Grouse Gap Nordic Ski Trails
Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District
Telephone: (541) 899-3800
http://www.fs.usda.gov/rogue-siskiyou

SEASON: Winter
LEVEL OF USE: Heavy
ELEVATION: 5,500-6,600 feet

Information: The first mile of the Grouse Loop Trail is easy; beyond the junction with the Summit Trail it is more difficult. Unmarked backcountry skiing opportunities can be found along the crest to the west beyond Grouse Gap.

The Grouse Gap Trail, a very scenic and popular trail, follows snow-covered Forest Road 20 along the crest of the Siskiyou Mountains to Grouse Gap Shelter (2.2 miles one-way, or 4.4 miles roundtrip). There are excellent opportunities for telemark skiing in several large open bowls. The first 0.5 mile from the Sno-Park to the bowl just past the restrooms is often used for snow play, snowboard jumping, and return access to Mt. Ashland Ski Area by out-of-bounds alpine skiers. This first 0.5 mile of the trail (a.k.a. “the gauntlet”) is almost always congested. After 1 mile, Forest Road 300 climbs to the right (north) to the top of Mt. Ashland (Summit Trail). The Grouse Loop Trail continues ahead, traversing the open bowl. Snowdrifts make it more difficult to recognize the roadbed through the open terrain, but ski tracks are normally present, and several posts with blue diamonds have been installed.

After traversing the bowl, the trail descends to Grouse Gap at 1.9 miles. The Grouse Gap Shelter is 0.1 mile to the south. The Southern Oregon Nordic Club stocks the shelter with firewood. You can return to the Grouse Gap Sno-Park via the same route or continue from the shelter on the "Connector" section of the trail.

The Summit Trail follows Forest Road 300 for 1.4 miles to the summit of Mt. Ashland at 7,533 ft. The route is unmarked but one can normally make out the snow cat trail to the electronic site on the summit. The climb is a steep one (900 feet elevation gain). Winds near the top can be extreme when storm systems are advancing, but on a clear day, the view is spectacular. Under icy conditions the trip down can be more than you bargained for.

The Connector Trail continues on the road (south) from Grouse Gap. The road descends gradually through forest and meadows. After 1 mile, visitors enter a plantation on private land and come to an intersection where they descend on the left (east) spur. The grade increases as you drop on this spur (if snow conditions are icy, you may want to turn around at this point). After about 0.4 mile, the trail turns left off the road onto a ridge. You continue to bear left and drop through the trees for about 0.25 mile at a fairly steep grade, then traverse a meadow. The last section through the trees is short and just above a road. When you intersect the road grade, continue left (north). After about 0.5 mile you intersect another road (#40S15) where you turn left again (north). After 100 meters, you cross Grouse Creek.

The Grouse Creek Trail lies between the Grouse Gap Section, which is 0.1 mile beyond the Sno-Park and Grouse Creek along road #40S15. Skiers with dogs may use the trail to Grouse Creek and back from the Sno-Park. Elevation gain from Grouse Creek to the Sno-Park is 650 feet.

Getting There: From Ashland, OR, take I-5 south to the Mt. Ashland Exit 5. Follow the sign to the Mt. Ashland Access Road (0.7 mile). Turn right onto the Mt. Ashland Road and continue 9 miles through the Mt. Ashland Ski Area parking lot to the Sno-Park at the far west end.
Considerations: The area beyond the Sno-Park is closed to off-road motorized travel and the Nordic trails are closed to motorized travel from November 15th to April 15th and when snow-covered. Dogs are not allowed beyond the restrooms and picnic area located 0.3 mile beyond the Sno-Park on the Grouse Gap section. On “good weather” weekend days, the Sno-Park is generally full before noon.

You must have a valid Sno–Park permit displayed near the lower left corner of the windshield of your vehicle if you park in a designated winter recreation parking area (Sno–Park) between November 1 and April 30.