

Contact Information



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Silver Crest Trails Association



Helena-Lewis and Clark
National Forest
1220 38th St N
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-791-7700
~

Belt Creek Ranger Station
4234 US Hwy 89 N • Neihart, MT 59465
406-236-5100



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Guided Hikes (equipment provided)

Montana Wilderness Association Winter Wilderness Walks take place across the state. Check wildmontana.org for a full schedule.

Winter Trails Day at Silver Crest is typically held in early February. Call the Forest Service for more information.

v. 17-1

Other Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Opportunities along Highway 89

The Little Belt Mountains provide a multitude of opportunities for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Snow depths near Kings Hill Pass average 50-70 inches annually, and the ski season in higher elevations can run from November through May.

Ungroomed, Marked Trails

O'Brien Creek Trail 7 miles - Moderately Difficult
Starts at Kings Hill Pass on Highway 89, and traverses the O'Brien Creek drainage to its end in Neihart. A car shuttle is required to ski this trail one-way. Watch for snowmobiles on the lower portion of the trail. Dogs are allowed.

Ranch Creek Trail 10 miles - Difficult
Starts at Kings Hill Pass on Highway 89, climbing Porphyry Peak to the ridge, and then follows Mizpah Ridge, making several steep runs before entering clearings above Mizpah Bowl. Stay on the Trail - Mizpah Bowl is avalanche-prone. The trail proceeds to the head of Ranch Creek, and then drops into Ranch Creek, following a logging road out to Highway 89. A car shuttle is required to ski this trail one-way. Watch for snowmobiles on the lower portion of the trail. Dogs are allowed.

Deadman Ridge Trail 7 miles - Difficult
Starts at Kings Hill Pass on Highway 89, following a forest road behind Kings Hill Cabin to Deadman Ridge, along which it proceeds south until it drops into Deadman Creek and reaches the highway. The lower portion of the route is not completely marked, and skiers should travel with someone familiar with the route. A car shuttle is required to ski this trail one-way. Dogs are allowed.

Other Recommended Places

Jefferson Creek Road 267 - Beginner
60 miles south of Great Falls on Highway 89. This road and area are closed to motorized vehicles in the winter and offer ungroomed opportunities for beginner cross country skiers and snowshoers. The trail is a gentle hike along Jefferson Creek road, ending in an open meadow. The round-trip is approximately 8 miles, but users can turn around at any point and shorten their trip. Dogs are allowed.

Crawford Creek - More Difficult
This moderate trail starts behind the Belt Creek Ranger Station and crosses back and forth across the creek as it climbs approximately 2 miles west. Please leave gates as you find them, and do not cross the private land at the top of the trail without permission. Dogs are allowed.

Memorial Falls - Beginner
60 miles south of Great Falls on Highway 89, this is a short 1/2 mile hike to a picturesque waterfall. The Memorial Falls Trailhead might not be plowed; in this case, park at the Jefferson Creek Road parking area 1/2 mile south of Memorial Falls Trailhead. Dogs are allowed.

Area History

The Silver Crest Ski Area is on the historic Kings Hill Scenic Byway, US Highway 89, the 71-mile route between Armington Junction on US 87 and US 12 near White Sulphur Springs. By 1919 much of the old route was completed. At that time, the Little Belt Mountains were part of the Jefferson National Forest. The photo below shows the county line at Kings Hill Pass in 1925.



The names of the trails at Silver Crest reflect the last 130 years of mining and timber history in the area.

