

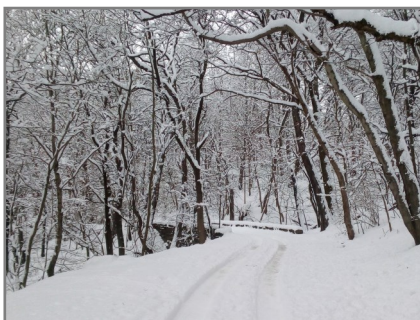


The 2021 PA Nordic Challenge!

Pittsburgh saw the second snowiest December since 1890! Hopefully snow conditions remain promising for the 2021 Pennsylvania Nordic Challenge. The Board has made the hard decision not to hold this year's PA Nordic Championship Races. Instead we've come up with an eight week challenge enticing you to enjoy the outdoors. The activities focus on keeping active and include a selection of cross country ski-type activities. You can log them right on our webpage and see what your friends are up to!

If you typically plan your season around races, you might find there aren't as many being offered and travel is uncertain, difficult, inadvisable or even prohibited due to COVID precautions. Most races are offering virtual options, to be completed within a short time-frame and on snow. Our challenge is unique in offering no-snow alternatives.

Details of how to join the challenge are on www.paccca.org on the front page and also in the events section. PACCSA members who complete the challenge will be rewarded with an embroidered patch. There will also be special prizes for certain category winners, to be decided.



Congratulations to Minnesota native, Jessie Diggins, who not only won the Tour de Ski, but is the first American to bring this home!

Photo credit: Nordic Focus

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Caution: Please be advised that some small game hunting seasons are still open and permitted in designated areas within state parks. Check your local hunting laws and wear fluorescent orange while recreating in areas of the park that are open to hunting during your visit. If you have questions please contact the park office.

**To view our Webcams
and find information
about skiing in our
region, check out our
website!**

www.paccca.org

Letter From the President - Jim South

It has become cliché to say this, but thank goodness 2020 is behind us. That said, skiers were lucky enough to get through the winter of 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit us in full force. For our part, PACCSA was able to pull off the 2020 PA Nordic Championship races at Wilderness Lodge just weeks before all of the shut-downs, precautions and restrictions started. I believe it was one of the most festive and competitive racing events that PACCSA has ever held.

If there has been a silver lining in all of the despair wrought by this pandemic, it is that a lot of people have re-discovered the outdoors! Some of my favorite hiking and cycling routes were almost overrun by folks with shiny new bikes and boots, taking a break from their “devices” to enjoy the wondrous beauty of Pennsylvania’s forests. This trend continued throughout the summer and fall of 2020 and there has been unprecedented interest in PACCSA’s winter activities such as the Yellowjackets Youth Skiing Program and the free group lessons we provide. Our volunteers are working hard to meet this demand and believe that it will be possible to offer our programs in a safe and responsible manner by utilizing appropriate COVID-19 precautions.

There have been challenges, and PACCSA has been forced to make several changes to our usual offerings for the 2021 season. The most prominent change is the new PA Nordic Challenge, a virtual event that PACCSA is holding in lieu of the annual Pennsylvania Nordic Championship races this year. More information about this unique virtual event can be found on the cover page of this Newsletter. However, be assured that PACCSA is already making plans to bring back the Pennsylvania Nordic Championships once this unfortunate pandemic is over.

Finally, I’d like to use this last paragraph to thank long-time PACCSA member Elly Fisher for agreeing to join our Board of Directors! I had the pleasure of first meeting Elly through her children, both of whom are members of the Yellowjackets team. I’ve always appreciated Elly’s passion for Nordic skiing, her enthusiastic support of the Yellowjackets program, and her willingness to help out at a moment’s notice. I think I speak for the entire PACCSA Board in saying we look forward to working with Elly in the coming years!

As always, thank you for supporting PACCSA and I’ll see you out on the trails!

–Jim South



Grab Some PACCSA Gear

<https://www.paccca.org/news-article/pacccsawear> Check out the webpage for details on ordering!

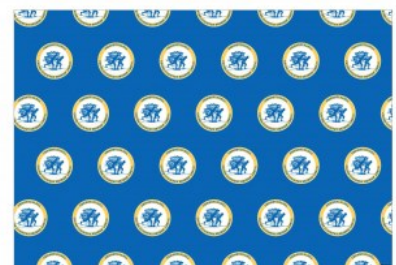
Hats/Jackets



T-Shirts



Neck Gaiters



Meet the Board

With our newest Board Member, Elly Flsher



How long have you been XC skiing and how did you become involved in the sport?

