

TRACKS TO TRY

CALIFORNIA

Bear Valley Cross Country

Nestled in the super scenic High Sierra and surrounded by two wilderness areas, Bear Valley Cross Country offers some of the finest striding and skating anywhere! With impeccable grooming, expansive meadows, scenic ridge tops, snowshoeing, sledding, telemarking, backcountry, alpine skiing and lodging within walking distance, Bear Valley offers incredible adventures for everyone.

209/753-2834, www.bearvalleyxc.com.

Kirkwood Cross Country Center

Above all the rest with a base elevation of 7,800 feet and 80 km of machine groomed trails, Kirkwood offers unsurpassed scenery and the most exciting terrain in the west. The day lodge houses the ski school, a retail and rental shop including standard track, skate and backcountry skis as well as snowshoes and pulks. Kirkwood Mountain Resort is a full service destination resort. Lodging: 800/967-7500, Cross Country: 209/258-7248, www.kirkwood.com.

Northstar-at-TahoeT Cross-Country, Telemark and Snowshoe Center

Northstar-at-TahoeT Resort is Lake Tahoe's premier destination resort offering a variety of lodging accommodations and a complete mountain resort experience including nearly 40 kilometers of groomed & tracked trails and a new Cross-Country Center. The teaching center offers unparalleled group and private lessons, tours and clinics from certified instructors and cross-country, Telemark and snowshoe demo equipment. For reservations and information call 866/356-9050 or visit www.NorthstarAtTahoe.com.

Sorensen's and Hope Valley Resorts

Your resort for all seasons in the Sierra Nevada. Sorensen's offers cozy housekeeping cabins, many with wood burning stoves, and delicious, homemade

cuisine in the Country Café, serving 7 days per week. Located on the eastern edge of beautiful Hope Valley, a perfect spot for XC skiing, snowshoeing, fishing, hiking, biking or just plain relaxing. Conveniently close to Grover Hot Springs State Park, east of Kirkwood and 20 minutes South of Lake Tahoe. For reservations or more information, 800/423-9949, www.sorensensresort.com.

MAINE

Aroostook County

Aroostook County in Northern Maine is the home of two Olympic caliber biathlon venues, has hosted World Cup Events, and has more than 200 kilometers of groomed Nordic ski trails all free to the public. These meticulously groomed trails offer quality skiing throughout the region. Many trails are lighted offering night skiing. There are currently 20 community Nordic trail systems offering an affordable getaway with amazing skiing opportunities. To learn more visit www.mainewsc.org or www.visitAroostook.com or call 888/216-2463.


MINNESOTA

Cascade Lodge

Located in the midst of Cascade River State Park overlooking Lake Superior. Historic main lodge, log cabins with fireplaces, some with kitchenette and whirlpool bath. Distinctive northwoods family restaurant. Great scenery on 50 km of groomed trails shared with the state park starting from our door. Trails groomed with state-of-the-art equipment. XC ski and snowshoe rentals available at the front desk. 3719 W. Hwy 61, Lutsen, MN 55612; 800/322-9543, www.cascadelodgemn.com.

Grand Marais

Who wouldn't love timeless Grand Marais as your base for terrific XC skiing? With over 300 miles of groomed trails in the area, and cafés, shops, galleries and

lodging steeped in North Shore hospitality, your winter break feels downright warm! Choose nearby trails at Pincushion Mt., Bally Creek, Cascade River State Park, Deeryard Lake and George Washington Memorial Forest. Or, try other trails in Cook County for more panoramas, terrain, levels of difficulty, ski-skating and skijoring. At trail's end, enjoy culture and comforts, only in Grand Marais. 888/922-2225 or www.grandmarais.com. 

Grand Rapids

The Grand Rapids area in northeastern Minnesota offers a wide variety of relatively undiscovered cross country ski trails. The area's 22 sets of ski trails offer challenge and variety for all skill levels. Standouts in this winter wonderland include the famed Suomi Hills that wind through the Chippewa National Forest and the Sugar Hills trails that traverse the newly designated Forest Legacy Lands. Ski trail information and updated grooming reports are available online all season long at www.visitgrandrapids.com.

Gunflint Ski Trail System: Boundary Country Trekking—Banadad Ski Trail

Ski the Gunflint's Banadad Trail—the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness' (BWCA) longest tracked trail and part of the 180km Gunflint Nordic Ski Trail System. Exclusive silent sport lodging along Banadad at Poplar Creek Guesthouse B&B, Ski-in Cabins and Wilderness Yurts. Snowshoeing and skijoring trails. Adventure trips including lodge to lodge and yurt skiing, dogsledding and other year round adventures. 800/322-8327, www.boundarycountry.com/portal.html.

Central Gunflint Ski Trail System: Bearskin Lodge—Golden Eagle Lodge

Nationally renowned skiing on 77km of snowcat-groomed trails with a dependable average snowfall of 120 inches.

