

UPPER LAKE MCDONALD AREA

Many great excursions start from the Lake McDonald parking area. In winter the Going-to-the-Sun Road is under a blanket of snow and offers delightful skiing or snowshoeing for the whole family. From West Glacier, follow the Going-to-the-Sun Road for eight miles along Lake McDonald to the parking area at Lake McDonald Lodge.

McDonald Falls (4 miles round trip)

Ski up the unplowed road 1.8 miles. Turn left and ski a short distance to the bridge over McDonald Creek for a view of McDonald Falls.

Sacred Dancing Cascade

(5.3 miles round trip)

Follow the route to McDonald Falls. Just across the bridge, turn right. Ski up stream one mile along the west bank of McDonald Creek. Cross the footbridge over the creek. Turn right and follow the unplowed road back to Lake McDonald Lodge.

POLEBRIDGE AREA

The routes described below follow unplowed gravel roads originating at the Polebridge Ranger station. Reach the area via County Road 486, which runs north from Columbia Falls to the Canadian border. This road is infrequently plowed and skiers should check local road conditions. Park on the east side of the North Fork Bridge at the Polebridge Ranger Station.

Big Prairie (4 miles round trip)

Ski this mostly level route from the ranger station through the 1988 burn to a large natural meadow and return. Keep left at both road junctions. Highlights of this ski include views of the North Fork of the Flathead River, the Whitefish Range to the west, and the Livingston Range to the east.

Covey Meadow Loop

(3 miles round trip)

After leaving the Polebridge Ranger Station, go right at the gate for approximately 100 yards, then turn left into the natural meadow. The route circles around to intersect with the Lone Pine Prairie trail at a high bank overlooking the North Fork of the Flathead River. This trip offers an excellent outing for families with small children.

Bowman Lake (12 miles round trip)

After leaving the ranger station, turn left at the first junction and right at the second. The route travels through the site of the 1988 burn and through forest ending with a spectacular view of Bowman Lake.

Lone Pine Prairie (6 miles round trip)

At the first junction north of the ranger station, ski right over low hills to a natural meadow. An easy trail leaves from the eastern edge of Lone Pine Prairie to Hidden Meadow (2.4 miles round trip).

MARIAS PASS AREA

The area at the summit of Marias Pass is popular with skiers and snowmobilers. It may occasionally be very windy, but the snow may still be good here when other areas are not. Parking is available at the main lot by the monuments.

Autumn Creek Trail (6 miles round trip)

Starts at the summit of Marias Pass and crosses the Burlington Northern tracks before entering the park. Remove your skis when crossing the line. Look for orange trail markers as you enter the trees. The first section follows the gradual grade of the trail until reaching the open section below Elk Mountain. The views of the mountains are spectacular, but several avalanche paths cross this area and openings to the south. From the start of the Autumn Creek drainage there are some steep hills and creek crossings. Beginners may choose to ski only the first part of the trail, exploring the open areas in the Three Bears Lake area. The trail ends at a pull off at mile marker 193.8 on U.S. Highway 2.

ST. MARY AREA

The skiing trailhead is located in a special parking area near the Hudson Bay District Office. Turn off U.S. Highway 89 at the winter park entrance just south of the town of St. Mary. Take a right after the bridge, then the first left to the parking area by the trailhead information board. Divide Creek Trail is located on the Blackfeet Reservation. A permit is required, but it is free and available from the tribal Fish & Game office in Browning.

Red Eagle Loops (mileage varies)

Three marked loops offer skiing through the aspens, meadows and mixed conifer stands east of St. Mary Lake. Distances range from one mile (Lion Loop) to 2.5 miles (Eagle Loop) and 3.5 miles (Elk Loop).

Red Eagle Lake Trail (8 miles round trip)

Take the Lion or Eagle Loop route to the old fire road, now called the Red Eagle Lake Trail. Ski the rolling terrain to a scenic bluff overlooking Red Eagle Creek. There are great views of the mountains along St. Mary Lake and Red Eagle Valley.

Divide Creek Trail (7 miles)

For intermediate to advanced skiers. Start 4.5 miles south of St. Mary at an orange stake on Highway 89. Begin on the logging access road and descend to Divide Creek. Cross the creek with caution and climb out along a steep, narrow side hill. Follow the old highway route to the Red Eagle Trail and back to the ranger station via one of the loop accesses.

TWO MEDICINE AREA

When snow conditions are good, the Two Medicine Road provides easy access to scenic skiing. Because of the wind, open areas may be blown free of snow at any time.

