



Deschutes National Forest Trail Conditions Update

December 31, 2008

For additional valuable winter recreation information and maps see the Deschutes National Forest Website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/>

Holiday Crowding at Deschutes National Forest Sno-Parks!

Fair to good snow conditions are expected at most Deschutes National Forest Sno-Parks this Holiday period. A few reminders for this Holiday weekend:

🌲 **Plan for overflow parking at sno-parks, be ready and have a second, maybe third sno-park choice in mind for the coming weekends. Area favorites like Dutchman, Wanoga, Ten Mile, and Upper Three Creek Sno-Parks are likely to fill early.**

🌲 An increasingly favorite sno-park is the new Wanoga Snow Play facility; that's for sledding and tubing. This park lot is designed for diagonal parking in 4 rows (2 rows each lobe of the lot) with a center travel lane that is one way. Please park accordingly and be sure to follow the sledding safety rules posted on the information board. Enjoy the new warming shelter too!

🌲 Trail grooming has commenced and will continue with adequate snow conditions and volunteer availability. At peak grooming operations, Moon Country, Sisters Sno-Go-Fers, La Pine Lodgepole Dodgers, and Walker Rim Riders Snowmobile Club volunteers groom 400-500 miles of snowmobile trails on the Deschutes National Forest. Some trails require 4-5 ft. of snow cover to safely groom. Tumalo Langlauf Club grooms up to 35 kilometers of nordic ski trails out of Meissner and Swampy Sno-Parks. 2 miles of dog friendly trails are groomed once/week at the Wanoga Snow Play Sno-Park.

🌲 75% of the removable winter signing is now in place in the Dutchman Flat, Tumalo Mt. and Moon Mt. areas. Sign installation is scheduled to continue thru this weekend. Stick to the well traveled/signed trails if you are unfamiliar with the area or under less than ideal conditions.

🌲 "NO PARKING" zones are posted for safe traffic flow into and out of snow parks. Please try another Sno-Park if you find your first choice snow park full.

🌲 Motorized users should use additional caution with speed and remain in control at all times. Slow down for pedestrians and other snowmobilers, especially in congested areas. Recommended "slow" speed near pedestrians and congested areas is 20 mph or less.

🌲 Nonmotorized users should be courteous when encountering motorized users on snowmobile trails (orange diamonds) and stay to the right to allow snowmobiles to pass safely; or avoid the heavily used snowmobile trails and stick to the blue diamond ski and snowshoe trails.

🌲 Respect winter area dog closures either by leaving your pet safe at home or going to a dog permitted area. Wanoga Snowmobile, Wanoga Sno-Play, Edison, Skyliner, Ten Mile, Six Mile, Crescent Junction and Upper Three Creek Sno-Parks are open to dogs. Practice Canine Courtesy by maintaining control of your dog with a leash or if required in harness; and remove dog waste from trail and snow park areas.

🌲 Go prepared for the unexpected emergency!

GENERAL SNOW & WINTER TRAIL CONDITIONS AS OF DECEMBER 31:

🌲 The past week has brought milder temperatures and varied snow and/or rain to all sno-parks and trails. During this period, area sno-parks have received 10-30" of new snow. General snow depths range from 20-40" at 4,500' and 60-90" at and above 6,000' west of Hwy 97. About 50% of those depths will be found east of Hwy 97. The forecast for the next several days and into the Holiday period indicates mild temperatures and a mix of snow and rain for some days. For more specific snow and winter trail conditions at the Forest's snow parks, see Sno-Park and Trails section below.

🌲 **Avalanche potential** increases with rapid snowfall and changing temperatures, and the avalanche hazard can escalate in a short time. Backcountry users venturing into avalanche terrain should be knowledgeable in recognizing potential avalanche conditions and act accordingly. **Backcountry travelers are strongly urged to perform snow pack assessment and stability tests and continue to make safe route selections.**

BEND/FORT ROCK RANGER DISTRICT SNO-PARK AND WINTER TRAIL CONDITIONS AS OF DECEMBER 31:

The following snow depths are approximations for the area around each snow park area. Actual depths may vary depending on recent weather conditions.

* **Meissner Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 14, elevation 5350') - **20-30" snow depth.** Fair to good snow depth for skiing and snowshoeing. Roads in this area are closed to highway vehicles December 1-April 30.

Parking at Meissner Sno-Park has now doubled in capacity. We look forward to seeing how well it accomodates likely increased use on the new trails. Please continue to head in park as efficiently as possible. Also check out the approx. 6 miles of new groomed trails (with adequate snow) for classic and skate skiing. A new Meissner shelter also provides premier views of the area.

