow Creek SnoPark. Alternatively, park at the intersection of roads 1900 and 1902, and walk upto the SnoPark. From there, go to the left, onto road 1920 (Fife's Ridge). After about 1 mile of uphill, turn right onto FR 1922 and continue about 1 flat mile to W. Quartz Creek. For views of the falls, you must head downstream a bit before the crossing, onto the bluffs that cradle the lower creek (caution!). Backtrack to return, or cross the creek and follow the West Quartz Creek loop trail back to FR 1902, turn right and return to the SnoPark (Difficult to follow in the snow)
<b>Fifes Ridge (intermediate to difficult due to distance)</b>	Crow Creek SnoPark	WA SnoPark	Park the same as W. Quartz Creek Falls. From there, go to the left, onto road 1920 (Fife's Ridge), continuing on 3.5 miles to 46° 59.05, 121° 10.257— there is a bend in the road to the right at this point. Now, turn left and walk cross country (at 120° from true North) a scant 100 yards, where you will intersect trail 952. Turn left and travel about 1.6 mile to the intersection with road 824. Again turn left and go about 0.5 miles back to road 1920, veering right onto the road, and then eventually back to the starting point (total of about 7.5 miles RT).
<b>Crow Creek CG/banks of Little Naches River (easy)</b>	Crow Creek SnoPark	WA SnoPark	Park same as W. Quartz Creek Falls. However, continue a short bit past the Crow Creek Sno Park on FR1902, crossing a bridge, then turn right to enter the Crow Creek Campground. Go through the campground, and soon approach the Little Naches River. Meander along the west bank of the river for a mile plus upstream, and eventually loop back to the campground, and then your car. No trail, but you are either along the river, or going through the campground. Nice short outing for beginners.
<b>Mesatchee Trail (easy to the American River crossing; intermediate to advanced for backcountry destinations)</b>	Mesatchee Trailhead, or Morse Creek / Bear Gap Road turnoff	None	Sometimes parking is available at the road leading to the Mesatchee trailhead, on WA410. If so, park, and snowshoe down the road (FR460) to the trail (969), then follow the trail for 1.5 miles, crossing Morse Creek on a bridge, and eventually coming to an end at the American River. If you can find a safe crossing, at this point you could continue on into the American River drainage, and after a 1/4 mile, you could go left onto trail 969, leading to Mesatchee Falls, or continue straight on trail 968. Alternatively, If you can't park at the Mesatchee road, continue west on WA410 to the Morse Creek road and park. Backtrack on WA410 for 0.3 miles, and on the right, there is a spur road that leads down to a diffuse campground, and the Mesatchee trail. In either case, backtrack to return.
<b>Morse Cr/ Sourdough Gap Road (easy)</b>	Morse Creek/ Bear Gap Road (FR462) just before the WA410 winter closure	None	There is usually room for 2-3 cars at the entrance to this road; if not, park at the road closure area. Snowshoe up the road, noting a waterfall on your left in Morse Creek about 1/2 mile in. In two miles you will reach the Clarence Truitt Memorial Cabin, also known as the Gold Hill Cabin. This is a privately-owned cabin, but the flat area in front of the cabin is a good place for lunch. Travel past the cabin can be dangerous due to potential avalanches. Snowshoeing here requires caution and a check of avalanche conditions on the morning of your trip. On the return, look for Mesatchee Falls on the opposite side of the valley as you near your car.
<b>WA 410 at Chinook Pass (easy)</b>	West end closure of WA410, at Morse Creek	None	It is 5 miles from this parking to Chinook Pass. It is a very dangerous avalanche zone as you go farther up this road towards the pass... be very aware of conditions, including forecasts from the Northwest Avalanche Center. Not advised to go more than about 3 miles up this road due to the hazards.