Two Medicine Road (mileage varies)

Start skiing at the end of the plowed road (usually about 4 miles north of East Glacier) near the junction of Hwy 49 and the Two Medicine Road. Popular routes include the park boundary (6 miles round trip) and Running Eagle Falls (10 miles round trip). Two Medicine Lake is a strenuous and hilly 16-mile round trip.



HAVE FUN - STAY SAFE!

Northwest Montana enjoys winter from mid-November through early April. The best cross-country skiing is usually December through April. While the Flathead Valley enjoys moderate winter temperatures (daily averages about 25°), the temperature and snow conditions can change dramatically from one hour to the next. For backcountry travel, please follow these guidelines:

- Be in good physical condition when you set out.
- Ski within your ability.
- Pack enough water, extra clothing, food and gear for a possible overnight.
- Let someone know where you're going and when you intend to return.
- Travel in groups of at least three.
- Check the forecast and avalanche hotline before you leave.
- Carry and know how to use avalanche equipment.
- Know and watch for signs of hypothermia.
- Turn back if the weather looks bad or you begin to tire.

For more information contact:

Glacier Country Avalanche Center

406-257-8204

www.glacieravalanche.org

Flathead Convention & Visitor Bureau

15 Depot Park
Kalispell, MT 59901

800-543-3105

www.montanafatheadvalley.com

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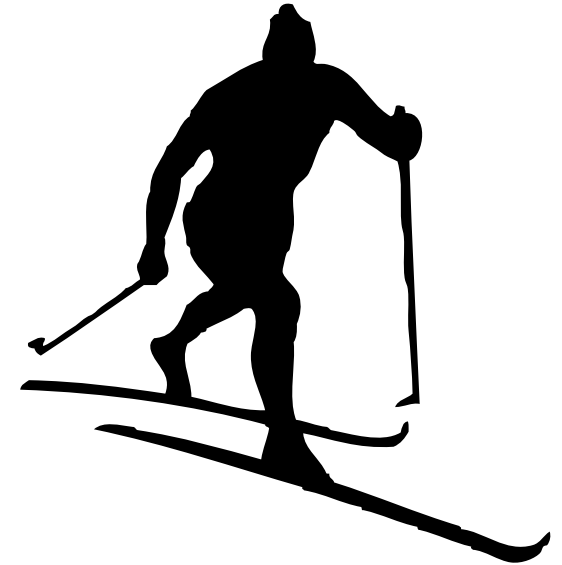


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CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

Montana's
Flathead Valley



Touring the countryside on cross-country skis or snowshoes lets you appreciate this spectacular area at a leisurely pace. Explore hundreds of miles of trails in Glacier National Park, the Flathead National Forest, and throughout the valley.



MACHINE GROOMED SKIING

WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT

NORDIC CENTER (*novice-advanced*)

15 km of groomed skiing. Widths of 12-14 feet allow room for family and friends to enjoy their favorite techniques.

Cost: Fee for use. Purchase trail pass at the Outpost ticket booth, located at the start of the trails. Season passes available.

Services: Certified instructors, ski rentals and repairs, food service, ski patrol.

Directions: The Whitefish Mountain Resort is 8 miles from Whitefish by car or take the free SNOW bus skier shuttle from various stops in Whitefish.

Other Information: Open mid-December to mid-April

Phone: (406) 862-1900

THE GLACIER NORDIC CENTER

(*beginner-advanced*)

12-km course of groomed tracks on a 36-hole golf course. With its rolling terrain, skaters and striders will enjoy this course. In the evening, enjoy 2.5 km of the course in the warm glow cast by hundreds of 10-watt bulbs.

Cost: Fee for use. Donation requested by the Glacier Nordic Club that maintains the course. Single or family memberships available.

Services: Certified instructors. Located at the trailhead, the Outback Ski Shack provides ski rentals including performance and skating skis, children's skis and child carriers. Full service dining/hotel located at Grouse Mountain Lodge.

Directions: The course is located one mile west of downtown Whitefish at the Whitefish Lake Golf Course

Other Information: Season runs mid-December through mid-March

Phone: The Outback Ski Shack (406) 862-9498

IZAAK WALTON INN

(*beginner-advanced*)

More than 33 km of groomed trails, partially on the Flathead National Forest, with set track and skating lane. Telemark hill. Lighted Starlight Trail (1km) for night skiing.

Cost: Fee for use. Overnight guests ski free.

