

**Canyon Rim/Bear Gulch/Mesa Falls Cross Country Ski Trail Guide
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
Ashton/Island Park Ranger District**

⊛TRAIL DESCRIPTION⊛

⊛ **Loop 1:** 3.8 miles long, the ski trail starts from the Bear Gulch parking lot on Highway 47. The first 0.4 miles is shared with snowmobiles and climbs at a 6% grade. The ski trail starts on the left hand side of the snowmobile trail. The southwest part of the trail runs along the canyon rim. Much of the canyon rim side is exposed which offers a spectacular view of the canyon and the Henry's Fork River, but can also be very windy at times. The trail runs in and out of the trees. The terrain is rolling and hilly on the canyon side. The northeast side of the trail is less hilly and more protected by trees. This side of the trail parallels the snowmobile trail.

⊛ **Loops 1 & 2 (round trip):** 5.9 miles; the southwest side of Loop 2 runs along the canyon rim up to the Grandview Overlook where you can stop and see Lower Mesa Falls from a distance. Coming back, the trail runs through the Grandview campground and then through trees down to Loop 1. The terrain is hilly and rolling.

⊛ **Loops 1, 2, & 3 (round trip excluding Upper Mesa Falls):** 7.5 miles round trip (perimeter) Loop 3 is not technically difficult to ski, but at the very end of Loop 3 you are 3 miles from the parking lot.

⊛ **Loops 1, 2, & 3 (round trip) to Upper Mesa Falls:** 9.1 miles with the last 0.8 miles shared with snowmobiles. The trail is downhill (6% grade) to Upper Mesa Falls. Upper Mesa Falls is beautiful in the winter - watch your step on the snow covered walkways. Loop 3 is not technically difficult to ski, but when you add in the trip down to Upper Mesa Falls, you are 3.8 miles from the parking lot (and you still have to ski back UP the hill), thus you should probably be prepared for a long day trip. The southwest side of Loop 3 parallels the snowmobile trail, while the northeast side runs through the trees on the east side of the snowmobile trail.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Winter time presents unique challenges in minimizing your impact on the land. Please follow these recommendations during your ski trip.

Human Waste

In winter, with snow covered ground, utilize toilets where available. Where toilets are not available deposit fecal material on the snow surface at least 200 feet from all water sources in areas not likely to be discovered by others. Burn or pack out used toilet paper. Yellow snow creates a visual impact, always cover urine stains with snow.

WILDLIFE

Give animals the right of way. Deer, elk, and moose work hard to survive during the winter.

They also may become aggressive and charge at you if disturbed.

Observe them from a distance.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is the mental and physical breakdown from overexposure to cold and/or wet conditions. Signs may include shivering, disorientation, stumbling, and drowsiness. To treat; restore body temperature with warm drinks, body contact, and blankets. Prevent hypothermia by eating before you leave, staying warm and dry and avoiding exhaustion.

FROSTBITE

Frostbite is caused by exposure of skin to subfreezing temperatures. It can be recognized by loss of feeling and a dead white appearance of the skin. If affected, DO NOT RUB. Restore body temperature as rapidly as possible, preferably in a water bath of 105° or less. Seek a location, as soon as possible, where treatment can be obtained.



**USE COMMON SENSE
AND COURTESY WHEN
ENCOUNTERING OTHERS**



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Ashton Ranger Station	(208) 652-7442
Island Park Ranger Station	(208) 558-7301
Harriman State Park	(208) 558-7368
Sheriff	911
Ambulance	911
Idaho State Police	(208) 525-7277
Cellular	Dial *ISP

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- * Leave word with someone on your destination and time of return.
- * Proper clothing to suit weather conditions. Use layers of clothing.
- * Extra food
- * Matches
- * First Aid Kit
- * Candle and Lighter
- * Flashlight and Whistle
- * Tarp for temporary shelter
- * Map and Compass
- * Hatchet
- * Water
- * Know the weather forecast!

SNOWSHOERS and PEOPLE with SLEDS

Snowshoers and people pulling sleds should stay to one side of the groomed trail in order not to destroy the set track.

PETS PROHIBITED

Dogs are prohibited on ski trails. They damage groomed trails and tend to scare off the wildlife.