# Chinook Pass Snowshoeing – continued

All descriptions assume you are driving west on US12 from the Naches area

Location/Name	Parking	Permit	Description
<b>Richmond Mines TH Rd (easy)</b>	On Bumping River road (FR1800) , just past Bumping River bridge, approx m.p.10	None	Parking is a problem here, but there is usually space for a car tucked along the road, or park back at the old Bumping Crossing SnoPark, where there is usually space. Hike on Bumping River road until you reach the FR391 turnoff, scamper up the first hill and then mostly follow the Bumping River a couple miles on Tr 974, or turn right to the trailhead on Thunder Creek/Richmond Mine trail (TR973; difficult/advanced trail).
<b>Bumping SnoPark (easy)</b>	On Bumping River road (FR1800), about m.p. 11 (at the closure)	WA SnoPark	Groomed Nordic ski and snowshoe trails, see the WA State Parks Winter Recreation webpage for a map and description. Mostly flat, gentle hills, with the ability to continue up the road for many miles. Rambles along the shoreline of the lake. Alternately, park at the SnoPark, cross the dam, and follow the road through the cabin development, leading to the Bumping River Trail (TR971), which follows the north shore of the lake for 3-4 miles.
<b>Hells Crossing SnoPark (easy)</b>	On WA410 across from Hells Crossing CG	WA SnoPark	There are two parking lots generally at this site; one before the American River bridge, and one after it. For this site, park in the second (farthest west) lot. Groomed Nordic ski and snowshoe trails on the far (north) side of the highway mostly follow FS Trail 999: see the WA State Parks Winter Recreation webpage for a map and description. Also, from the same spot, beginners can cross the highway, and roam the campground area.
<b>999 Wilderness Trail (easy to intermediate)</b>	On WA410 across from Hells Crossing CG	WA SnoPark	Same site as above, but park in the first lot. FS Trail 999 leaves from this parking lot, and quickly enters the William O. Douglas Wilderness, thus there is no grooming, although the trail is very clear and (for this district) tends to get a number of visitors that help set a track. Trail goes west, paralleling the American River for about 5 miles, at which point you would reach WA410 again... from there, walk east on the highway to the Union Creek SnoPark, where you can rejoin the 999 trail for a return to Hells Crossing.
<b>Pleasant Valley SnoPark / 999 Trail (easy)</b>	On WA410 at Pleasant Valley Campground	WA SnoPark	This SnoPark is about 4 miles west of Hells crossing, and the non-wilderness 999 trail system to the north of the highway is accessed from here. Note: there is no way to cross the American River at this point and thus no way to gain access to the wilderness portion of the 999 trail.
<b>Pleasant Valley CG nature trail (easy)</b>	On WA410 at Pleasant Valley Campground	WA SnoPark	Instead of crossing the highway, enter the campground which allows you to visit the river and the CCC covered picnic shelter, as well as snowshoe a mile or so of interpretive trail within the campground.
<b>Union Creek (easy for Tr 999 travel, intermediate to advanced for backcountry trip)</b>	On WA410 at Union Creek Trailhead	WA SnoPark	This site allows two different trips... the easiest is to park, walk back down the highway past the cabin development area, and snowshoe the non-wilderness end of the 999 Trail, going as far as you'd like, then returning. Alternately, follow the Union Creek trail (TR956) , skirting one waterfall in about 1/3 mile, and coming to a view of the second and third waterfall in about 2.5 miles (one below the trail on Union Creek, and one above the trail on the North Fork of Union Creek just upstream of where you would cross the creek.

There is no universal guide for the rating of snowshoe trips. In this document, "easy" trips are fairly short and tend to follow a road. "Intermediate" trips are longer easy trips, or are short trips that are on trails that might be more difficult to follow when they are snow covered. "Advanced" is used for longer trips, generally with obstacles or extensive backcountry components.

**SnoParks:** The Washington State SnoPark program is a virtually 100% user funded program within the Washington State Parks department that provides money for locations for winter recreation throughout the state. Many of these sites are on National Forest or Washington State owned lands. Passes may be purchased at a number of local merchants and at the Naches Ranger District, but they are most easily bought on-line. The program is broken into motorized and non-motorized. Yearly non-motorized SnoPark pass sales provide the money for snow removal at SnoParks. Within the Naches Ranger District, there are currently four non-motorized SnoParks on the Chinook Highway system (Hells Crossing, Crow Lake Way, Pleasant Valley, and Union Creek) and one dual use (motorized and non-motorized) at Bumping Lake. There are two non-motorized parks on the White Pass Highway (Goose Egg and N. Fork Tieton). These sites generally have a plowed parking lot, outhouse facilities, and trails that are groomed, or groomed and tracked. When a trail is groomed and tracked, general etiquette is for snowshoers to use the area to the right of the tracks as you are headed out. In some areas, this is just not possible due to width of the grooming...in this case, snowshoers should try their best to just stay out of ski tracks.