Services: Certified ski instructors, guided trips for all levels, equipment rentals including performance, touring and skating skis and child carriers and snowshoes. Ice skating rink and skate rentals. Special trails for snowshoes. Restaurant, bar & gift shop.

Other Information: Named one of the top 10 cross country ski resorts in the Rocky Mountains by Snow Country Magazine. Season is late-November through mid-April. Due to elevation, spring skiing is excellent as snowfall usually lasts into the middle of May.

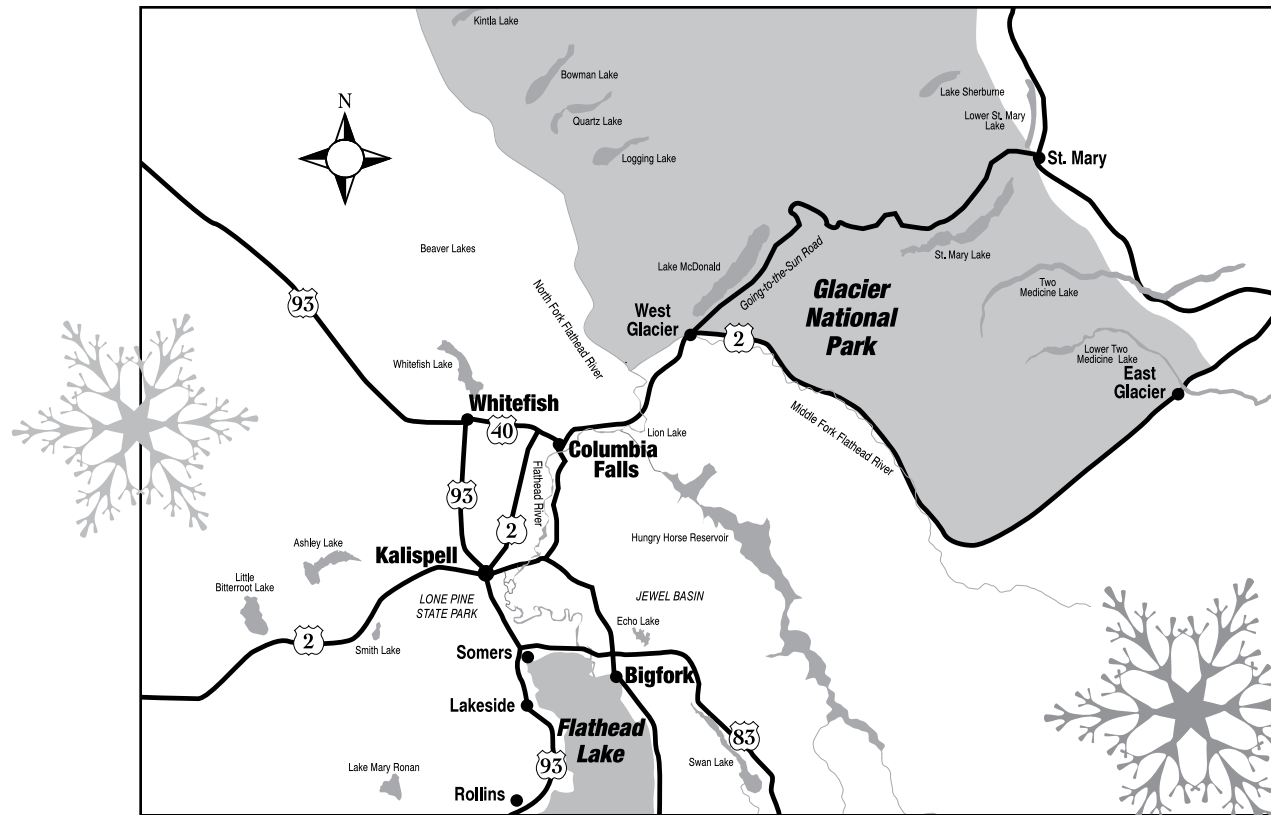
Directions: Hwy 2 to Essex, halfway between East and West Glacier. Follow the signs to the Inn.

Phone: (406) 888-5700

GLACIER OUTDOOR CENTER

(*beginner-intermediate*)

10-km groomed course that is 14' wide, set for both Skate and Classic Nordic Skiing.



Cost: Fee for use. Overnight guests ski free.

Services: Cross Country Ski Rentals & Snowshoe Rentals available on site, with ski tuning & waxing also available.