I've been cross country skiing since I was a little kid. I learned with my parents mostly in Lake Tahoe, California. I've never taken a lesson or been on a team so it's been fun to hang out with more technically experienced people.

What is your favorite thing about XC skiing?

My favorite thing about cross country skiing is being able to go anywhere so long as there is enough snow. I love blazing my own trail through the woods and then enjoying the fruits of my labor with a nice trail back home.

Tell us about your best skiing memory!

Page Meadows is a series of alpine meadows on the west shore of Lake Tahoe. Usually the skies are blue and you can choose to make your own tracks or follow others for miles through open meadows and beautiful pine trees.

Where are your favorite places to ski, and what makes them so special?

I love everywhere that I ski, it's such a great way to enjoy the winter, get some exercise and stay warm. Of course, I love Laurel Ridge. We'll be up there all winter since my kids are on the Yellowjackets team.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself?

I'm learning to skate ski. It's so much fun during those moments that everything comes together and you fly across the snow.

Sunrise Scramble - Racing Uphill at Dawn

By Naomi Jarvis



Canaan Valley State Park Foundation is holding the 2nd Annual Sunrise Scramble on March 7th 2021 at Canaan Valley Resort Ski Area, WV. The first Sunrise Scramble was memorable. It started with a mass start on a gentle downhill, then a sharp bend and a whopping great big climb almost to the top of the mountain, down a slope which was much too steep for comfort (aka terrifying) on cross country skis, and finished with a gentle uphill. There was a huge variety of heavy classic, back country and telemark equipment, and many skiers dressed up for the party (wigs etc). Just one skier used alpine touring skis with skins, and Riccardo Monaco won the race using skate skis. Ask him about it. Would I do it again? Absolutely, but I'll rent metal-edged skis.

Skiers climbing the hill in the Sunrise Scramble Photo used with permission from Liz Stout

Where to Ski In and Around Pittsburgh

Contributions from Naomi Jarvis, Sean Brady, Jim South, Fred Fargotstein, Michele Fetting, and Brian Joly

On the rare occasions that we get 6 or more inches of snow in the city, there are plenty of places to cross-country ski. This is permitted in the city parks, the county parks and on the county park golf courses if there is more than 4 inches of snow. Skiers are asked to stay off the greens (these are usually marked with small flags). Ski rentals are available at 3 Rivers Outdoor Company. The singletrack trails popular for mountain biking are often too narrow, steep and twisty for skiing, but the wider doubletrack trails are fine. The Allegheny County parks website has maps and a map app at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/parks/resources/maps/index.aspx> Pittsburgh's riverside rail-trails can be fun for skiing if you get there while the snow is still good. The trails outside the city tend to get more snow and keep it for longer. Tandem Connection in Hendersonville offers ski rental, it's right beside the Montour trail.

Frick Park - The main trails (Tranquil Trail, Falls Ravine Trail, 9 Mile Run Trail) are very skiable for classic after a significant snowfall. Tranquil Trail can become good for skate skiing a day or two later, as dog-walkers and hikers quickly pack the snow with their feet. The terrain is suitable for most abilities, but pretty much every trail requires going up and down hills. Avoid the single track mountain bike paths, and be aware that Frick Park gets busy!

Schenley Park - Both sides of the golf course are fun to ski, with flatter areas at the top of the hill in the east. If there's a lot of snow, the bridle trail makes a loop from Greenfield Rd around to join Panther Hollow trail, returning to Bartlett. Be prepared to remove your skis and walk under the Blvd of the Allies bridge, that section is sometimes icy but never snowy.

Riverview Park, Pittsburgh's Northside - Three hundred acres of park woodlands includes lots of hilly trails, but there are a few good xc ski areas. Street parking at the Visitor Center presents the wide-open slope leading up to the Observatory, which is great for trying some tele turns. The nearby 1-mile Marshall Trail is the widest and flattest trail in the park, good for an out-and-back. The Chapel Shelter area features a flat grassy meadow and is a good place to pick up the 3/4-mile Bob Harvey Trail, which is wide but with some gentle slopes, plus small off-shoot meadows. Toward the end, best to turn back before the steep slope down to the road. The Observatory Trail is wide, but not flat. Trail Map - <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/415693/assets/docs/riverview-letter.pdf>

Allegheny Commons, Pittsburgh's Northside - The classic Victorian esplanades circle the National Aviary, Lake Elizabeth, and throughout the park's arboretum dating to the days before Pittsburgh annexed Allegheny City in 1907. This destination lies tantalizingly close to many fine eateries and craft breweries. Start at the end of East Ohio Street, anywhere along Cedar or North Avenues, or near the Aviary.

