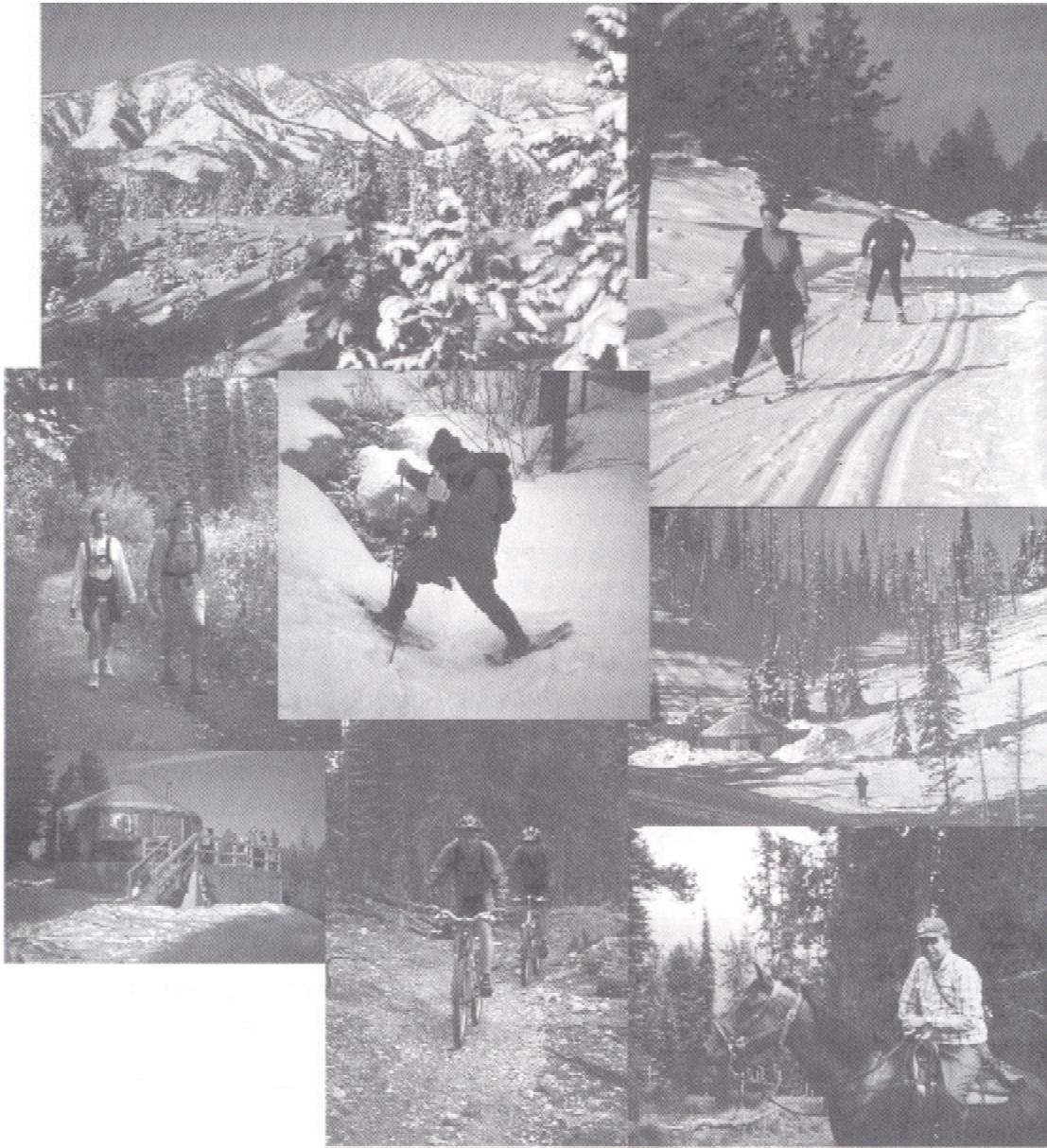


FREE!
Take one

Year-Round Yurt and Trail Guide

Idaho City Area Trail System



INSIDE!

Yurts

Trail Information

Winter Maps

Summer Maps

From Parks & Recreation

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Winter/Summer Trail System

The Idaho City Area trail system is one of the finest year-round trail systems for non-motorized trail users in the Northwest. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation has worked cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service and user groups since 1977 to develop a top-notch winter trail system in the Idaho City area. This was done through the Department's statewide Park N' Ski program. The statewide program provides a dedicated source of funds for the development and maintenance of cross-country ski facilities.

But there is more to it than great cross-country skiing. After three backcountry yurts were constructed in the late 1990's, the existing trail system became popular for mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and snowshoeing. During the last five years the trail system has doubled in size to a total of 56 miles. Each year the trails are maintained by hundreds of volunteers so users have the safest and best marked trails in the state. In the summer the trail system is a naturally cool place to hike and ride because of its high elevation and dense forest environment. There is no cost to use the trail system and parking lots in the spring/summer/fall, but during the winter you must purchase a Park N' Ski permit to park in the designated parking lots. Park N' Ski and yurt rental income is dedicated to maintain and improve both the summer and winter trails system.

So now, no matter when you're in the mood to enjoy the great outdoors, the Idaho City Area trail system has you covered for all your non-motorized needs. We hope you find this Trail Guide useful and informative, and that you'll consider not just using the trails, but volunteering your time to help maintain this wonderful, year-round outdoor amenity for everyone to enjoy for years to come.



Leo Hennassy

Non-Motorized Trail Coordinator
Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Partners in Success

The Idaho City Area trails and yurt system is moving forward to meet the demand of users. Six organizations and agencies are working hand in hand to provide the highest quality program and facilities available.



The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) coordinates the Park N' Ski and non-motorized trails programs. IDPR also assists in promotion, maintenance, grooming and management of the area and yurts.

For more information, contact: Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, PO Box 83720, Boise ID 83720-0065, Phone (208) 334-4199.



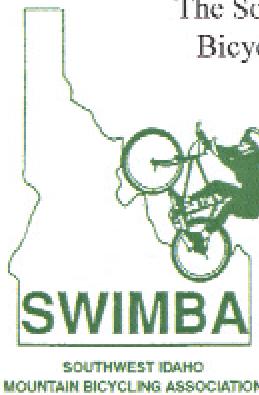
The Idaho City Ranger District manages the land on which the facilities are located. They provide technical support, planning, the Beaver Creek cabin and a storage building for the groomer. For more information, contact: Idaho City Ranger District, PO Box 129, Idaho City ID 83631, Phone (208) 392-6681.



The Idaho City maintenance crew plows Highway 21 and the three Park N' Ski parking lots. For more information, contact: ITD, District 3, PO Box 8028, Boise ID 83707, Phone (208) 392-6681.



to improving Nordic ski opportunities in Southwest Idaho. They provide most of the volunteer support for trail and yurt maintenance. For more information, contact: Nordic Voice, 1718 N. 17th Street, Boise ID 83702, Phone (208) 344-7371.



The Southwest Idaho Mountain Bicycling Association (SWIMBA) is a group of mountain bikers who promote responsible riding and enhance riding opportunities in Southwest Idaho. They have constructed many of the new summer trails in the area. For more information, contact: SWIMBA, PO Box 1443, Boise ID 83701.



The Treasure Valley Back Country Horsemen is a club of riders who are dedicated to preserving pack and saddle use. The group, which is our newest partner, will help maintain the trail system. One of their goals is to develop additional equestrian opportunities out of the Whoop-Um-Up equestrian campground and trailhead. For more information, contact: TVBCH, PO Box 413, Nampa ID 83653-0413, Phone (208) 362-4126.

A special thank you to numerous outdoor sporting goods stores who help by donating time, equipment, materials and promotional gifts.



Volunteers building Banner Ridge Yurt

Winter Trail Information

Park N' Ski Permits

To use any of the three Idaho City Park N' Ski area parking lots, (November 15 to April 30), you must display a current Park N' Ski permit or a Visit Idaho Playgrounds (VIP) Pass on your vehicle. If you do not have the permit or pass, you could be cited and fined \$45.00 by law enforcement officials. Park N' Ski permits can be purchased in Idaho City at Tom's Service, the Shady Lady Espresso Bar and the Idaho City Grocery. Annual cost for the decal is \$20.00 or \$7.50 for a three-day temporary hangtag. In Boise, you can buy Park N' Ski permits at most sporting goods stores that sell Nordic skis. By law, generated income must be used to finance snow plowing of the parking area and maintenance of the ski or Nordic facilities. The quality and quantity of the winter trails and grooming depends on permit sales, donations, yurt income and volunteer help. Please purchase a permit and volunteer to help so we can continue to provide some of the best backcountry ski/snowshoe trails in Idaho.



Status of Current Snow Conditions

Because the nearest person lives 17 miles away, providing up-to-date snow conditions is always difficult. IDPR has a designated Snowline (208-334-4180 Ext. 403) for the Idaho City Park N' Ski area. The groomer operator usually updates the Snowline late Thursday and Friday. Please note that the conditions provided on the



Snowline or printed in the *Idaho Statesman's Idaho Outdoors* magazine may not be completely accurate due to printing deadlines and fast-moving snowstorms. In general, if it is 45 degrees F or less and raining in Boise, it is snowing at the Park N' Ski areas.

The Idaho Department of Transportation plows the highway continually during daylight, except in heavy snowfalls that may be dangerous to their personnel. The parking lots are generally plowed, but under heavy snow conditions the Department of Transportation's top priority is to keep the road open. In any case, it is wise to drive a high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicle and to carry a shovel to dig yourself in or out of the parking lot. The parking lots are most likely to be plowed just before the weekend. For current road conditions, contact the Idaho Department of Transportation's Road Report at (208) 336-6600. Do not park on Highway 21.

