**WHERE TO SNOWSHOE ON THE CLE ELUM RANGER DISTRICT**

**Some General Tips:**

Always check the avalanche forecast for the area where you plan to travel (www.nwac.us). Take an avalanche awareness course. Make wise choices.

Always carry winter survival gear and know how to use it. Weather can change rapidly in the mountains.

Always take a map and compass. Winter routes are not always marked on hiking maps. Some maps are available from Washington State Parks (see website below), but make sure the map you carry has adequate detail. Blue diamond markers indicate non-motorized winter routes, and orange diamonds mark snowmobile trails.

Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return. Remember to call this person when you get back.

Many areas are open to dogs, but be prepared to leash dogs where there may be conflicts with other recreationists. Dogs can become fatigued or lost in deep snow, and hypothermic in wet weather.

Understand parking regulations and have the correct permit ***before*** leaving home. Please park safely and courteously to allow other recreationists access to their vehicles and the travelway.

For more information, refer to Washington State Parks winter website at [www.parks.wa.gov/winter](http://www.parks.wa.gov/winter).

**I-90 Corridor**

**\*\*PCT NORTH & COMMONWEALTH BASIN**

Easy to more difficult. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park along SR 906, hike under freeway to PCT North trailhead. No permit required.

TRAILS: Not groomed. Not marked. Find your own route, or follow routes used by guided walks.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low at lower elevations in timber. Increasing up Commonwealth Creek due to terrain and open slopes (not recommended for those with limited route-finding experience and avalanche training). There are also creek crossings in this area. Choose a safe route or turn back.

**\*\*GOLD CREEK SNO-PARK**

Easy to moderate difficulty. Dogs OK.

Kendall Peaks Road (FS Road 9090)

PARKING & ACCESS: Park near entrance of Sno-Park. Route takes off from there. Sno-Park permit required. Shared with snowmobiles, but use is segregated. This can be a very congested area!

TRAILS: On a road, not groomed or marked but easy to follow. There are also side roads to explore. Lower part of the road is a popular snow play area. Views of Keechelus lake and Cascade crest higher up.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low hazard for approximately 2 miles. Terrain gets steeper after that, increasing the danger.

Gold Creek Pond, and Gold Creek Valley (FS Road 144)

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at midpoint of Sno-Park (there will be other vehicles there). Sno-Park permit required. This can be a very congested area!

TRAILS: On a road, not groomed or marked but easy to follow. Take road to pond parking area. Trail loops around pond. Or continue on road through private land (please respect cabin owners and stay on trail) to Gold Creek Trail #1314.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: No hazard at pond. Gold Creek Trail enters avalanche terrain (run out zone) past private property. Choose a low danger day to travel here.

**\*\*HYAK LAKE**

1.2 miles. Dogs not OK.

This route is managed by The Summit at Snoqualmie Nordic Center.

**\*\*MT. CATHERINE LOOP**

9.6 miles. Dogs not permitted on groomed trails.

Trail managed by The Summit at Snoqualmie Nordic Center. Parking at the Nordic Center, follow all or part of the groomed route. Nordic ticket required to use groomed trails here. Part of the trail is on FS Road 9070 along Cold Creek, but does not go to the top of Mt. Catherine.

**\*\*HYAK SNO-PARK**

The Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail is managed by Washington State Parks, and groomed to Crystal Springs Sno-Park. Snowshoers should stay to the side of the trail, avoiding the set ski track and skate lane. Dogs not permitted from Hyak to crossing with FS Road 5480.

**\*\*CRYSTAL SPRINGS SNO-PARK**

Easy to moderate difficulty. Dogs OK in certain areas—see below.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park in the non-motorized areas of the Sno-Park. It is shared with snowmobiles, mushers, ski-jorers and offers access to two lodges (Sons of Norway and Mountaineers). A seasonal Sno-Park permit with a special grooming sticker is required, or a daily Sno-Park permit with a Discover pass.