Access to 26 miles of easy to more difficult ski trails, 4 warming shelters (day use only), and connecting trails to the Swampy Lakes ski trail system. Limited trail grooming by Tumalo Langlauf Ski Club volunteers has commenced and will continue with favorable snow conditions. (541) 585-2289 or www.tumalolangluaf.com for updated grooming report.

There are also 5+ miles of easiest to more difficult **snowshoeing trails** with a connecting snowshoe trail to the Swampy Snowshoe trail system and Swampy Sno-Park constructed especially for snowshoeing. Snowshoers using these sno-parks are encouraged to use the snowshoe trails over the ski trails as they were designed for the snowshoeing experience; and they usually have tracks set shortly after each new snowfall. If you choose to use the ski trails for snowshoeing, remember to stay at least 2 feet to either side of a set ski track. This will help avoid ruining the ski track and a walked on ski track is unpleasant and hazardous to ski.

Updated trail maps will soon be available at sno-park info board and on the Deschutes NF website.

Area is closed to dogs November 1 until April 30. Warming shelters are day use only (no camping).

*** Wanoga Snow Play Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 15, elevation 5400')-**24-30" snow depth.**

Good snow depth for safe sledding at this time. A new in 2007/08 snow park designed for families and groups interested in nonmotorized snow play, i.e., tubing and sledding. Has a 97 car parking area, sledding hill, new fully enclosed warming shelter, restrooms and fire rings. Provides a designated and relatively safe sledding hill option. Dogs are permitted on leash only and at all times while on the slope or in the sno-park. Please park diagonally, vehicle length limit of 24 ft. and trailers prohibited. State sno-park permit required for parking.

Also provided out of the snow play parking area are 3 kilometers of nordic trails that are groomed for dogs and their skiing or snowshoeing human guardians. Human visitors are not required to have a dog but, dogs must be accompanied by humans. Leashes are required in the sno-park area, clean up after your pet and please maintain voice or physical control of your dog while on the trails. The trail begins out of the north side of the new Wanoga Sno-Play sno-park mentioned above.

*** Wanoga Snowmobile Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 15, elevation 5500') - **24-30" snow depth.** Fair to good snow for winter activities. Watch for low snow hazards. As most of these winter trails are on summer roads, some trails may have vehicle tracks making them difficult or unsafe to snowmobile. For this reason, roads in the area are closed to highway vehicles December 1-April 30.

Access to 150 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, Elk Lake Resort and 4 warming shelters. Trail grooming by Moon Country and Sisters Sno-Go-Fers Snowmobile Club volunteers sill

commence with favorable snow conditions. Moon Country Club info and grooming hotline: (541) 410-4219. Area open to dogs and RV camping.

PLEASE NOTE: DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS, CERTAIN AREAS AROUND DUTCHMAN SNO-PARK, THE BEND MUNICIPAL WATERSHED, SWAMPY NORDIC SKI/SNOWSHOE AREA, WANOGA SNOW PLAY AREA AND MT. BACHELOR PERMIT SKI AREA ARE CLOSED TO ALL MOTORIZED USE. IN HIGH USE AREAS, PORTIONS OF THESE BOUNDARIES HAVE BEEN POSTED, BUT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE USER TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE AT ALL TIMES!!! JUST BECAUSE THERE IS NO SIGN DOES NOT MEAN IT IS OPEN TO MOTORIZED USE.

* **Swampy Lakes Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 16, elevation 5800') - **30-36" snow depth**. Good snow conditions for skiing or snowshoeing at this time. Access to about 25 miles of easy to most difficult **nordic ski trails**, 5 warming shelters (day use only), with connecting ski trails to Meissner, Vista Butte, and Dutchman trail systems. Tangent Trail grooming (diagonal and skate skiing) with access to Meissner groomed trails is performed by Tumalo Langlauf Ski Club volunteers and will commence with favorable snow conditions; www.tumalolangluaf.com for updated grooming report.

There are also 9+ miles of easiest to most difficult **snowshoeing trails**, with a connecting snowshoe trail to the Meissner Snowshoe trail system and Meissner Sno-Park constructed especially for snowshoeing. Snowshoers using these sno-parks are encouraged to use the snowshoe trails over the ski trails as they were designed for the snowshoeing experience; and they usually have tracks set shortly after each new snowfall. If you choose to use the ski trails for snowshoeing, remember to stay at least 2 feet to either side of a set ski track. Walking at least 2 ft. to the side will avoid ruining the ski track; and a walked on ski track is unpleasant and hazardous to ski in.

New trail maps available at sno-park info board and soon at Deschutes NF website.

Area is closed to dogs (November 1 until April 30) and snowmobiles.