Grooming

Over 28 miles/45 kilometers are groomed. Grooming is generally done before the weekend and holidays



from the first week in December to the second week in March. A diesel-powered Pisten Bully 150 is used to till and pack a 10-foot wide path. The snow cat is equipped with a front blade, rear snow tiller and a hydraulic track setter. The trails are groomed for both skate and diagonal stride skiers.

Telemarking/Snowboarding

If you enjoy long slopes of untracked premium powder, you have come to the right place. Few people know of the great telemark slopes located just out of view from Highway 21. The yurts and groomed trails provide easy access to at least three excellent areas. The most popular area is located about 1.5 miles up the Elkhorn Trail on

the north slope of Banner Ridge. Another telemark area is located .6 mile east of the Elkhorn yurt, just off the Cougar Trail. This remote area offers bare slopes facing in all directions. The third area is located about half way around the Gold Fork loop. At the half way point, continue west on an unmarked road for about .7 miles until you view telemark heaven. Please be aware that avalanches can occur anytime, and you should educate yourself in proper safety procedures before attempting these slopes. Carrying an avalanche transceiver, shovel and avalanche probe poles are recommended for all telemarkers and snowboarders.



Snowshoeing

The fastest growing winter recreational activity is snowshoeing. Snowshoers are welcome on all groomed and ungroomed Nordic ski trails. The Snowshoe trail was specifically developed for snowshoers. This 1.5 mile loop is accessed from the Banner Ridge Park N' Ski parking lot. It starts just



behind the Banner Ridge toilet. Snowshoers are encouraged to use the Whoop-Um-Up Park N' Ski trails. The recent growth of snowshoe use on the groomed ski trails to yurts is causing conflict between skiers and snowshoers. Snowshoers are damaging the mechanically set ski tracks. In order to reduce the friction, we ask that you follow the trail etiquette recommended on pages 6-7.

Beginner Skiers

Because of the changing topography, opportunities for beginner skiers are limited to only a few miles of the entire 56-mile system. It is recommended that first-time skiers ski the groomed Gold Fork Loop at the Gold Fork Park N' Ski lot counter clockwise to the first intersection of the Lodgepole Loop and return (2.2 miles one way) or ski the ungroomed .6 mile Pilgrim Loop at the Whoop-Um-Up Park N' Ski lot.

Snowmobiles

Overall, the Idaho City Park N' Ski areas are relatively free of snowmobiles. Only the Whoop-Um-Up Park N' Ski parking lot is a shared-use lot. Snowmobilers are not required to have a Park N' Ski permit but they do contribute to the cost of plowing the parking lot. A major snowmobile trail passes through the lot from the Atlanta area to Lowman/Idaho City. The Wagon, Valley and Whoop-Um-Up trails cross or parallel portions of the snowmobile trail. Please respect the snowmobiler's right to recreate in the area. The snowmobilers have assisted us in development of this area, and a good relationship is developing with them.

Risk

You are responsible for injury to yourself and other persons and damage to property that results from the inherent risks of skiing, snowshoeing and snowboarding including (but not limited to): variations in weather, terrain, surface or subsurface snow or ice conditions, cornices, avalanches, poor visibility, bare spots, rocks, sand, trees and other forms of forest growth or debris, and wildlife.

Winter Trail Information

Trail Etiquette

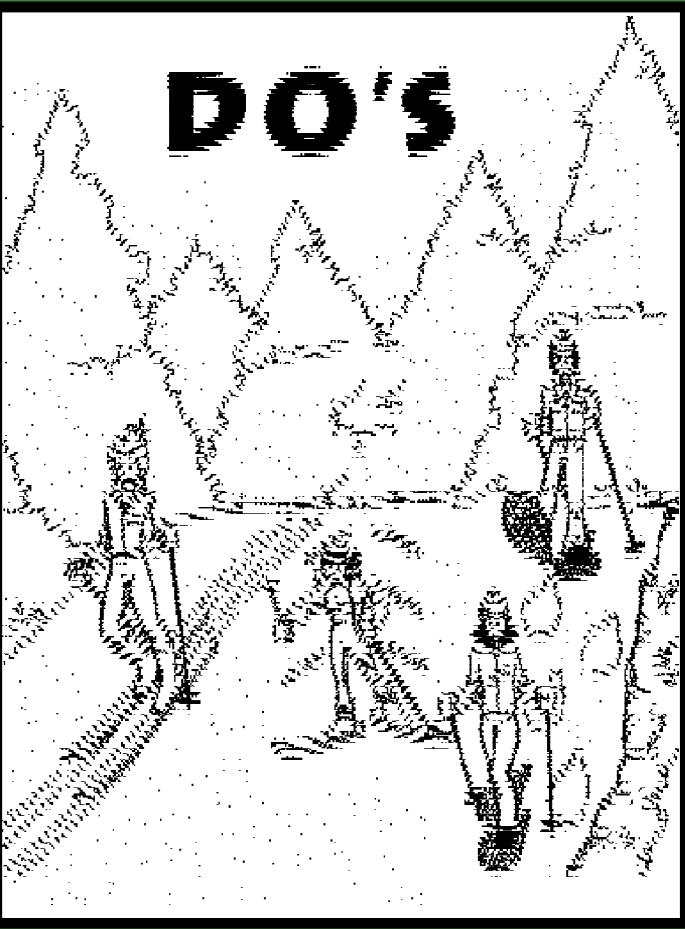
General

- ◆ Control your speed based on ability, terrain, visibility and traffic.
- ◆ Ski so as not to endanger others. Keep poles close to body when other skiers pass.
- ◆ If you stop to talk or rest, please step out of the ski track.
- ◆ In case of a fall, clear track without delay. Any depression left in the snow should be filled with snow and leveled so as not to create a hazard for others.
- ◆ Do not walk or snowshoe on mechanically or human set ski tracks.
- ◆ Keep to your right upon meeting an oncoming skier. A climbing skier should yield the right-of-way to a descending skier.

- ◆ A slower skier should step to the side of the track when being overtaken by a faster skier.
- ◆ Do not litter or leave human waste near the trail or water course.
- ◆ Park vehicle to maximize available space. Please do not park on State Highway 21.

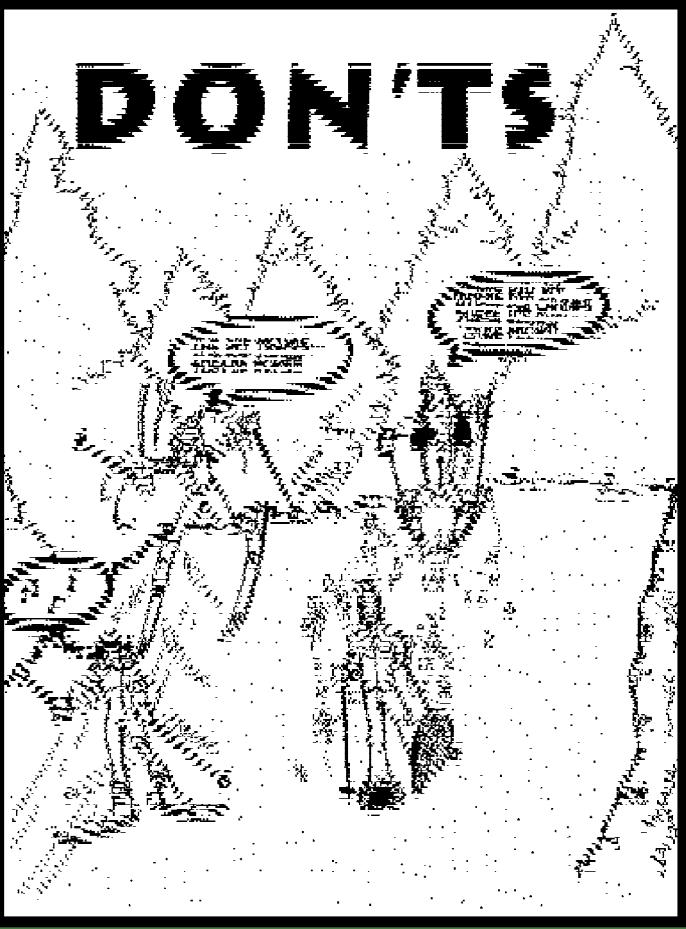
Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on the groomed ski trails. Because of health concerns, dogs are not allowed at or near the yurts. The snow surrounding the yurts is melted for drinking water. Dogs are welcome on ungroomed ski/snowshoe trails such as the Whoop-Um-Up trail network and the Snowshoe trail located at the Banner Ridge parking lot. We ask that dog owners remove all dog droppings from the ski trails and leash or control their dog at all times. Incidences have occurred in the past where dogs get in the way of skiers and cause them to crash.



DO'S

Artwork by Star Sutazzo



DON'TS

Snowshoes

Because of the recent growth of snowshoeing at the Idaho City trails system, IDPR has received numerous complaints relative to damage done by snowshoers on trails groomed primarily for skate and traditional Nordic skiers. The skier's complaints are primarily in two areas. The first is that snowshoers are damaging the mechanically set traditional ski track (two parallel grooves) by walking on top of them. Traditional skiers like smooth parallel ski tracks so they can glide efficiently and not have to concentrate on keeping the skis from crossing. The second complaint is that snowshoers and walkers are walking in the center of the ten-foot wide groomed/packed track. This smooth center portion of the trail is used by skate and traditional skiers when snow plowing down steep descents. Because metal cleats are attached to the bottom of most snowshoes, snowshoers are leaving small chunks of snow in the center of the trail. When these snow chunks freeze and thaw overnight they make it nearly impossible for skiers to snow plow (brake) down the trail without crashing. We ask that snowshoers walk on the opposite side of the mechanically set parallel ski tracks on the smooth, groomed/packed portion of the trail. Please snowshoe as close as possible to the edge so as not to negatively affect skate and snow plowing skiers. We also ask when you travel in groups that you snowshoe single file, not side by side.