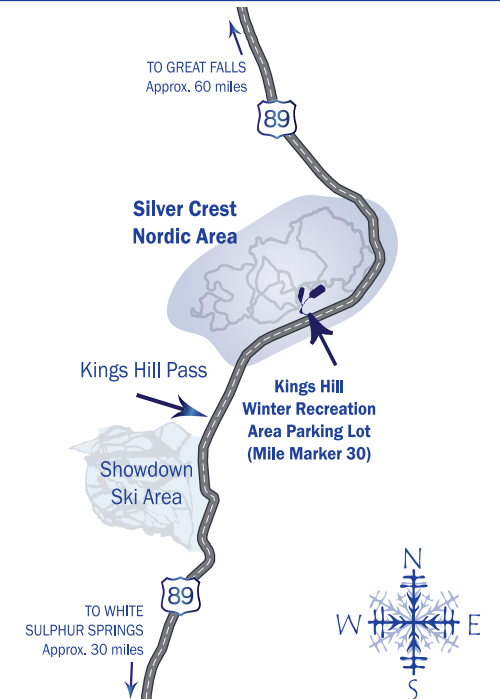
Ski Trails

Silver Dyke is a mine in the Neihart Area, and refers also to veins of silver deposits. **Wu Tang's Way** is named after a Chinese laundry in Neihart that served miners for decades. **Gold Run** is a mine in the Barker-Hughesville area. **Eureka!** is an exclamation miners made when they struck gold. A **sluice box** is a device used in placer mining that has riffles on the bottom to catch the heavier gold as water flushes material from one end to the other. **Quicksilver** was a commonly used name for mercury, which was used in the processing of gold and silver. **"89'er"** refers both to U.S. Highway 89 and gives a nod to a significant period in the history of Neihart and Kings Hill. **Homestake Meadow** refers to the homesteaders who made their claims in the area. **Neihart Flyer** refers to the train, often called the "Fish Train," that took supplies, materials, and passengers to and from Great Falls to Neihart for over 50 years.

Snowshoe Trails

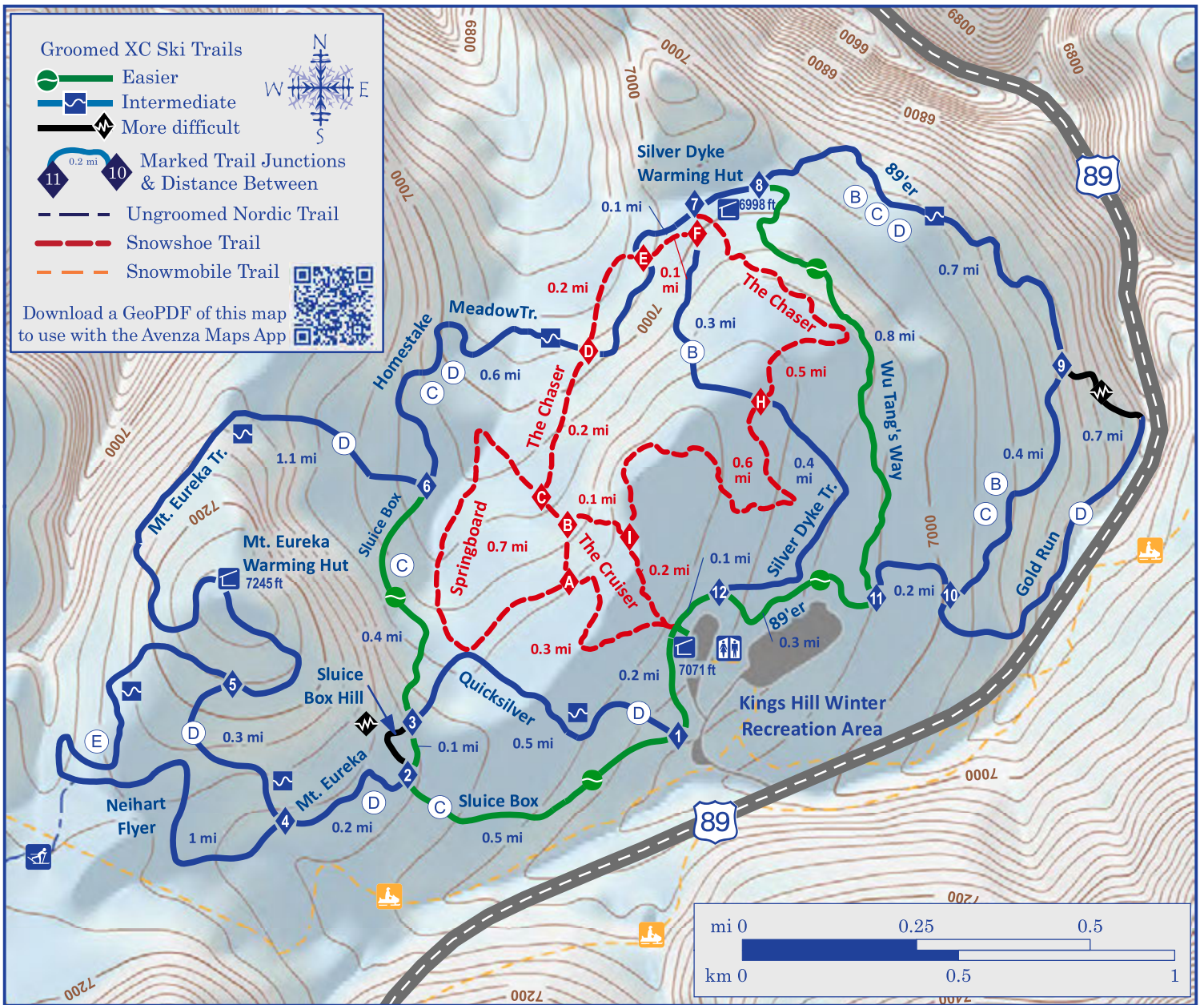
Springboards were flexible platforms on which early loggers stood to fell a tree. **Cruisers** survey timber stands and estimate the quality and amount. **Chasers** are loggers who unhook logs from skidders or cables.