Groomed for traditional and skate skiing accommodating all levels of difficulties. Night skiing, snowshoe trails, sauna, heated waxing room, ski lessons, ski & snowshoe rentals, ice skating rink and lit trail for night skiing can all be enjoyed while staying in modern lakeside cabins with fireplace, some deluxe with whirlpools. Early and off-season specials. Skiing right from your cabin door.

Bearskin Lodge— 800/338-4170,
www.bearskin.com.

Golden Eagle Lodge— 800/346-2203,
www.golden-eagle.com.

Upper Gunflint Ski Trail System: Gunflint Lodge—Heston's Lodge— Gunflint Pines Resort

Ski deep snow of the Laurentian Highlands November to April in NE Minnesota. 10+ feet annual snowfall, 80+ km groomed forest trails winding through cedar swamps and aspen ridges. Frequent wildlife encounters. Large A-frames, honeymoon suites, many with fireplace, hot tub, sauna. Breakfasts, packed lunches, gourmet dinners, pizza & beverages. Dog sledding, ski, snowshoe & snowmobile rentals, gift shops, ice fishing, sledding & nearby sleigh rides.

Gunflint Lodge— 800/328-3325,
www.gunflint.com.

Heston's Lodge— 800/338-7230,
www.hestons.com.

Gunflint Pines Resort— 800/533-5814,
www.gunflintpines.com.

Lutsen Resort

Experience the beauty and wonder of Lake Superior in the winter. Nearly 200 km XC ski trails nearby. Lakeside lodging includes historic lodge rooms, log cabins, and town homes/condos. In-room fireplaces & whirlpools available. Swimming pool/whirlpool, lakeside dining, pub, downhill skiing nearby also. XC ski instruction as well as guided XC ski tours and snowshoe tours. Two new winter adventure packages utilizing xc skiing and snowshoeing include a "Winter Photography Weekend" and a "Women's Winter Adventure weekend. 800/258-8736, www.lutsenresort.com.

Maplelag Resort

Voted the #1 XC Ski Resort in North America 2002/2003 readers poll. Maplelag Resort offers 65km of custom groomed trail for all types of skiers. 46,000 sq. ft. lodge features folk art from around the world. Serving all-you-can-eat, made from scratch family style meals and four bottomless cookie jars. Ice skating rink, sledding hill, Nordic Terrain Park, saunas, steam room and state's largest spa make Maplelag a must-see Nordic destination. 800/654-7711, www.maplelag.com.

MONTANA

Lone Mountain Ranch

Experience western hospitality at this award winning guest ranch in the heart of Yellowstone Country. Over 80 km groomed trails, snowshoe trails and naturalist guided ski tours into Yellowstone Park. For downhill skiers, Big Sky Ski Resort is just six miles away. Cozy, comfortable log cabins, renowned cuisine and an old fashioned sleigh ride dinner are all a part of the vacation package.

P.O. Box 160069, Big Sky, MT 59716
800/514-4644, lmr@lmranch.com,
www.lmranch.com.

Yellowstone Expeditions

This is the way Yellowstone Park in winter was meant to be experienced. Join our ski and snowshoe guides for an unforgettable adventure. Package tours from our Yurt Camp in the heart of Yellowstone include a variety of terrain for all abilities, wildlife, mud pots and perfect snow. Enjoy the Yurt Camp with private sleeping huts, delicious meals and sauna and camp shower.

P.O. Box 8654,
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
406/646-9333 or 800/728-9333,
info@yellowstoneexpeditions.com,
www.YellowstoneExpeditions.com.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Waterville Valley Nordic Center

Ski over 70km of trails of pristine backcountry wilderness in the scenic splendor of the White Mountain National Forest. Wide trails, expertly groomed by Pisten Bully for both classic and skate. WVNC is located

in an alpine village with shops, restaurants, lodging and entertainment. PSIA coaching, childcare, fully-stocked retail shop, rentals, repairs and child sleds. Ten minute shuttle ride from Waterville Valley Ski Area, with alpine skiing, snowboarding and tubing. Summer biking and hiking. Bring a copy of this ad and receive a 2-for-1 trail deal.

603/236-8311,
mseeger.wv@boothcreek.com,
www.waterville.com.

VERMONT

The Mountain Top Inn & Resort Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Center

With a setting of "breathtaking natural beauty" the Mountain Top Inn boasts 80km of Nordic ski trails with 40km groomed, and 350 acres of pristine backcountry for skiing or snowshoeing. Varied terrain for all skill and age levels. Elevation up to 2,100 ft. Snowmaking on limited trails ensures great conditions. Private or group lessons, ski shop, rentals, café fare. Seasonal packages. Luxurious accommodations and great cuisine. Host site for the New England Women's Cross Country Ski Day on February 3, 2008. Only 11 miles from Killington. 800/445-2100,
www.mountaintopinn.com/ccskiprogram.html.