Skate Skiing

The trails are being groomed/packed ten feet wide to allow a skate lane next to a mechanically set parallel ski track. Because of the narrow roads on which we groom we cannot widen the groomed/packed track to allow skating skiers the full width skate lane that they need when climbing hills. When climbing hills, many skate skiers are going beyond the current skate lane and breaking down the edge or crushing the parallel set ski track (two grooves) thus causing complaints from the traditional style Nordic skiers. We ask that skate skiers be considerate by taking smaller strides that do not damage the parallel set ski track.

Safety Tips

- ◆ Bring the equipment noted on the checklist provided.
- ◆ Wear fleece, wool or polypropylene clothing to keep warm, dry and comfortable.
- ◆ Avoid danger by skiing in areas where you are capable of skiing safely.
- ◆ Ski in recommended direction of travel.
- ◆ Do not ski alone. Plan your trip according to the weakest skier's ability.
- ◆ Stay tuned to local weather forecasts.
- ◆ Avoid avalanche areas by staying on the marked trail.
- ◆ On a map, show friends where you plan to go. Tell them when you expect to return.

Recommended Winter Equipment List

- Map and Compass
- Hat
- Waterproof Matches
- Gaiters
- Candle/Fire Starter
- First Aid Kit
- Sunglasses
- Gloves/Mittens
- High Energy Food
- Sunscreen
- Water
- Camera and Film
- Small Flashlight w/Extra Bulb & Batteries
- Extra Clothing
- Whistle
- Lightweight Plastic Tarp
- Knife
- Nylon Cord
- Duct tape

Winter Trails

Banner Ridge

The Banner Ridge Park N' Ski area is located 23.5 miles northeast of Idaho City on Highway 21 near the Beaver Creek Summit, approximately a two-hour drive from Boise. The system is comprised of at least seven loops, each providing a unique experience. The trails are marked by 5" x 7" blue reassurance diamonds (blue blazes) at regular intervals. The loops have been rated More Difficult or Most Difficult under good snow conditions. All loops have short steep sections with sharp turns requiring advanced skiing techniques.



Elkhorn Loop (7.3 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	4.5 hours
Elevation gain:	700 feet
General information:	Groomed

If you travel clockwise, the first 1.2 miles is a steep climb to an open-ridge top. The ridge provides an excellent view of the South Fork of the Payette River Canyon and Sawtooth Mountains. The trail continues along the ridge for about .6 mile and then enters rolling meadows and forest. Halfway around, the trail starts a gradual descent with a steep section and sharp turns the last .3 mile.

Alpine Loop (6.5 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	4 hours
Elevation gain:	700 feet
General information:	2.5 miles ungroomed

If you travel clockwise, the Alpine loop follows the Elkhorn loop for 3.4 miles. The Alpine Loop then cuts across the middle of the Elkhorn loop. The ungroomed 2.5 mile Alpine trail section is relatively flat with the last .5 mile a steep downhill to the Elkhorn trail.



5"x7" blue trail blaze

Banner Loop (1.9 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	1 hour
Elevation gain:	447 feet
General information:	Groomed

The counter clockwise loop follows the Elkhorn loop trail with a steep 440-foot climb to the turnoff at .9 mile. The return loop provides scenic views of the

Lowman Valley to the north. The final .6 mile follows a wooded drainage down to the parking lot.

Cougar Trail (3 miles)

Rating:	Most Difficult
Approximate travel time:	2 hours
Elevation gain:	280 feet
General information:	Ungroomed

This trail provides a route to an excellent telemark slope near the Elkhorn yurt and serves as an alternate trail between the Banner Ridge and Elkhorn yurts other than the groomed Elkhorn trail. The closest way to access the trail is to follow the Elkhorn trail clockwise 1.8 miles to the Cougar trail intersection. Start by traveling on the Cougar trail following the ridgeline east for .5 miles. Then locate a marked signpost along the trail and turn right. Follow the blue blazed trail through rolling forested country for 2 miles until you come to the first of two bridges. From the second bridge you will climb .4 mile until you intersect the Elkhorn trail.



A skier returning to the Banner Ridge yurt after telemarking on the nearby slopes.

the Snowshoe loop. The recommended direction of travel is counter clockwise. If you travel counter clockwise, turn right and follow the blue diamond blazes up the hill following an old roadbed. After you travel .4 miles, you will see the ridgeline through a forest of large Ponderosa pines. Then travel off the old roadbed and follow the blue blazes nailed to the Ponderosa pines a short distance cross-country to the top of the ridge line. At this point you will find a signpost. From here turn left and continue along the ridgeline. You will be following an old skid road as it winds you south around a small 30-foot high-forested knob. Continue past the knob about .2 mile until the blue blazes direct you off the ridge line left and cross country down into a creek drainage. (For those who like off-trail exploring through rolling open meadows, continue along the ridge line a short distance and then back track.) Once you get into the creek drainage the trail will once again follow an old roadbed. Continue down the road and drainage until you come to a grove of aspens and a fork in the roadbed. At this point you will be about 100 feet north of Highway 21. From this point turn left up the hill. Travel about 400 feet until you arrive at the intersection you encountered earlier. From there turn right and descend 80 feet in .2 mile to the starting point.



Paul Dawson telemarking on the slopes near the Banner Ridge yurt.

elevation in about .2 of a mile to the first intersection. From this intersection you can travel either direction to complete

“While out on a walk we saw a fox watching us right by the “Wolf Crossing” sign. A fun adventure for our young family! In August we are planning a trip to the Elkhorn yurt.”

Skyline Journal
6/26/99

Winter Trails

Gold Fork

The Gold Fork Park N' Ski area is approximately a 1 hour and 45 minute drive from Boise. The area is located 20 miles Northeast of Idaho City on Highway 21. The trails are comprised of one long groomed loop and three shorter cutoff loops. The trail is marked by 5" x 7" blue reassurance diamonds (blue blazes) at regular intervals. The loops have been rated More Difficult or Most Difficult under good snow conditions.

Gold Fork Loop (5.1 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	3 hours
Elevation gain:	496 feet
General information:	Groomed

If you travel clockwise, the trail starts left with a short, steep climb out of the trailhead. The route follows a forested drainage, which climbs gradually for about 1.6 miles. Approximately .4 mile past the Double Dip cutoff, the trail climbs steeply for about 300 yards. The next .5 mile is somewhat level and provides many good viewpoints. The trail between the Double Dip and Lodgepole cutoffs descends quickly with some sharp turns. Just past the Lodgepole cutoff, the trail starts a long 2.2 mile gradual descent to the trailhead.

Lodgepole Loop (3.9 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	2 hours
Elevation gain:	336 feet
General information:	.3 mile ungroomed

The Lodgepole loop follows the Gold Fork loop trail the first 1.4 miles. At 1.4 miles turn right on the Lodgepole trail cutoff and ski up steep terrain on an ungroomed track for .3 mile. At this point, you will connect into the groomed Gold Fork loop. Turn right on the Gold Fork loop trail and descend 2.6 miles to the trailhead.

