



## Annual Free Lesson Day

On Saturday, January 19, we will be offering our annual “FREE SKI LESSONS” for anyone who is interested in attending. We especially welcome first-time skiers and those who simply want to improve their basic skills. Lessons will begin at 12:00 noon from the trailhead parking lot.

We’re looking for Club Members to volunteer to act as instructors. You don’t have to be an expert skier. Please contact George Corn ([gcorn@bresnan.net](mailto:gcorn@bresnan.net), 406-363-1163) if you can help.

## Youth/Family Ski Day

On Sunday, January 27, we will have a youth/family ski day at Chief Joe. Ski times are from 1:30 to 4:30. We will need instructors to help with the kids and their families. The group is from the Keystone Project (Hamilton Public Schools). It should be a fun time for all!

If you can help, please e-mail Richard at [rcstone1@msn.com](mailto:rcstone1@msn.com).

**Instructor Hats** If you were one of the instructors for last year’s Free Ski Lessons, bring your hat to the next Club Meeting to exchange it for one embroidered with the Club’s Logo.

## President’s Message

The New Year is upon us and the cross-country ski season is well underway. For the second year in a row, Chief Joseph Pass received more and better snow during December than other cross-country ski areas in the western portion of Montana—believe it or not, as of this writing some areas are still grooming dirt! And, because we’ve had such good snow conditions, the number of skiers using the Chief Joseph Trails is growing.

Speaking of numbers, if you hadn’t already heard, the number of trees that had to be removed from the trails by our groomers during December far exceeded those of past years. In fact, because of an extended period of plentiful rains immediately before snow began to fall during November, followed by heavy wet snow and a few days with high winds, the number of healthy trees that blew down—the roots pulled right out of the ground—far exceeded 100. During the first few grooming sessions more time was spent removing trees than actually grooming trails. Fortunately the snow is now deep enough to help most trees stay upright and withstand strong winds. Even with all the extra work, the groomers survived and the trails are now in superb condition.

According to Mel Holloway, the head groomer, the new grooming equipment is a joy to work with and is enabling the trails to be groomed with less work (except for cutting fallen trees) and less time. Several times the trails have been groomed—including setting tracks—in one pass, allowing the groomers to be finished by as early as 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon. An added plus is the fact that the two new snowmobiles use less than half as much fuel as the older machines. Less work, less time, less cost. Mmm... What else can we do to help the groomers?



Mike Hoyt

# Trappers and the Chief Joseph Ski Area

Just after Christmas, there was a report that trappers were setting traps for wolves in the area on Trail Creek Road between Hwy 43 and Hogan Cabin. A ranger from the Wisdom District and a representative from Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks checked the area on December 28th and found no traps set near the road.

Although skiers have had no history of problems with trappers in the area around Lost Trail and Chief Joseph Passes or Gibbons Pass and Trail Creek Roads, you should be aware that trapping is legal in the general area. There is no cause for alarm and your dogs will be safe as long as you keep track of them—a leash is not required, keeping them close should be sufficient.

According to FWP, dog owners can minimize risks of accidental capture by sticking to well-traveled routes, especially in those spots that are subject to setback requirements. And, look for signs of trapping activity; a lightly traveled snowmobile track or a few footsteps in the snow may indicate a trapper's presence and should be avoided. Trappers should avoid setting traps in areas of concentrated public use, where more conflicts could occur.

If a dog does encounter a trap, two large vice-grip pliers can open a foothold trap (*the only trap legal for wolf trapping in Montana*) and a quality cable cutter cuts a snare, used in some other furbearer trapping seasons.

Recreationists who want to become more proficient at releasing traps and snares can contact FWP for an instructional brochure that was developed in partnership with the Montana Trappers Association. FWP Region 2 in Missoula also is soliciting interest for offering a short class that would provide a short overview of trapping in Montana, including steps to take to release traps in the case of an accidental capture. Email [fwprg22@mt.gov](mailto:fwprg22@mt.gov) or call 406-542-5500 if interested.

As a matter of information, here are a few of the regulations that apply to trapping.

**Trap set-back requirements:** Montana law requires wolf traps on public lands to be set back at least 150 feet from a designated road or trail (*50 feet for furbearer trapping*); 1,000 feet from a trailhead (*300 feet for other furbearers*); and 1,000 feet from a public campground.

**Trap checking requirements:** Wolf trappers are required to visually check traps at least once in every 48 hours.

**Trap, harvest & reporting requirements:** Only foothold traps can be used for wolf trapping; snaring wolves is prohibited. All wolf harvests via hunting or trapping must be reported to FWP within 24 hours by calling 1-877-397-9453.