Other Information: Cabin Rentals and Gift Shop (which includes outdoor clothing) available on-site.

Directions: Drive on US Hwy 2 eastbound until you reach Mile Post 152. Look for the giant arch on the right side of the highway and the Glacier Outdoor Center sign.

Phone: (406) 888-5454

STILLWATER NORDIC

(*beginner-advanced*)

Winding through the Stillwater State Forest, enjoy 20-km of varied terrain for both classic and skate skiers. All trails are groomed daily, and up to 5-km are "dog friendly".

Cost: Fee for use. Family and Season Passes are available. Group rates available. State Land Use License is required (available through Stillwater Nordic).

Services: A warming hut is available to day users & lodging is available at the trailhead at Stillwater Mountain Lodge.

Other Information: Daily Snow Reports at 406-862-7004 or www.stillwatermtnlodge.com.

Directions: Head out of Whitefish, West on US Hwy 93. Follow Hwy 93 for 7 miles. Look for the brown Beaver Lake fishing access sign and turn right onto Beaver Lake Rd. Stay right at the "Y" in Beaver Lake Road and continue on for 1.5 miles. On your left will be Stillwater Mountain Lodge at 750 Beaver Lake Road.

Phone: (406) 862-7004

INTERMITTENTLY GROOMED SKIING

ROUND MEADOWS

(*beginner- intermediate*)

12 km of varied terrain on Flathead National Forest and up to 24km of un-groomed trails offering excellent beginner and thrilling intermediate skiing. Lots of interconnecting loops that start and end at the parking area.

Cost: None

Services: None

Other Information: Grooming is usually done on Fridays or when conditions permit. Call the Tally Lake Ranger District at 406-758-5200 for updates on conditions and trail grooming.

Directions: Drive north on Hwy 93. Eleven miles from Whitefish turn left onto Farm to Market Road (there should be a small sign saying Round Meadows Ski Area) then turn right on Star Meadows Road (2 miles). Continue two more miles to the parking area on the right.

BLACKTAIL XC SKI TRAILS

(*novice - intermediate*)

Four trails on Flathead National Forest (3 to 6km each) offering great views of Flathead Lake, the Swan Crest and the Mission Mountains, make this a favorite with local Nordic buffs. Grooming is intermittent – usually on Fridays.

Cost: None

Services: None

Directions: Go south on Hwy 93 from Kalispell. Turn west onto Blacktail Road just south of Lakeside. Lower parking area trailhead is 6.4 miles. Upper parking area trailhead is 8.1 miles.

Phone: Flathead County Parks & Recreation: (406) 758-5800

OTHER LOCAL SKIING AREAS - UNGROOMED

MEADOW LAKE RESORT

Enjoy the spectacular mountain views while skiing among the towering tamaracks on Meadow Lake's 330 gently rolling acres.

Cost: None

Services: Full service accommodations & restaurant (dinner only), ice skating, sledding and supervised children's activities.

Other Information: Open daily as snow permits.

Directions: Take Highway 2 to Meadow Lake Boulevard. Resort is 1.4 miles.

Phone: (406) 892-8700

BUFFALO HILL GOLF CLUB

Open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Buffalo Hill is located at 1176 N. Main in Kalispell. There are no groomed trails and their only request is that skiers please stay off the greens and keep out of the roped off areas. Course gates are locked at 5 p.m. Remember to park your car out of the gated area if you plan to ski later than 5 p.m.

Cost: None

Services: None

Other Information: Open daily as snow permits

Phone: (406) 756-4545

SWAN RIVER NATURE TRAIL

Just outside the village of Bigfork, the trail follows an abandoned road, providing an easy two-mile ski or walk along the Swan River. To access the trail from downtown Bigfork, take Grand Avenue east about a quarter mile from its intersection with Electric Avenue.

Cost: None

Services: None

Phone: (406) 837-5888

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

Cost: Park Entrance Fee

Services: Limited services within the park.

Other information: Stop at the Apgar Visitor Center (open winter weekends 9 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.) or Park Headquarters Monday-Friday 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. for current trail information and directions. The park is isolated during the winter. If you plan any off-road touring be prepared with extra warm clothes, map, compass, food, and water. Skiers, snowshoers, and hikers are asked to maintain separate tracks. Pets are not allowed on trails, unplowed roads, in the backcountry or off leash. Snowmobiles are not permitted in Glacier National Park. Daily trail conditions for these areas can be found at www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/crosscountryskiing.htm

Phone: (406) 888-7800