West Gold Fork

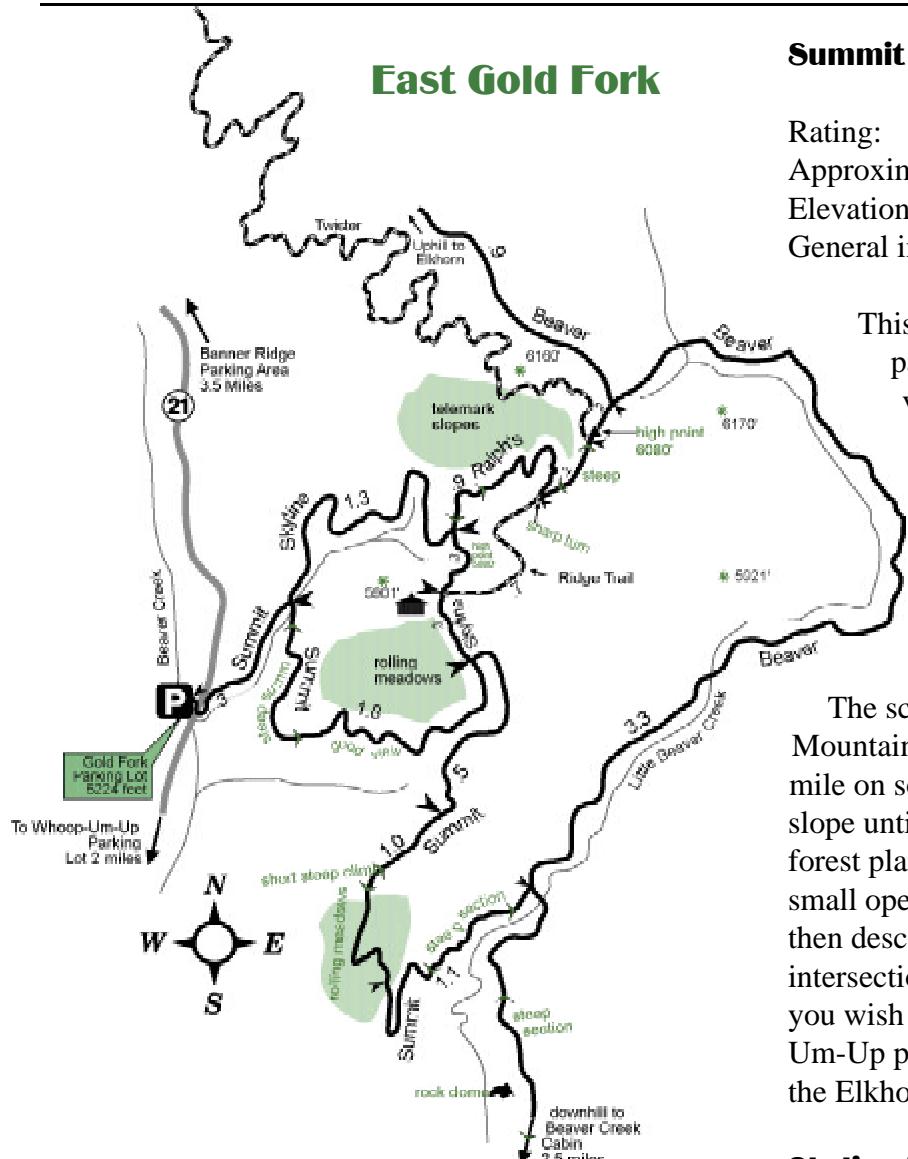


Double Dip Loop (4.6 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	2.5 hours
Elevation gain:	496 feet
General information:	.4 mile ungroomed

The Double Dip loop follows the Gold Fork loop trail for the first 1.6 miles. At 1.6 miles turn right on the Double Dip trail cutoff and ski up steep terrain on an ungroomed track for .4 mile. At this point, you will connect into the groomed Gold Fork loop. Turn right on the Gold Fork loop trail and descend 2.6 miles to the trailhead.

East Gold Fork



Summit Trail (4.7 miles)

Rating:	More difficult
Approximate travel time:	3 hours
Elevation gain:	580 feet
General information:	Groomed

This trail provides a route from the Gold Fork parking lot to the Whoop-Um-Up parking lot via the groomed Beaver trail and the ungroomed Wagon trail. Out of the Gold Fork parking lot, the first .3 mile climbs 120 feet up a drainage to the first intersection of Summit and Skyline trails. Summit trail turns right and climbs about 456 feet in 1.8 miles to the second intersection of Summit and Skyline trails.

The scenic views to the south include Sunset Mountain and Pilot's Peak. Continue on for about 1 mile on somewhat level ground on the wooded north slope until you climb a steep 40-feet-high pitch to a forest plantation, and then gradually descend through small open meadows to a hairpin turn. The trail will then descend steeply for about 1 mile to the intersection of Summit and Beaver trails. Turn right if you wish to go to the Beaver Creek Cabin or Whoop-Um-Up parking lot. Turn left on Beaver trail to access the Elkhorn or Ralph's trail.

Skyline Loop (4.3 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	2.5 hours
Elevation gain:	656 feet
General information:	Groomed

This trail is easily accessed from the Gold Fork parking lot via the first .3 mile of the Summit trail. From the first Summit/Skyline intersection, continue left up the drainage. At 1.6 miles you will reach the Skyline/Ralph's trail intersection. Continue climbing .3 mile on the Skyline trail until you top out and have a view overlooking a long south-facing meadow. At the meadow you can view the mountains to the south. Then continue about .3 mile down the meadow.

Moose Loop (3.5 miles)

Completion Date Scheduled for Fall 2001

Rating:	Most Difficult
Approximate travel time:	2.5 hours
Elevation gain:	420 feet
General information:	1.3 mile ungroomed

The Moose loop travels counter clockwise following the Gold Fork loop trail for the first 2.2 miles. At 2.2 miles turn left on the ungroomed Moose trail. After contouring around a 100 feet tall knob, the trail generally follows a ridgeline. About .5 mile from the Gold Fork parking lot the Moose trail descends steeply on switchbacks and enters the trailhead behind the toilet.

Continues on pages 14

② Moose Trail* ▶ 1.3 Miles

Legend

Groomed Trail

Ungroomed Trail

Snowmobile Trail

Easiest

More Difficult

Most Difficult

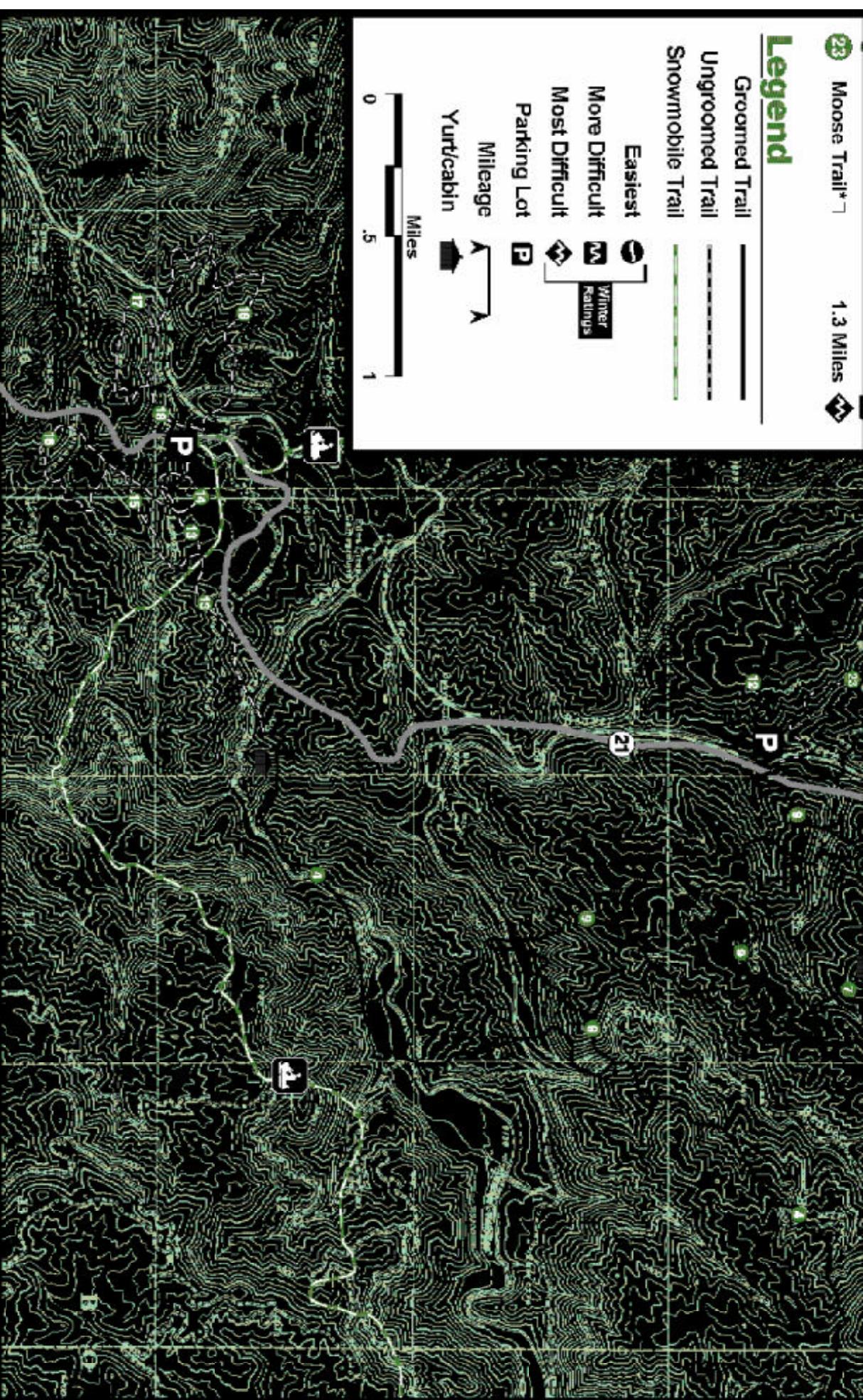
Parking Lot

Mileage

Yurt/cabin



Winter Rating



* Estimated completion date for these trails is the fall of 2001.