**Avoid accidental capture:** Trappers must adhere to trap setback requirements from roads, trails and campgrounds and should make additional efforts to place traps in areas well away from those frequented by other recreationists. Dog owners can minimize risks by staying on well used routes and keeping pets close by when hiking, snowshoeing, or skiing.



# Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club Meeting Minutes, December 2012

**Meeting Date:** December 13, 2012

**Call to order:** Mike Hoyt called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, following the delicious potluck dinner

**Number attending:** 44

**Special Guest:** Henry M. Yaple, author of Never a Bad Year for Snow, The First 75 Years at Lost Trail Pass Powder Mountain, helped to kick-off our meeting. Henry gave an overview of his book and signed copies.

**Current Membership:** Earl Phillips shared that membership is doing well although it is down from prior year.

**Treasurer's Report:** Reine Hilton

Total Income	\$38,619
Total Expenses	\$ 7,129
Net Income	\$31,490
Total Current Assets	\$36,896

Attend the January Meeting and get your free pair of ski wraps with the Club Logo.

**Place** – First Presbyterian Church, 1220 West 1st Street, Hamilton, MT

**Date** – Second Thursday of the month

**Time** – 7:00 p.m.

## New Business:

- Jack Cooley is taking over as the new webmaster as Toddy Perryman is retiring after her many years of service to the Club. There is a new site now and everyone is encouraged to take a look.
- The 20th Annual Raffle is being planned for 2013. We have some excellent prizes and will begin selling tickets in January.
- New maps and brochures are available and volunteers have helped to distribute them at local businesses.
- Everyone was asked to remember to sign in when skiing up at Chief Joseph and to encourage visitors to sign-in. The \$22,000 grant we were given this year was due to being able to document the numbers of skiers that visit Chief Joseph, especially out-of-state visitors.



## Election of Officers:

George Corn presided over the election.

Mary Alice Holloway moved that we vote for the slate of candidates

This move was seconded by Dan Driscoll,

All present agreed, no one opposed,

Reine Hilton was reelected to serve another two-year term as Treasurer.

Kelly Zeiler was elected to serve a one-year term as Vice President.

Michael Hoyt was reelected to serve another two-year term as President.

## Guest Speaker:

Buffie Carutti from the Lolo Pass Visitor Center, Powell Ranger District, was the featured speaker of the evening. Buffie provided a brief history of Lolo Pass and shared details about the multi-use trails and events they offer during the winter. I know we all love our Chief Joseph Ski Area, but this presentation was a good reminder that we have other great skiing opportunities in our backyard. They sponsor moonlight ski and snowshoe events and the Lolo Pass Ski Challenge.

**Meeting closed:** 7:45 PM

**These minutes prepared by:** Deborah Duffy



# Wilderness Watch



Program Presentation  
January 10, 2013

## Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club

Founded in 1989, Wilderness Watch is the only national organization whose sole focus is the preservation and proper stewardship of lands and rivers included in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and National Wild & Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). The organization grew out of the concern that while much emphasis is being placed on adding new areas to these systems, the conditions of existing Wilderness and rivers are largely being ignored. Wilderness Watch believes that the stewardship of these remarkable wild places must be assured through independent citizen oversight, education, and the continual monitoring of federal management activities.



### GEORGE NICKAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



George joined Wilderness Watch as policy coordinator in 1996. Prior to Wilderness Watch, George served 11 years as a natural resource specialist and assistant coordinator for the Utah Wilderness Association. George is regularly invited to make presentations at national wilderness conferences, agency training sessions, and other gatherings where wilderness protection is discussed.

Meeting starts at 7:00 on January 10, 2013 at the Presbyterian Church, 1220 West Main Street, Hamilton.  
The public is encouraged and welcomed to attend all meetings.

# Trails Report

New equipment meets old nemesis. Several of the early December snows were wet and heavy and stubbornly clung to the trees. Subsequent cold-snaps froze the snow to the needles and limbs. These snowfalls were preceded by quite a bit of rain and a warm weather, so the ground was soft when insulated by the snow. Even more snow accumulated on the trees during more recent storms. Then many hours of strong winds pushed over many of overly burdened trees. Much of the time during the first grooming days was spent clearing trees from the upper trails. Jim Aronson thinks he has seen more trees across the trails this season than all his previous grooming years put together—more than 130 at last count.



The new rollers were successful in establishing a firm base in time for us to set track for the Continental Divide Classic Race in mid-December. So the groomers have spent substantially less time getting snowmobiles unstuck than was required during previous seasons.

For the most part the new sleds are performing quite well. There have been some relatively minor problems. The new Skandic had to be reprogrammed because the built-in computer kept searching for a non-existent sensor. Then an ignition part had to be replaced. However, this new machine exceeds the expectations that were established by our older Skandic.