* **Vista Butte Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 18, elevation 5900') - **50-60" snow depth**. Good snow conditions for skiing or snowshoeing at this time.

Access to 6 miles of more to most difficult ski trails and connecting trails to Swampy and Dutchman trail systems. Area is closed to dogs November 1 until April 30. Area closed snowmobiling except on the nearby snowmobile trail. There is no snowmobile access from Vista Butte Sno-Park.

* **Dutchman Sno-Park** (Hwy 46 - Milepost 22, elevation 6250') - **60-70" snow depth**. Good snow conditions for non-motorized and motorized winter trail activities. **75% of the temporary winter boundary, trail marking, and destination signs are now in place. Installation of these signs will continue this weekend.** Without these signs, trail navigation can be difficult and hazardous, especially under adverse weather.





This continues to be a multiple use area (winter motorized and nonmotorized). First come, first serve basis. No changes have been implemented over the past few years. Please abide by area boundaries and respect each other.

Access to 150 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, Cross District Trail access to Sisters and Crescent Ranger District snowmobile trails, snowmobile warming shelters, Elk Lake Resort, 19 miles of easy to most difficult nordic ski trails with a connecting trail to the Swampy Lakes ski trail system and now 3+ miles of designated snowshoe trails. Snowshoers using this area are encouraged to use the snowshoe trails over the ski trails as they were designed for the snowshoeing experience; and they usually have tracks set shortly after each new snowfall. If you choose to use the ski trails for snowshoeing, remember to stay at least 2 feet to either side of a set ski track. This will help avoid ruining the ski track and a walked on ski track is unpleasant and hazardous to ski in.

Trail maps will soon be available at sno-park info board and soon at Deschutes NF website.

Snowmobile trail grooming by Moon Country and Sisters Sno-Go-Fers Snowmobile Club volunteers will commence with favorable snow conditions. Moon Country Snowmobile Club info and grooming hotline: (541) 410-4219.

Important reminders when using the Dutchman Sno-Park and area:

-  **Special winter use regulations are in effect indefinitely in the Dutchman Flat and Tumalo Mt. area.** Some of the area is now closed to motorized use and other areas and snowmobile trails are closed to non-motorized use. These closures are or will be signed on the ground and are noted on the Dutchman/Tumalo Winter Use Area Map found in the Deschutes National Forest Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/recreation/winter/area-dutchman.shtml>
-  **Dutchman Sno-park is very congested and parking is limited during winter holidays and weekends. The lot fills early on these days. Pay close attention to "No Parking" zones.** To make more efficient use of the limited parking space, **vehicles or vehicle/trailer combinations over 40 ft. in length are not permitted to park at Dutchman Sno-park.** Oversized vehicle/trailer combinations must use Wanoga or Edison Sno-Parks. The lower and mid-elevation snowmobile trails offer good access to the upper elevation trails and areas **when there is adequate snow.**
-  **Overnight camping** is not permitted at Dutchman Sno-Park. Please camp at the lower snowparks (or overflow parking area near Dutchman Sno-Park) to avoid overcrowding at this congested area.
-  **Overnight parking** is not permitted from Tuesdays 6 pm to Wednesdays 6 am and Thursdays 6 pm to Fridays 6 am to allow for complete plowing of the snow park. Vehicles may be towed at owners expense.

- 🌲 **The area is often busy on winter weekends and holiday periods** with snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding, and snow play. All recreationists need to practice extra patience and adhere closely to posted closures and trail etiquette.
- 🌲 **Skiers and snowshoers are to stay to the right side** when using open snowmobile (orange diamonds) trails.
- 🌲 **Snowmobilers, please slow to 10-20 mph when passing skiers/snowshoers.** Also, obtain an area trail map and familiarize yourself with the areas closed to snowmobiles/atvs. These areas include: The Three Sisters Wilderness, Todd Lake, part of Tumalo Mt./Bend Municipal Watershed and the Mt. Bachelor Ski Area. Snowmobile access to Mt. Bachelor's Sunrise Lodge is permitted from the east via a snowmobile trail.
- 🌲 **The area is closed to dogs November 1 until April 30** except working dogs in harness are permitted on groomed snowmobile trails with a permit. Call (541) 383-4000 for info on obtaining the free permit.

* **Edison Butte Sno-Park** (4 miles south of Hwy 46 Milepost 19 on Road 45, elevation 5000') - **24-30" snow depth.** Good snow conditions for winter sports. Watch for low snow hazards.