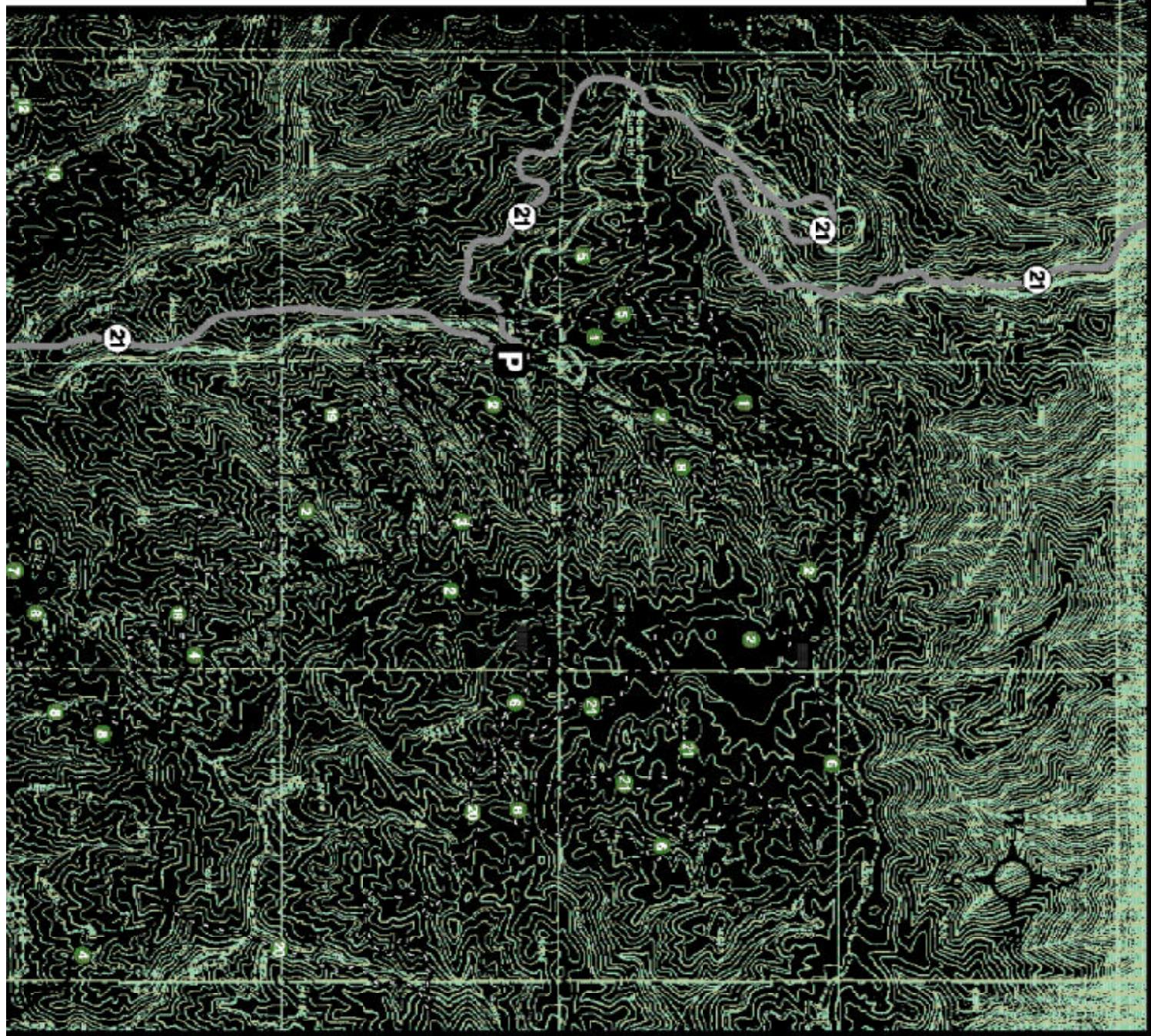
Idaho City

Area

Summer
/Winter



1	Banner Trail	1.0 Miles
2	Elkhorn Loop	7.2 Miles
3	Alpine Trail	2.5 Miles
4	Beaver Trail	6.7 Miles
5	Snowshoe Trail	1.5 Miles
6	Cougar Trail	3.0 Miles
7	Skyline Trail	1.9 Miles
8	Ralph's Trail	1.1 Miles
9	Summit Trail	4.7 Miles
10	Double Dip Trail	0.4 Miles
11	Lodgepole Trail	0.3 Miles
12	Gold Fork Loop	5.1 Miles
13	Wagon Trail	1.0 Miles
14	Pilgrim Loop	0.6 Miles
15	Valley Trail	0.7 Miles
16	Lower Lamar Trail	1.2 Miles
17	Upper Lamar Trail	0.7 Miles
18	Whoop-Um-Up Loop	2.0 Miles
19	Twister	4.1 Miles
20	Wayout	2.7 Miles



Winter Trails

through small pines and aspens to the second intersection of Summit/ Skyline trails. Turn right on Summit trail and descend 2.1 miles to the Gold Fork parking lot.

Beaver Trail (6.7 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	4 hours
Elevation gain:	1,020 feet
General information:	Groomed

It is recommended that this trail be accessed from the Banner Ridge parking lot and skied downhill from Elkhorn loop to the Beaver Creek Cabin. Then ski 1.3 miles on ungroomed trails to the Whoop-Um-Up parking lot. A shuttle vehicle at the Whoop-Um-Up lot is recommended, as you are about 800 feet lower and 5.5 miles by highway from your starting point at the Banner Ridge parking lot. The Beaver trail starts at the Elkhorn loop and descends gradually along a creek in a remote valley for 4.2 miles until you reach the intersection of the Beaver/Summit trail. The trail makes a short 40-foot climb and then descends steeply for about .6 mile. It then continues on through meadows on almost level ground for 1.9 miles to the Beaver Creek Cabin, its end point.

Ralph's Trail (1.1 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	45 minutes
Elevation gain:	380 feet
General information:	Groomed

This trail is a groomed connection between the East Gold Fork and Banner Ridge trail systems. The best way to use this trail is to start at the Banner Ridge parking lot and follow the Elkhorn and Beaver trails until you intersect Ralph's trail. This way you will be

generally descending and you can travel continually downhill to the Gold Fork parking lot via the Skyline trail. From the Beaver/Ralph's trail intersection follow Ralph's trail .2 mile and 80 feet up in elevation to the high point. From there follow the blue blazes immediately downhill for .9 mile and 300 feet until you intersect the Skyline trail. Ralph's trail is very steep at the top and bottom and has at least one sharp 180 degree turn which is difficult to ski.

Ridge Trail (.7 mile)

Completion Date Scheduled for Fall 2001

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	15 minutes
Elevation gain:	75 feet
General information:	Ungroomed



Twenty-eight miles of trails are groomed 10 feet wide with a Piston Bully.

This trail was designed as an ungroomed ridgeline short cut between Banner Ridge trail system and the Skyline trail. To use this trail, start at the 180-degree turn on Ralph's trail. Continue straight through the 180-degree turn and follow the Ridge trail until you intersect the Skyline trail, which is at its highest point.



A skate skier on the Summit trail.

Some verse from the yurt

"I was asked out to a yurt
... perhaps to get fit.
Of yurt knowledge you know
... I'm somewhat of a twit.
my forte' you see
... is sailing my sloop.
So I questioned a kid, he said,
... "Yurt is yak poop."
This didn't sound right, sleeping
... in yak produced dirt.
To try to stay warm how "deep"
... must be the yurt?

So I looked in my book and
... I found without doubt
Yurts are round tents for people
... who trek round about.

We packed up our stuff
... adjusted our load.
Straight up several miles,
... two & two tenths I am told.

We got to the yurt
... we opened the door
We've skied so hard
... my toe nails are sore.

I looked in the yurt and said
... "Oh what a palace"
This place is the nicest between
... Lowman & Challis.

We unloaded our gear and
... made up our cots.
I noticed the list of to do's
... & do not's.

So building a fire was
... one of our chores
Step 2 gave us problems
... there's no two by fours!

The four of us went
... for an afternoon ski
It was Ron & Michelle & Marion & Me.

Went up Summit Trail
... maybe a mile
Then back to the yurt
... to party a while.



The Skyline yurt after a snowstorm.

That night it was clear
... temp less than twenty
We're warm in the yurt
... snuggled up to our honey.

Saturday came lets go to
... the yurt at the top
The one up on Elkhorn
... It's a skip & a hop.

The weather was snowy
... as we trudged up the hill
The tracks that we left were
... beginning to fill.

Ate lunch at the top
... before our all downhill slide
But the snow was too sticky
... my skis gave me no glide.

Got back to Skyline
... about 3 p.m.
Eight visitors were there,
... only 1 of them men.

Had a great dinner that night
... Italian cuisine
Still snowing outside
... or is this a dream?

Woke Sunday morning to fog
... snow, sound of birds
This truly is God's country
... perhaps say some words?

We're packing our stuff
... we'll be leaving here soon
I'd much rather stay
... until late afternoon.

Down hill to the truck
... should be a breeze
Sticky snow is no problem
... I've glide waxed my skis.

A few things of this Yurt
... I think should be said
The view is sublime
... you can't beat the bed (well
maybe?)
From the stove & its heat
... that you know is the best
to the john with a view that's
... out back to the west

This Yurt is for all to enjoy
... & hold dear
If we all lend a hand
... we can come back next
year!"