Silver Crest Winter Trails



Silver Crest Trails Association works in partnership with the United States Forest Service under a land use contract, and with the Kings Hill Grooming Association and Showdown Montana Ski Area for contracted grooming services.





Trail Etiquette: It is each skier's duty to ski responsibly, under control, able to stop, and with consideration for others. Be courteous. You may encounter skiers of different abilities along the trails. Pass on the left if overtaking a slower skier, giving audible signals when passing. Don't block the trail and be watchful for oncoming skiers, particularly on uphill and downhill sections or where visibility is limited. On ungroomed routes, snowshoers can protect established ski tracks by staying to the side, not on the ski tracks. No snowshoes are allowed on groomed ski trails.



Cross Country Ski Trails

Using Ski Trails: Use of groomed and ungroomed trails is free to the public. No dogs, snowshoes, or other forms of transportation are allowed on groomed ski routes in order to keep the groomed surfaces in good condition for skiing and to keep the trails safe.

Silver Crest Groomed Ski Trails

All trails are two-way travel. The ski trails are identified on the map by loop (B, C, D, E) and by trail name. The distance between major junctions is marked on the map.

Ski Loops:	Individual Trails
Loop B 2.7 mi. 4.3 km	89'er 1.6 mi. 2.7 km.
Loop C 3.9 mi. 6.2 km	Gold Run 0.7 mi. 1.1 km.
Loop D 5.2 mi. 8.3 km	Homestake Meadow 0.9 mi. 1.4 km.
Loop E 1.0 mi. 1.6 km	Mount Eureka 1.7 mi. 2.7 km.
	Neihart Flyer 1 mi. 1.6 km.
	Quicksilver 0.5 mi. 0.8 km.
	Silver Dyke 0.9 mi. 1.4 km.
	Sluice Box 1.1 mi. 1.8 km.
	Sluice Box Hill 0.1 mi. 0.2 km.
	Wu Tang's Way 0.8 mi. 1.2 km.



Only Skis are Allowed
On Groomed Ski Trails

Avalanche Safety & Awareness

What are the RED FLAGS of unstable snow pack?

- ◆ Recent avalanche activity
- ◆ Wind
- ◆ Heavy Precipitation
- ◆ Cracks in the snow surface
- ◆ Rising temperature

Be Informed, Be Trained!

The Forest Service National Avalanche Center web site has online avalanche awareness & skills training:

<http://www.fsavalanche.org/>

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center in Bozeman offers classes and more local condition information:

<http://www.mtavalanche.com/>



Snowshoe Trails

There are three loops designated for snowshoes inside the Silver Crest Cross Country Ski Area. You can also travel the outside of all of the loops for a longer loop. The trails are marked with red diamonds to distinguish them from the cross country trails. When snowshoe trails cross groomed ski trails, please cross in the shortest distance possible. Snowshoeing is not allowed on the groomed Silver Crest ski trails.

Snowshoe Loops		
The Cruiser	0.7 mi.	1.1 km.
Springboard	1.3 mi.	2.1 km.
The Chaser	2.2 mi.	3.5 km.
Chaser- Springboard- Cruiser	2.7 mi.	4.4 km.

All distances measured from trailhead



On
Snowshoe
Trails

Need snowshoes?

The Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest has a limited number of snowshoes in various sizes that can be checked out with no charge for three days. See our contact information on the back of this map.

◆ Plan your route and stick to it. Let someone know where you are and when you plan to be back.

◆ Getting Lost: Even light snow and wind can cover your tracks and make finding your way back hard. Plan for the worst. Carry a compass and map and know how to use them.

◆ Cold Weather Injury: To prevent frostbite and hypothermia: Stay dry. Wear a base and middle layer with a water resistant-breathable outer layer, and don't wear cotton. Stay aware of changing conditions. Carry fire-starting tools, emergency blanket, dry socks, extra food, water, and extra layers of clothing. Use waterproof gaiters and waterproof boots. Stay well hydrated.



Know the Forecast! Check the weather and forecast before you go, and be prepared for changes. This QR Code will take you to the National Weather Service Current Condition and Forecast page at the nearby Porphyry (PHYM8)
Lat: 46.835278°N Lon: 110.7175°W, Elev: 8232 ft.