North Park - The golf course is enormous and rolling. It is divided into two by the drive road to the clubhouse and parking lot which runs along the ridge and often the two parts have different snow conditions or one is more wind-blown than the other. The old cross-country ski trail circles the southern half of the golf course through the woods and is marked with orange blazes, it needs quite a bit of snow to cover the roots and rocks. The first part (starting behind the driving range) is easier than the second, which can be quite technical. The fields above the nature center (Reynolds Rd) and adjacent to Pigeon

Shelter (Brown Rd) also provide good skiing on roughly mown trails cut through the plants.

Deer Lakes - Rumors say it's great, if you know where to go.

Hartwood Acres - The open fields beside the parking lot on Middle Rd provide a large expanse of mostly flat space, and the 15+ miles of wooded trails are glorious to ski when there is enough snow. Within the park, the only road open to traffic is the driveway from Saxonburg Blvd up to the parking lot at the mansion. There are heated restrooms with outdoor access at the back of the mansion.

Boyce Park - The wide grassy trails to the west of Pierson Run Rd can be great for skiing. A particular favorite is the Carpenter trail, which runs from the ski slope parking lot past the model aircraft field up towards Tanglewood Shelter, and is marked with yellow blazes with a black dot. If unplowed, the gravel roads from the archery area to the tennis courts and then to the log cabin can be used to complete the loop.

Churchill Valley Greenway - Allegheny Land Trust is raising funds to buy the long-disused Churchill Country Club - see <https://alleghenylantrust.org/churchill-valley/> - it was formerly a golf course. With enough snow, the paved trails provide a way to explore this area on skis as it reverts to nature.

South Park - Like North Park, the golf course is huge and rolling, with some flat areas on top of the hills. The road separates the 9-hole course, popular for sledding, from the much larger 18-hole course.

Montour Woods Conservation Area, Moon Township - The Nike Road trailhead offers a large plateau with several miles of trails and open space for xc skiing (500 Nike Rd. 15108). In colder conditions or with a bounty of fresh snow, you can also ski the 1.5-mile Meeks Run Trail from the Downing Drive trailhead (321 Downing Dr. 15108) to the mouth of Meeks Run. Trail Map - http://hollowoak.org/assets/img/map_montourrunC_large_color.jpg

Where to Go in the Laurel Highlands

By Naomi Jarvis

The pandemic has brought some changes to the facilities available at the Laurel Highlands xc ski areas - for your convenience, here's the round-up:

Kooser - the WC at the park office is available for public use and has an outdoor entrance. There is no warming hut.

Laurel Ridge - the warming huts are closed for warming purposes but the upper (small) hut is open for WC use, no fires or gathering, masks must be worn.

Laurel Summit - the public half of the warming hut is open, masks are encouraged. There is a separate outhouse nearby.

North Woods - the warming hut in the middle of the ski area is open (masks required) but the old outhouse there is closed. There is a new outhouse at the snowmobile parking lot off Rt 31, close to Tunnel Rd.



The sign on the door reads, "FACILITY CLOSED... Call 911 for Emergencies"

The Nordic Ski Patrol of the Laurel Highland Regions

By Fred M. Fargotstein, Laurel Highlands Nordic Ski Patrol (fmf@fmf-architect.com)

Just who are those folks with the bright red ski patrol uniforms and the big backpacks that we keep seeing out on the cross country trails? And what the heck are they doing out here? Did they get lost from over at Seven Springs?

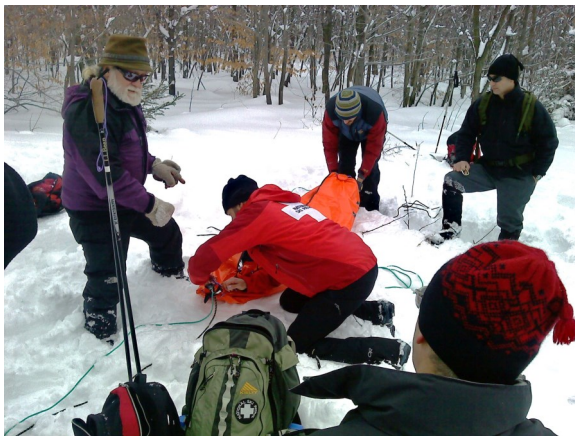
No! These are the men and women of the region's two Nordic ski patrols, volunteering their time every winter weekend to provide emergency care, rescue, and other safety related services to cross country skiers and other winter recreationalists.