Skyline Yurt Journal
February 1998

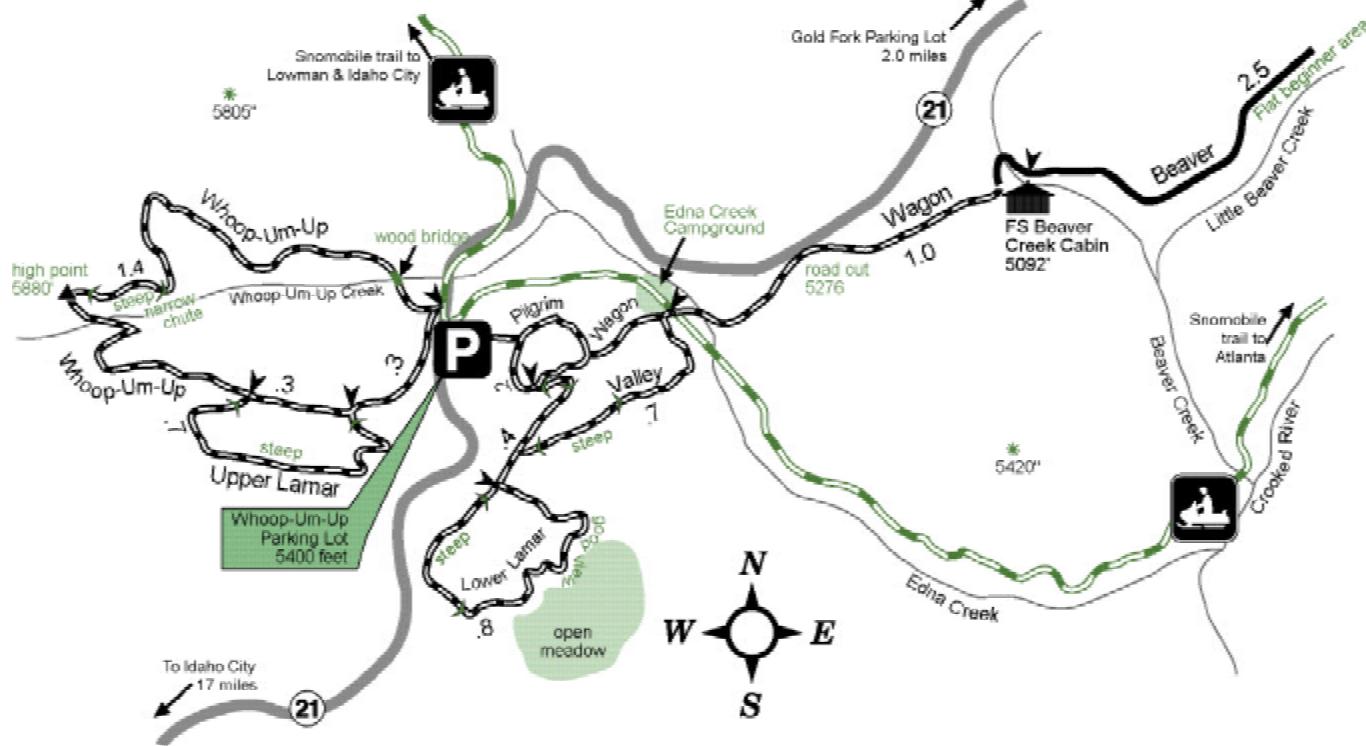
Whoop-Um-Up

The Whoop-Um-Up Park N' Ski area is about a one and a half hour drive from Boise and is located 18 miles Northeast of Idaho City on Highway 21. There are two loops on the west side of the highway and three on the east side. All loops are ungroomed. Snowmobilers share the trailhead parking lot. The ski and snowmobile trails separate immediately, leaving little chance you will encounter a snowmobile on the ski trail. The ski trails are marked by 5" x 7" blue reassurance diamonds (blue blazes) at regular intervals. The trail loops are rated Easiest and More Difficult under good snow conditions. Many loops have short, steep sections with sharp turns requiring advanced skiing techniques.

Whoop-Um-Up Loop (2 miles)

Rating: More difficult
Approximate travel time: 1 hour
Elevation gain: 480 feet
General information: Ungroomed

The trail starts on the west side of Highway 21. Ski



left and uphill past the two Upper Lamar trail turnoffs. Just past the second turnoff, the trail becomes steeper. It reaches its high point about halfway around. The trail then descends a steep narrow chute. About .5 mile from the trailhead, it levels off. About 300 yards from the trailhead, there is a wooden bridge to cross.

Upper Lamar Loop (1.6 miles)

Rating: More difficult
Approximate travel time: 45 minutes
Elevation gain: 360 feet
General information: Ungroomed

The trail starts on the west side of Highway 21. Ski left for .3 mile on the Whoop-Um-Up trail until you reach the first Upper Lamar trail turnoff. Turn left and ski uphill until reaching the high point on the loop, then continue down a steep grade until you intersect the Whoop-Um-Up trail. Turn right and ski downhill .6 mile on the Whoop-Um-Up trail to the parking lot.

Pilgrim Loop (.6 mile)

Rating: Easiest
Approximate travel time: 30 minutes
Elevation gain: 120 feet
General information: Ungroomed

The Pilgrim trail is the shortest loop in the Idaho City Park N' Ski area complex. It starts on the southeast side of the Whoop-Um-Up parking lot and travels in a loop through dense woods and small meadows. You must first ski sections of the Pilgrim trail to access Lower Lamar, Wagon and Valley trails.

Lower Lamar Loop (2 miles)

Rating: More difficult
Approximate travel time: 1 hour
Elevation gain: 200 feet
General information: Ungroomed

The loop starts on the southeast side of the parking lot. Turn right at the first intersection and follow the Pilgrim trail for about .2 mile until you come to a second intersection. At this point, turn right up the side slope and travel .4 mile to where the trail divides to form a loop. Continue around the loop until you return to where you were. Ski .6 mile back to the trailhead.



Each parking lot has an information center and toilet.

Valley Trail (.7 mile)

Rating: More difficult
Approximate travel time: 30 minutes
Elevation gain: 200 feet
General information: Ungroomed



Ray Johnson and Kim Monnier breaking trail on the Lower Lamar Loop.

The Valley trail starts off the Lower Lamar loop trail. At the Lower Lamar/Valley trail intersection, ski downhill through dense woods about .5 mile until the terrain flattens out. Then turn left before intersecting the snowmobile trail and parallel the snowmobile trail for .2 mile until you intersect the Wagon trail. You must turn left on the Wagon trail if you wish to

return to the Whoop-Um-Up parking lot. A right turn will take you across the snowmobile trail to the Beaver Creek Cabin.

Wagon Trail (1 mile)

Rating: More difficult
Approximate travel time: 1 hour
Elevation gain: 140 feet
General information: Ungroomed

The trail's primary purpose is access from the Whoop-Um-Up parking lot to the Beaver Creek Cabin/groomed Beaver trail. The trail starts approximately halfway around the Pilgrim trail loop. From the Pilgrim/Wagon trail intersection, ski down through the Edna Creek campground across the Edna Creek road, which is a groomed snowmobile trail in the winter. Then make a short 140-foot climb to where the trail intersects Highway 21 at a narrow road cut. Take your skis off, and walk 100 feet next to the road through the road cut. Climb the right bank, and ski downhill about .5 mile to the Beaver Creek Cabin and Beaver trail starting point.

Summer Trail Information

Non-motorized Use

Over 56 miles of marked two-track forest roads and single-track trail are available to mountain bikers, equestrians and hikers at no charge. Many of the trails used in the winter make excellent summer trails, except the lower half of Banner trail which is wet and marshy. Because of the trees and high elevation (5200 to 6500 feet), it is always 10-20 degrees cooler than Boise. Summer trails are marked with 5" x 7" blue reassurance diamonds (blue blazes) at regular intervals. A map showing the summer trails is located in the center of this guide. Please note that single-track Lehn's Loop, Ridge and Moose trails are not yet completed. We anticipate these new trails will be completed by the fall of 2001. The US Forest Service is completing the environmental review process (NEPA) for the Ridge and Moose trails this spring.

Motorized Use Restricted

Under the current Boise National Forest travel plan, ATVs and motorcycles are allowed on all designated roads in the area except during big game hunting season. The only roads in the area open during the big game hunting season are the Banner Ridge, Banner Mine, China Fork/Gold Fork and Kemper Ranch roads. No motorized traffic is allowed on the old rehabilitated roads that have been ripped up and water barred. Access to the yurts from an open road must be by foot, pack animal or mountain bike.

Risk

You are responsible for injury to yourself and other persons, and damage to property that results from the inherent risks of skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, including but not limited to, variations in weather, terrain, surface or subsurface snow or ice conditions, cornices, avalanches, poor visibility, bare spots, rocks, sand, trees and other forms of forest growth or debris, and wildlife.



Trail Etiquette

General

- ◆ Stay on trail and don't cut switchbacks, take short cuts or create new trails.
- ◆ Be considerate of fellow trail users.
- ◆ Avoid muddy trails.
- ◆ Remove obstacles from trail when possible.
- ◆ Avoid deliberately disturbing wildlife, especially during calving and fawning in the spring. Observe from a distance.

Hikers

- ◆ Move off the trail when meeting less mobile users.
- ◆ When meeting horseback riders, step aside the trail, downhill if possible, and talk in a normal voice to the riders. This calms the horses.

Mountain bikers

- ◆ Ride under control. Travel at a safe speed considering the terrain and the possibility of meeting others.
- ◆ Use caution on blind corners.
- ◆ Announce your presence with a bell or greeting and pass slowly, especially when approaching equestrians.

Equestrians

- ◆ Stock tied directly to a tree destroys trees and turf. Use hitch lines or the hitching rails at the yurts.
- ◆ Keep horses at the yurts only as long as it takes to unpack and pack them. Then hitch or pen them at the designated site near the yurt.
- ◆ Clean up all manure and hay at yurts, trailheads or loading areas.
- ◆ If possible, use pellets in lieu of hay or suspend hay in netting from hitch line.
- ◆ Never tie horses within 200 feet of the creeks or springs.

Wildlife Viewing

The area is rich with wildlife. Often trail users see large ungulates such as elk, deer and moose. Occasionally a bear, coyote, fox or mountain lion is spotted. Squirrels and grouse are plentiful. It is likely a wolf or two is in the vicinity. In the large creeks you will find rainbow trout, bull trout and tailed frogs.

Courtesy and Safety

One of the main reasons trail and yurt users come to this area is for wildlife viewing. In order for the area to continue to have abundant wildlife you should do the following: Control your dog. This is especially important during elk calving season, which runs from early spring until early July. Do not approach elk calves, deer fawns and/or other infant animals even if they are alone. The mother will eventually return to them. Be careful around moose, which sometimes like to use the groomed winter trails. Do not pressure them to move off the trail, as they will charge. We recommend that you back down the trail out of sight and wait a few minutes until the moose meanders off the trail. In the summer we usually have 5 or 6 bear sightings on the trails. In all cases the bear high-tailed it into the woods. To date we have had no conflicts with yurt users and bears. To be on the safe side we recommend that you keep a clean camp at the yurt and dispose of all dirty water in the gray water system. All food should be packed out of the yurt when you leave. Please do not feed any animal including the chipmunks. A portion of the trail system is located near creeks that contain bull trout. Bull trout are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and, like other aquatic biota, are sensitive to extra sand and silt in the stream. To reduce stream bank erosion, which adds sand and silt to the stream, we ask that you use the bridges instead of fording the stream. Your respect for wildlife may assist us in future expansion of the yurt and trail system.