The Bearcat initially had cooling system problems because of an air bubble which prevented proper circulation. The good news is we now know the computer system prevents the machine from being operated in an overheated state. And, its keeled, flat skis make the Bearcat considerably easier to steer through curves than the Yamaha Vikings.



The YTS compaction drags have proven their worth in renovating trail surfaces and leveling the bumps. Used in conjunction with the rollers, we have been able to prepare the trails in a single pass, thereby saving time, money, and wear and tear on us, the groomers!

Because of an electrical/wiring problem, the Ginzugroomer and Tracksetter have yet to get a full workout. The short trials we did manage have shown promise, but were curtailed by blown fuses. After soldering the wires at terminal connections and replacing fuses, the actuators have been cycled many times with simulated loads, all without blowing fuses. Come January 4th, the Ginzugroomer and automated Tracksetter are expected to be a fulltime part of the grooming equation.

Mel Holloway

# Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club Board Meeting

## Minutes for Meeting on December 13, 2012

The board meeting was opened at 5:10 PM by Michael Hoyt, President.

### Attendees:

Michael Hoyt, President

Deb Duffy, Secretary

Earl Phillips, Membership

Mel Holloway, Trails & Grooming

Kelly Zeiler

Reine Hilton, Treasurer

Jim Greenfield, Program

Jack Cooley, Webmaster

Richard Stone, Youth Activities

- Maps have been distributed and Club netted a profit of \$4,148
- Brochures are being distributed by the distribution service throughout a five-valley area during December, January and February
- Jim Greenfield has been discussing a possible presentation by the Seeley Lake Club at a meeting or board meeting. Board members expressed an interest in talking with them about their youth program, grant writing, mission statement and races they sponsor.
- Club will continue giving away the ski wraps at meetings and on lesson day.
- The Club will proceed with the 20th Annual Raffle. Jim Greenfield and Mike Hoyt have taken the lead on planning
  - o Each chance will be \$5 and the prizes are selected at the time of purchase
  - o Two sponsors are providing \$450 which will help cover cost of printing and any prizes that may need to be purchased.
- Earl suggested the Club purchase the projector as was discussed last year. All officers agreed.
- Richard Stone suggested that we have the logos put on hats for instructors to wear at lesson day and youth program events—this will help identify the instructors. It was agreed to get that done.

**Meeting closed:** 6:07 PM

**These minutes prepared by:** Deborah Duffy

## 5<sup>th</sup> Continental Divide Classic Ski Race

After an 8-year hiatus, Tony Neaves revived the 10k and 20k classic ski races on the trails at Chief Joseph Pass. After the long layoff, and with little advance advertising or notice, we had 21 participants—about what we expected—take part in the races. In spite of fact that every racer claimed to be “out of shape,” everyone finished and maintained they were extremely satisfied with the race course and the conditions—a perfect “blue-wax day.”

**Thanks Tony,  
for putting on a  
terrific Race!**



# Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club Officers

<b>President</b> Michael Hoyt <a href="mailto:michael.hoyt@gmail.com">michael.hoyt@gmail.com</a> 406-360-3803	<b>Vice President</b> Kelly Zeiler <a href="mailto:krz-inc@live.com">krz-inc@live.com</a> 406-363-8631	<b>Treasurer</b> Reine Hilton <a href="mailto:hilton@mcn.net">hilton@mcn.net</a> 406-375-1952	<b>Secretary</b> Deb Duffy <a href="mailto:darbydeb1@gmail.com">darbydeb1@gmail.com</a> 406-821-2276
<b>Trails &amp; Grooming</b> Mel Holloway <a href="mailto:tromper@bitterroot.com">tromper@bitterroot.com</a> 406-381-1334	<b>Programs &amp; Map</b> Jim Greenfield <a href="mailto:jkgreenfield@q.com">jkgreenfield@q.com</a> 406-363-2110	<b>Webmaster</b> Jack Cooley <a href="mailto:jackc@jcphotography.com">jackc@jcphotography.com</a> 970-227-1360	<b>Membership Data</b> Earl Philips <a href="mailto:philips@montana.com">philips@montana.com</a> 406-369-0073
	<b>Youth Coordinator</b> Richard Stone <a href="mailto:rstone@msn.com">rstone@msn.com</a> 406-642-9648	<b>Ski Lessons</b> George Corn <a href="mailto:gcorn@bresnan.net">gcorn@bresnan.net</a> 406-363-1163	

## Membership Renewals / Dues

Annual Memberships Expire on November 1st of each Year

### Please Renew Your Membership Now

Family - \$25

Supporting Family - \$40

Individual - \$15

Supporting Individual - \$30

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**Mail To: Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club, PO Box 431, Corvallis, MT 59828-0431**

Name (families, please include childrens names): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (to receive monthly newsletters): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership (see above): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_