As members of the National Ski Patrol, these patrollers receive the same extensive medical training as their Alpine counterparts, plus specialized training related to providing care in remote situations where additional help and equipment are not immediately available.



Members of the Laurel Highlands Nordic Ski Patrol are responsible for trails in the North Woods, Roaring Run, and Jones Mill Run portions of the Forbes State Forest, as well as Kooser State Park. The Laurel Summit Nordic Ski Patrol covers the network of Forbes State Forest trails that are accessed via Laurel Summit Road. Both patrols coordinate closely with, and receive support from, Pennsylvania DCNR management and Rangers.

Say hello when you see us! We're happy to provide directions and route advice, to tell you more about what we do, and to share our enthusiasm for exploring the world beyond the rope lines of the Alpine resorts!



If you'd like to hone your own skiing and outdoors skills, learn some new ones, and have the opportunity to help others along the way, please visit WAR-Nordic.org for more information.

SPOT THE PROBLEM: The spotted lanternfly is an invasive insect that poses a serious threat to Pennsylvania's resources, businesses, and economy. To date, Cambria, Fayette, Westmoreland, and Somerset counties do NOT have these pests. Help us stay lanternfly free and stop the spread. Visit the Penn State Extension's Spotted Lanternfly website to learn how to identify it, report it, and inspect your vehicle or gear when traveling to and from the quarantine zone.



Beginner Ski Lessons: The Covid-19 Edition

By Charlie Nash

The tradition of free PACCSA sponsored ski lessons at Laurel Ridge is something that has been happening since the dawn of time, at least in PACCSA years that is. To meet State and Federal guidelines regarding COVID-19 a new process was put in place for ski lessons that asked groups of families or close friends to reach out and schedule a PACCSA Ski Lesson in advance.

The core team of instructors will continue to offer and provide lessons as conditions allow this winter and we are happy to see new faces to the sport. If you know anyone that might be interested in a lesson, please have them contact us via the website. Despite offering the lessons in a slightly different manner, it seems as though we are set up for the potential outreach toward new skiers to be profound this season!

XC Ski Destination Edinboro

By Nathan Latimer



Grooming at night

Nathan Latimer of Edinboro started the venture Mobile Trail Grooming a few years ago. It is exactly what it sounds like - trail grooming equipment and operators with the ability to move and groom trails upon request. Nathan still offers grooming by request but has committed to grooming Wainer Park and the 2 parks adjacent to it, beside the township buildings in Edinboro, on a regular basis. Wainer Park has about 5 km of groomed trail at present, the hot news is that it is rapidly expanding and in the process of acquiring an additional 30 acres! The park is very much in its opening phase and will be improved upon each year. Currently trails are groomed for skating, tracks are set for classic skiing and separate trails are also groomed for fat bikes. The main part of Wainer Park is a large field surrounded by trees, one side of the field is 0.15 miles long, straight and flat - useful terrain for teaching beginners. This is at the top of the hill; there's a fun gentle descent and then a climb back up to complete the 0.5 mile outer loop. There's usually an inner loop groomed too, and trails connect to the other fields. Night skiing is permitted (bring your own headlamp). The really great thing about this location is that it's just inside the lake effect snow belt and it's an easy, hill-free, 10 minute drive from I-79. The private social club Engine House 39 is close to the park, anyone skiing here on a regular basis should consider joining, but be aware that it can take a while to process the application.

814 outdoor sports is Nathan's new sport store that caters to the silent sports in the Edinboro Area, offering sales and service of all cross country equipment and also rentals. They carry wax, gloves and some other xcountry ski accessories. PACCSA members will receive 10 percent off all ski accessories at the shop. Also, there is a YMCA close by which could be a useful resource for members.



Skiing at Wainer Park with several inches of snow on top of the groomed trails



Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers Association

PACCSA
309 W. Marion St
Munhall, PA 15120

Find us on

 Search "PACCSA"

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Member Name(s):

[Dashed box for Member Name(s)]

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General comments and inquiries can be sent to PACCSA via the contact page on our website (www.PACCSA.org/contact)

PACCSA Membership Form

You can also renew your membership online! Visit www.paccca.org

Name _____ Phone _____

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Membership Information

_____ Single \$6/yr _____ Family \$9/yr _____ Donation Only

Number of Adults: _____ Number of Children : _____

Please indicate if you are interested in volunteering any of your skills:

- Mail Newsletters (they will be sent via e-mail unless this box is checked).
- Please add me to PACCSA's e-mail chat group!

Make checks payable to PACCSA
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