"Came across a mother black bear and 2 cubs on the trail into the yurt. They ran off, but be aware that they are hanging around."

Skyline Yurt Journal
8-12-98

Recommended Mountain Bike/Equestrian Loops:

Lehn's Loop (3.3 miles)

Completion Date Scheduled for Fall 2001

Rating:	Easiest
Approximate travel time:	45 minutes
Elevation gain:	200 feet
General:	All single-track

This beginner loop starts at the top of the scenic Banner Ridge near the Banner Ridge yurt parking spot. A high clearance vehicle is recommended to drive the two miles to the top of the Banner Ridge and yurt parking spot. From the parking spot travel on Cougar trail 100 yards into the woods and then on the Elkhorn trail south for .4 miles until you pass through a large aspen grove. Then turn left at a signpost and travel downhill .2 mile to the Upper Sawmill Creek Bridge. Cross the bridge and travel .1 mile to start Lehn's loop. Turn right and travel .7 miles on generally level ground until you intersect Cougar trail. Stay left on Lehn's loop and travel 1.2 miles crossing the Elk Wallow Bridge. By continually staying left on Lehn's loop you will return to the point where you started on Lehn's loop. Then turn right, cross the Upper Sawmill Creek bridge a second time and intersect the Elkhorn trail after .3 mile. Turn right on the Elkhorn trail and travel .4 mile to your point of beginning. The trail has grades of less than 10% and no sustained climbs over 60 feet in elevation. The terrain is rolling, has dense stands of spruce and firs and contains numerous creeks and wetlands.

Snowshoe/Alpine Loop (6.9 miles)

Rating:	More Difficult
Approximate travel time:	1.5 hours
Elevation gain:	860 feet
General:	4.2 miles single-track

The beginning point of this loop is at the Banner Ridge parking lot. Begin this trip by following the Snowshoe trail, which starts behind the trailhead toilet. Travel .2 mile up the single-track trail to the

first intersection. Turn right on the Snowshoe trail and travel .6 mile up to the next intersection, which is at the top of a ridge. Then turn right and travel .6 mile on the Banner trail (generally following a ridgeline) until you intersect with the Elkhorn trail. Turn left on the Elkhorn trail and continue to climb until you begin seeing spectacular views of the South Fork Payette River Canyon from the scenic Banner Ridge. The official Elkhorn trail sometimes meanders off the main drivable Banner Ridge road. This diversion is necessary in the winter because drifting snow obliterates the main road in the winter. You can follow the drivable Banner Ridge road until you reach the highest point. From this point you will see a sign post directing you to turn right off the drivable road onto a closed road that parallels the drivable one. Stay on this closed road for about .2 of a mile until you come to the first intersection of the Cougar and Elkhorn trails. Turn right on the Elkhorn trail and travel 1 mile on rolling, forested terrain to the second Cougar/Elkhorn intersection. Continue on the Elkhorn trail .6 mile until you arrive at the Alpine trail turn off. Turn right onto the Alpine trail and travel gradually downhill 2.5 miles until you intersect with the Elkhorn trail. Turn left and travel .6 mile downhill to the Banner Ridge parking lot.

Wayout Loop (11.0 miles)

Rating:

Approximate travel time:

Elevation gain:

General:

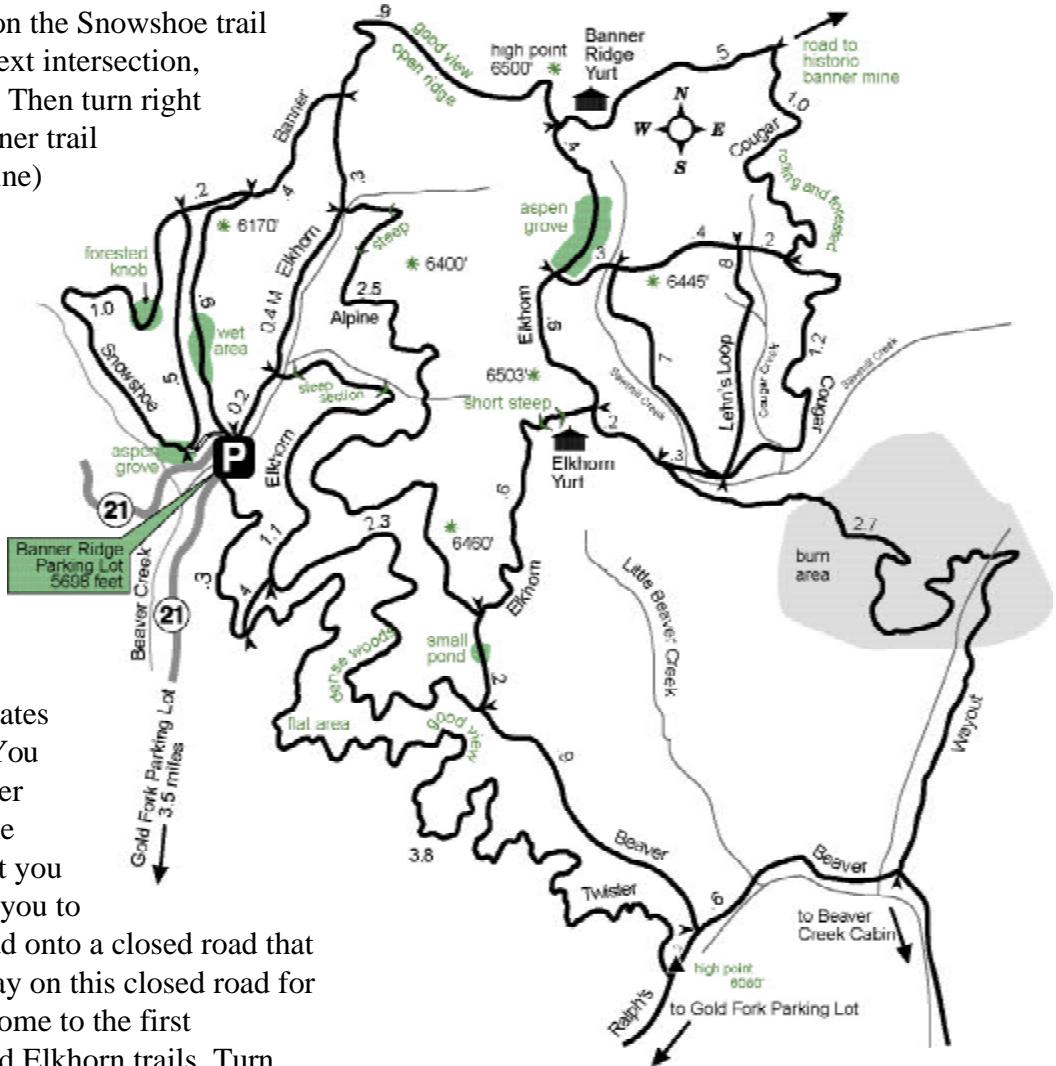
Most Difficult

3 hours

1100 feet

2.1 miles single-track

The starting point for this loop is at the Banner Ridge parking lot. The first part of this route is the same as the Snowshoe/Alpine Loop noted above. Please follow those directions until you reach the second



Cougar/Elkhorn trail intersection. At the second Cougar/Elkhorn trail intersection turn left on to the Cougar trail. Travel .2 miles until you come to the intersection where the Wayout trail starts. Soon the Wayout trail turns into a single-track trail along a ridgeline. At about 1 mile you will reach a drivable road. Turn right and travel 1.7 miles downhill through a burned area. You will then intersect with the Beaver trail. Turn right on the Beaver trail and travel on the road along Little Beaver Creek. You will then come to the Beaver/Ralph's trail intersection. Continue straight up the hill for .2 mile until you reach the high point which is marked with a Ralph's/Twister trail signpost. At this point turn right off Ralph's trail onto the Twister trail and travel 4.1 miles along this contouring road until you reach Highway 21. Then turn right and travel 200 yards on the highway to the point of beginning at the Banner Ridge parking lot.

YURTS: Comfort in the Backcountry

For decades, only the most experienced backpackers, skiers, hunters and outdoors enthusiasts could venture into the backcountry during the winter months and know how to survive the elements and hazards. Sleeping in tents and snow caves, bundled in specially made sleeping bags, and carrying only the most essential gear, these folks were the only witnesses to arguably the most spectacular snow-covered mountain scenery in the world. That is, until now. Since 1996, people who love winter sports and activities have had the opportunity to enjoy the backcountry with a safe, secure, and warm home base—a yurt—to return to after a day of skiing, snowshoeing or sightseeing along the Idaho City Area trail system. Today, there are three yurts available to rent.

The **Banner Ridge** yurt is located at 6500 feet on a high scenic ridge overlooking the South Fork of the Payette River drainage and Sawtooth Mountains. It was constructed in the fall of 1996 and is the favorite for telemark skiers because of the good powder and long, open slopes. Access in the winter is 2 miles and up 680 feet from the Banner Ridge parking lot. In the summer you can drive within 300 yards of the yurt on a high clearance vehicle Forest Service road.