Trapp Family Lodge

Home to the country's first and finest cross country ski center and the family who inspired "The Sound of Music." Over 100 km of trails wind through 2,700 acres with magnificent mountain views.

700 Trapp Hill Road, Stowe, VT 05672,
800/826-7000, www.trappfamily.com.

WASHINGTON

Mammoth Lakes

While Mammoth is renowned for its world-class downhill skiing, its cross country skiing is also among the best in the West. Surrounded by the Inyo National Forest's winter trail system, visitors can explore tall Jeffrey Pine forests, meadows and fascinating geologic attractions like Inyo Craters, Obsidian Dome, and Hot Creek. Enjoy magnificent vistas of the High Sierra mountain range. Forty-five km of groomed track at Tamarack Ski Center plus 75,000 acres of surrounding National Forest.

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888/GoMammoth, *from page 77* www.VisitMammoth.com.

Sun Mountain Lodge

Spectacular mountaintop resort on 3,000 acres. Ski from your door on the famous Methow Valley trail system with 200 km of groomed magic. PSIA fully certified ski school. Full service ski shop with complete rentals. DiRoNA Award winning restaurant. Wine Spectator Award winning wine cellar. AAA Four Diamond Award winning guest rooms. Full-service spa. Two hot tubs, ice skating and sleigh rides. 800/572-0493, www.sunmountainlodge.com.

WISCONSIN

Minocqua

Dare we say, “The best?” You bet! With 6,500 acres and 75 kilometers of expertly-groomed trails for all skill levels, every day is a great day at Minocqua Winter Park. Because of amenities like a heated chalet that serves hot food, great kids programs, top level instruction and coaching and a full service ski shop Minocqua Winter Park is the best cross country skiing in the Midwest. Visit us at www.minocquawinterpark.org or 715/538-7364.

Telemark Resort & Convention Center

World-class cross country ski trails (classic, skate and combination skiing), comfortable lodging and terrific dining in Wisconsin’s magnificent Northwoods. Man-made snow possibilities for early skiing. Direct access to the American Birkebeiner® race trail. Ski rentals and lessons available. Cross country skiing for all abilities plus miles of marked snowshoe trails, ice skating, snowboarding and tubing. 129 lodge rooms, 64 condos & suites, restaurant, bar & grill, indoor pool, whirlpool and saunas. Cable, Wisconsin — Great Packages! Toll Free 877/798-4718, www.telemarkresort.com.

A Crime of Passion

OFFTRACK

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stone-faced with a pistol on his hip, came up to the car warily. I pondered the profile I presented to him: a middle-aged, northern European male, driving a VW diesel wagon sporting a bike rack and a bumper sticker that reads, “Biker, Hiker, Voter.” I was going to be trouble, bothersome or both. And I probably didn’t give to the police officer’s charity.

He gave my driver’s license a studious scan and commenced the following interrogation almost verbatim:

“Were you driving this car 15 minutes ago, out on county highway?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said, wondering what dreadful thing I had done while marking the bike route. Did I run a stop sign? Was I speeding? Driving recklessly? Did I cause an accident?

“Did you write something on the pavement?” Officer Johnson continued.

Ah ha! This was my great offense. Writing words of encouragement in the bike lane. Would I have to do time in the village hoosegow?

“Yes,” I fessed up.

Officer Johnson bored in with the clincher, “Did you write, ‘Go, Bob, Go?’”

I was totally busted. Again I blurted, “Yes.” But Officer Johnson wasn’t finished with me. He needed motive for this misdeed.

“What is ‘Go, Bob, Go’ about?” he asked. There was probably something unsavory involved with these code words. I confessed that it was to urge on some bike riders that were coming out later in the afternoon.

“Did you have permission?” he continued, knowing that he had me for defacement of public property.

“I used sidewalk chalk”, I said, as I held up the little bucket of chalk, with the residue still visible on my fingers.

“Oh,” he said. “Well.” He paused a bit as it registered that perhaps I was not public enemy number one. Writing with chalk on pavement put me in the same threat category as five-year olds. “I’ll call the county dispatcher. You probably won’t be hearing anything more about this,” he said.

Relieved, I thanked him and slowly pulled away to work. The amazing thing was that, in just over 10 minutes, a county highway crew reported my alleged crime and license number to the county dispatcher, who contacted the village who, in turn, vectored a squad car to my house. Talk about connecting the dots. Now that’s homeland security. Michael Chertoff would be proud. To close this episode, a brief morning shower washed away the subversive chalk marks before the ride even started. Despite that, the infamous ‘Bob’ appreciated the effort and got a chuckle over my brush with the law.

So I submit myself as a skier who has nearly committed a misdemeanor in the heat of sport passion. Surely there must be many more examples. Skiers might be cool but the ardor is there, even if short of the criminal. And every skier is “hot” enough to melt the snow under their skis and surf that microscopic layer of water down the track. That’s where our passion goes. Go Bobby Go! 