Access to 24 miles of easy to most difficult nordic ski trails, 2 ski warming shelters (day use only), 4+ miles of snowshoeing trails, 150 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, 3 snowmobile warming shelters and Elk Lake Resort (via snowmobile trails). Snowshoers using this area are encouraged to use the snowshoe trails over the ski trails as they were designed for the snowshoeing experience; and they usually have tracks set shortly after each new snowfall. If you choose to use the ski trails for snowshoeing, remember to stay at least 2 feet to either side of a set ski track. This will help avoid ruining the ski track and a walked on ski track is unpleasant and hazardous to ski in.

Snowmobile trail grooming by Moon Country and Sisters Sno-Go-Fers Snowmobile Club volunteers will commence with favorable snow conditions. Moon Country Club info and grooming hotline: (541) 410-4219. Area open to dogs and RV camping. If you do bring a dog to this area, please practice good canine courtesy while on the trails and in the snow park and maintain control of your dog and clean up after them.

* **Skyliner Snow Park** (Milepost 9 on Skyliner Road, elevation 4700') - **18-20" snow depth.** Fair to good snow conditions for winter activities. Road 4603 to Tumalo Falls is closed to vehicle traffic for the season.

Access to 5 miles of easy to more difficult nordic ski trails. Area is open to dogs. If you do bring a dog to this area, please practice good canine courtesy while on the trails and in the snow park and maintain control of your dog and clean up after them. **Snowplay activities (sledding, tubing, etc.) are NOT permitted in this area. The slopes are too steep, contain hidden hazards, and have little to no runout to safely allow this activity.** See "New..." section above for information on the New Wanoga Sno-Play Sno-Park.

Tumalo Creek Nordic Loop is no longer a "loop". The trail that crossed the creek about 1 mile upstream from Skyliner has been removed along with the log bridge crossing. The bridge was deemed unsafe do to decay and removed along with the trail. You can still make a loop trip however by using the yet existing nordic trail on the south side of the creek up to Tumalo Falls and returning on the road.

Newberry National Volcanic Monument Nordic Ski and Snowmobile Trails:

* **Ten Mile Sno-Park** (10 miles east of Hwy 97 on Road 21, to Newberry Crater, elevation 5560') **20-28" snow depth.** Fair to good snow conditions for winter trail activities. Watch for low snow hazards.

Access to over 100 miles of snowmobile trails and 10 miles of easy to most difficult ski trails. Snowmobile trail grooming by Lodgepole Dodgers Snowmobile Club volunteers will commence with favorable snow conditions. Area is open to dogs and RV camping. If you do bring your dog to this area, please practice good canine courtesy while on the trails and in the snow park and maintain control of your dog and clean up after them. The Monument is closed to ATV use year round.

* **Six Mile Sno-Park** (6 miles east of Hwy 97 on Road 21, to Newberry Crater, elevation 4400') - **12" snow depth.** Fair snow conditions for winter trail activities. Watch for low snow hazards.

Access to over 100 miles of groomed (by Lapine Lodgepole Dodger volunteers) snowmobile trails when snow conditions permit. There is now a warming shelter (installed by Lapine Lodgepole Dodgers Snowmobile Club and Deschutes National Forest) and restroom facilities at Six Mile Sno-Park. Area is open to dogs. The Monument is closed to ATV use year round.

SISTERS RANGER DISTRICT SNO-PARK & WINTER TRAIL CONDITIONS AS OF DECEMBER 31:

Santiam Winter Recreation Trail Maps available! The new 2007 winter trail maps covering winter trails east and west of the Santiam Pass area are on sale (\$7) at the Deschutes National Forest Headquarters and Bend/Fort Rock Ranger Districts in Bend and Sisters Ranger District office in Sisters. They are also available at a few Sisters and Bend outdoor sports stores.

The following snow depths are approximations for the area around each snow park area. Actual depths may vary depending on recent weather conditions.

* **Upper Three Creek Sno-Park** (Forest Road 16 - Milepost 11, elevation 5200') - **30" snow depth.** Good snow conditions for winter trail activities. Watch for low snow hazards. The gates have been closed at Milepost 11 on the 16 Rd and the 700 Rd to Jefferson View Shelter. The snowmobile trail grooming depends on good snow conditions and volunteer availability.

Non-Motorized access to 12 miles of ungroomed nordic trails and the Jefferson View Shelter. Snowshoe opportunities are plentiful, please when using designated ski trails walk at least 2 ft. to either side of a set ski track. Warming shelter is day use only (no camping). Snowmobiles are not allowed on the nordic ski trail system or at the Jefferson View Shelter.