The **Elkhorn** yurt is located about halfway around the Elkhorn loop trail and is accessed from the Banner Ridge parking lot in the winter. It is the most remote of the yurts and is the place to get away from everyone. It provides access to untouched telemark slopes in the winter and good single-track mountain bike trails in the summer. In the winter you must travel 3 miles and climb 800 feet to get to the yurt. In the summer you can drive within 1 mile of the yurt on a high clearance vehicle Forest Service road and then hike or ride rolling terrain with little elevation gain.

The **Skyline** yurt is accessed out of the Gold Fork parking lot in the winter and is situated just off the Skyline trail. Its spectacular setting and view of the Boise Mountains make it popular in both summer and winter. In the winter and big game hunting season it is a 600-foot climb in 2 miles to the yurt. In the spring/summer you can drive on a Forest Service road within



The Trinity Mountains are the backdrop for the Elkhorn yurt.

.5 miles of the yurt and then you will have to climb about 200 feet in elevation.

What is a Yurt?

Derived from the Russian word “yurta,” a yurt is a domed, circular, Mongolian-style tent with a plywood floor, hardwood lattice sidewall and a clear plexiglass skylight. This fully insulated shelter is designed to withstand high winds and heavy snow loads. It has a framed-in lockable wood door and windows with screens and storm flaps. Covered entirely by waterproof canvas, the yurt is an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable place to stay, even in the dead of winter.

Why Stay in One?

The yurt offers furnished comfort and security, with the solitude of backcountry camping. With bunk beds that sleep six, table and chairs, kitchen cabinet, propane lantern and stove, outhouse toilet, wood burning stove (with wood), cooking pots, plates, cups, and utensils and nearby water, the yurt is a warm, cozy place to stay on those snowy or rainy trips. It provides a cool, pine-scented experience during the summer and is an inviting place to use as a base camp for exploring the 56 miles of summer trails at your doorstep. Just bring your sleeping bag, food, appropriate gear for the season and that book you want to finish reading.

Reserving Your Yurt

A yurt can be reserved at the cost of \$60.00 per night for groups up to six and \$72.00 for winter weekends and holidays. An additional \$10.00 or \$12.00 fee per night per person will be charged for groups over six. Maximum number of people allowed at a yurt site is 12.

Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis in person or by telephone. Full payment of all nights must be made at the time or within 7 working days of reservation. Your reservation is **not final** until payment is made and the reservation form is complete. Holidays and weekends are usually reserved months or even a year in advance, so register early if you want a specific date. Yurts are reserved from 1:00 pm the day of the reservation to 1:00 pm the next day. The maximum length of stay in any one yurt is five (5) days.

Planning the Trip

It is important for you to make a careful and honest evaluation of your party's abilities. If you have any doubts of your



Yurts are stocked with eating and serving supplies.



The Elkhorn yurt with five feet of snow on the ground.



Skiers packing supplies the easy way.

ability to undertake a yurt tour, we recommend that you first go on a professional guided yurt tour in the Boise, Stanley or Sun Valley area. When planning, please note that the yurt is a pack-in/pack-out, no-smoking facility, and pets are not allowed in the winter. Because of the remote location of the yurt, users are required to help with maintenance (such as cleaning) to ensure that the yurt is in good condition for the next group. For your convenience, a yurt manual has been developed to help you organize a trip. The manual covers: tips on planning a trip; safety considerations; rules and regulations; opening/closing procedures; suggested personal and group equipment list; a copy of the reservation procedures; a copy of the reservation form; and a guide for each yurt outlining how to find it, distances, elevation gain, equipment provided at each yurt and a map. If you would like to check on yurt availability or receive a copy of the yurt manual, please contact the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, PO Box 83720, Boise ID 83720-0065. Phone: (208) 334-4199. If you would like to quickly view the yurt manual, visit our website at www.idahoparks.org and click on yurts or cross-country skiing.

Beaver Creek Cabin Rental

The Idaho Ranger District rents a backcountry, two-bedroom cabin for \$45.00 per night (year-round). The two-bedroom cabin is accessed by a 1-mile ski trail from the Whoop-Um-Up parking area in the winter and is a .5 mile drive off Highway 21 in the summer. A wood stove heats the cabin. Firewood, cooking equipment and a propane cooking stove is provided. If you would like to reserve the cabin, contact the Idaho City Ranger District at (208) 392-6681.

The Future

The future expansion of the Idaho City trails and yurt system depends on the income generated by the yurt rentals, sales of Park N' Ski permits and volunteer labor. For years the public has been demanding additional yurts and trails. Recently IDPR submitted a request to the US Forest Service, who manages the land, for additional yurts and a few more miles of single track trail. Long-range plans include construction of a total of six yurts evenly spaced to allow yurt-to-yurt trips. We also envision a winter warming shelter on the Elkhorn loop, additional snowshoe trails, two new Park N' Ski lots and expansion of existing parking lots and more miles of single-track trail for summer use.

Of Historical Interest

The Idaho City Park N' Ski area is located in the historic Banner Mining District. Placer mining started along the Crooked River in 1863. Pits and tailings are still visible as are some ditches and wagon roads. On July 6, 1864, a rich silver vein was discovered at Banner that created much excitement. A rush of 200 prospectors occurred in August of 1864. They discovered about 50 new veins. In a few weeks, the towns of Banner and Eureka were established. Mining continued at Banner until 1921. Silver production totaled \$3 million during that period. Several of the ski trails follow the roads and trails built to serve the mines. The original Banner mine is located about 4 miles east of the Banner Ridge parking lot.



Volunteers building the first bridge across Sawmill Creek.

Volunteers Needed

Many special events are held each year to promote and improve the trails and yurt system.

- ◆ Coordinate parking and act as hosts for the January Cross-Country Idaho Free Ski Day.
- ◆ Do slide programs on the trails/yurts for community education and other occasions.
- ◆ In July help haul and split wood for the three backcountry yurts.
- ◆ Build three new 20-foot long bridges on the Cougar Trail and Lehn's Loop.
- ◆ Man a booth at the annual ski swap and other special events.
- ◆ In the winter, ride along on the Snowcat on Thursday and Friday for safety reasons and assist the Snowcat operator in fueling and preparing the groomer for operation.
- ◆ In early September participate in the annual volunteer work weekend at the Beaver Creek Cabin. Work includes trail brushing/markng, yurt maintenance and new trail development.

If you would like to help, contact the Nordic Voice volunteer coordinator, Ralph McAdams, at 344-7371, or Jan Joseph, IDPR yurt coordinator, at 334-4180 Ext. 232.

Important Phone Numbers

Boise County Sheriff
(208) 392-4411

Medical Emergency
(800) 632-8000

Idaho Road Report
(208) 336-6600

Idaho City Ranger District
(208) 392-6681

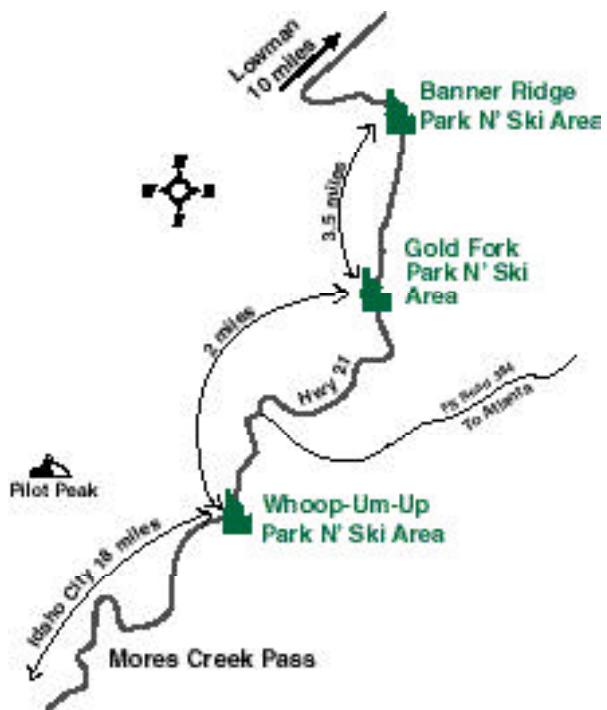
Idaho Dept. of Parks and Rec.
(208) 334-4199

Idaho City Park N' Ski Area Snowline
(208) 334-4180 Ext. 403

Nordic Voice Ski Association of Southwest Idaho
(208) 344-7371

Treasure Valley Backcountry Horsemen
(208) 362-4126

Idaho City Area



Help us make future decisions

The agencies and organizations involved in this trail system would like your input as to future improvements which could be made. Noted below are items that have been mentioned for improvement. We ask that you check the items you wish to see in the next 3 years.

- ◆ More summer single-track trail for bikers, equestrians, and hikers

Preferred locations _____

- ◆ More marked snowshoe trails (Preferred locations):

Beaver Creek Summit area
 China Fork Creek area
 Other site _____

- ◆ Additional yurts (Preferred locations):

Near Whoop-Um-Up lot
 West side of Gold Fork lot
 4 miles out on Banner Ridge road
 Near Beaver Creek Summit
 Other sites _____

- ◆ More or larger winter Park N' Ski parking lots (Preferred locations):

Beaver Creek Summit
 Banner Ridge lot expansion
 China Fork Creek road
 Beaver Creek FS Cabin road
 Other sites _____

- ◆ Warming shelters (Preferred locations):

Halfway around Elkhorn Loop
 Other sites _____

- Dogs allowed in winter on some groomed trails.

- ◆ Other improvements or changes you wish to see:

Please return to: Non-Motorized Trails Coordinator,
Idaho Dept. of Parks and Rec., PO Box 83720, Boise ID
83720 or fax to (208) 334-3741.