Motorized access to over 30 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and additional access to over 150 miles of snowmobile trails on the Bend/Fort Rock Ranger District. Loss of a trail bridge has removed access to Ray Benson Sno-Park and trails system at Santiam Pass. **PLEASE NOTE: WILDERNESS AREAS ARE CLOSED TO ALL MOTORIZED USE. IN HIGH USE AREAS PORTIONS OF THE WILDERNESS BOUNDARY HAVE BEEN POSTED, BUT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE USER TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE AT ALL TIMES!!! JUST BECAUSE THERE IS NO SIGN DOES NOT MEAN IT IS OPEN.**

* **Lower Three Creek Sno-Park** (Forest Road 16 - Milepost , 5000 ') - 20" snow depth. Fair to good snow conditions.

* **Corbett Sno-Park** (Hwy 20 - 16 miles West of Sisters, elevation 4300') **CLOSED** - Due to continual vandalism, marginal snow, limited snow plowing budgets and hwy safety, Corbett will not be plowed this winter. Please use **Ray Benson Sno-Park** at the summit of Santiam Pass to access this trail system. Ray Benson provides access to 50 miles of groomed snowmobile trails, 21 miles of groomed nordic trails, Hoodoo Ski Area, Suttle Lake Resort and 3 warming shelters (day use only). Area open to dogs and camping.

To get the most updated status on grooming at Santiam Pass please call the McKenzie Ranger District at 1-541-822-3381. **PLEASE NOTE: WILDERNESS AREAS ARE CLOSED TO ALL MOTORIZED USE. IN HIGH USE AREAS PORTIONS OF THE WILDERNESS BOUNDARY HAVE BEEN POSTED, BUT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE USER TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE AT ALL TIMES!!! JUST BECAUSE THERE IS NO SIGN DOES NOT MEAN IT IS OPEN.**

* **McKenzie Snow Park (undeveloped free site)** (Hwy 242 - Milepost 6, elevation 4000') - **Estimate 16" snow depth.** Fair snow conditions, with access to the parking area good right now, although it can be sporadic due to the fact that there is no official snow plowing on 242, except by HTS to access their land. Watch for low snow hazards.

Access to about 45 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. Nordic and snowshoe opportunities are abound, but beware there are no marked nordic trails in this area. Many winter users like to ski, snowshoe or snowmobile along the McKenzie Highway to the Dee Wright Observatory which is 8 miles from the parking area. The observatory offers a spectacular 360 degree view of the Cascades.

Hwy 242 from the east snow gate to Mckenzie Pass is undergoing logging operations for hazard tree removal, possibly thru the end of January. The road will be plowed for logging access, logs decked along the road, debris in and along the road making for an unusable winter trail. Please avoid the road and area until logging operations have finished in late January.

Most of the Mckenzie Highway is bordered on both sides by Wilderness. **PLEASE NOTE: WILDERNESS AREAS ARE CLOSED TO ALL MOTORIZED USE. IN HIGH USE AREAS PORTIONS OF THE WILDERNESS BOUNDARY HAVE BEEN POSTED, BUT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILY OF THE USER TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE AT ALL TIMES!!! JUST BECAUSE THERE IS NO SIGN DOES NOT MEAN IT IS OPEN.**

CRESCENT RANGER DISTRICT SNO-PARK & WINTER TRAIL CONDITIONS AS OF DECEMBER 31:

* **Crescent Junction Sno-Park** (Off Hwy 58, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south on Forest Road 60, Milepost , elevation 4,750') - **30-36" snow depth.** Good snow conditions. Watch for low snow hazards. Be aware of area closures in the Royce Mt. Fire area and stick to the trails.

* **Crescent Lake Sno-Park** (Off Hwy 58, 2 miles south on Forest Road 60, elevation 4,700') - **30-36" snow depth.** Good snow conditions. Watch for low snow hazards. Be aware of area closures in the Royce Mt. Fire area and stick to the trails.

*** Crescent Lake area trail grooming report:**

Hotline...call (541) 410-4914 for more current trails information

Ben Sunderland, Grooming Program Chairman

SPECIAL SAFETY NOTES:

Go prepared for changeable weather conditions. This time of year (as anytime) we can have very changeable weather from clear, sunny and warm in the morning to stormy, cold and wet or snowy. Be sure to go prepared with plenty of warm clothing, water, and food as well as other emergency essentials. Winter snows have begun accumulating and will only continue over the coming months.

For further Deschutes National Forest winter or summer trails information, please call:

Deschutes National Forest Headquarters: (541) 383-5300

Bend/Fort Rock Ranger District: (541) 383-4000

Sisters Ranger District: (541) 549-7700

Crescent Ranger District: (541) 433-3200

This report updated bi-weekly or as time permits!

Have a safe winter!