TRAILS: To get to snowshoe opportunities, follow main groomed route out of Sno-Park to the Stampede Pass Road. This road is divided to segregate motorized and non-motorized traffic. Please avoid the groomed Erling Stordahl Ski Trail system which is managed for disabled skiers. A marked snowshoe route takes off near the Trollhaugen (Sons of Norway) Lodge. The Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail crosses the Stampede Pass Road. It is groomed from Hyak to this crossing and is open to dogs from the crossing with Road 5480 south. Dogs must be harnessed or leashed. Snowshoers are reminded to stay to the side of the groomed trail while avoiding the set track and skate lane. From the Stampede Pass Road south, the JWPT is open to all users (including snowmobiles). A system of dogsled trails meanders through the forest on old logging roads. They are marked and groomed.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: No hazard, except a couple isolated spots on the JWPT.

**\*\*KACHESS SNO-PARK**

Easy. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at the Sno-Park. Permit required. Shared with snowmobiles—please park courteously.

TRAILS: Hike along groomed snowmobile route to Kachess Campground, or explore unmarked ungroomed side roads.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low to none.

**\*\*CABIN CREEK SNO-PARK**

Recommend that snowshoers avoid due to potential conflicts with skiers, especially on weekends. Trails north of freeway are not dog-friendly. Dogs and snowshoes are OK on the Cabin Loop and Cabin Lookout trails south of the freeway. Also known as South Loop.

Easy to moderate difficulty

PARKING & ACCESS: There is an upper and lower lot. Sno-Park permit with special grooming sticker is required.

TRAILS: Cabin Loop trail has termini at both parking lots. This trail is sporadically groomed, and a marked route called Cabin Lookout takes off from it. Snowshoers may attempt Amabilis Mountain on FS Road 4822, but please stay to the side of the groomed set tracks and skate lane and leave dogs at home.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: None, except higher up on Amabilis Mountain.

**Cle Elum Valley**

**\*\*HEX MOUNTAIN AND SASSE RIDGE**

Crosses private land to get to the National Forest.

**\*\*FRENCH CABIN SNO-PARK**

Easy to moderate difficulty. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park in Sno-Park or along SR 903 (permit required). Shared with snowmobiles.

TRAILS: No marked routes. After crossing on the road bridge, explore along the Cle Elum River. Or follow the groomed snowmobile route about 1/3 mile to FS Road 4310, which parallels Cle Elum Lake.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low to none.

**\*\*HOWSON CREEK ROAD**

Easy. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Roadside parking just past Red Mountain Campground on SR 903 (permit required). Walk back to FS Road 128, which may be difficult to see. Watch for a “Road Closed” sign and a skier symbol.

TRAILS: Not marked, not groomed. Voluntary Non-motorized area. Follow road.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low to none.

\*\***COOPER RIVER ROAD**

Easy. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Roadside parking in designated areas. Shared with snowmobilers. No permit required.

TRAILS: Follow FS Road 49 which is a groomed snowmobile route. Explore side roads, or along Cle Elum River.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low on main route.

**\*\*4315 ROAD**

Easy to moderate difficulty. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Roadside parking in designated areas. OR park in Salmon la Sac Sno-Park, permit is required. Shared with snowmobilers.

TRAILS: The route starts at a plowed berm where the road goes down into the Sno-Park. It is groomed for skiing for a short distance and continues up the 4315 Road. A junction near the berm accesses the Salmon la Sac Campground ski trail system. This area is unofficially closed to snowmobiles. Please snowshoe to the side of the groomed trail.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low to none.

**\*\*SALMON LA SAC SKI TRAIL SYSTEM**

Easy to moderate difficulty, depending on conditions. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Roadside parking in designated areas. Shared with snowmobilers. No permit required. OR park in Salmon la Sac Sno-Park, where a permit is required.

TRAILS: The route starts at a plowed berm where the road goes down into the Sno-Park. It is groomed for skiing. A junction near the berm accesses the Salmon la Sac Campground ski trail system. Turn left here and follow the route through the woods to the historic Salmon la Sac Guard Station. Please stay to the side of the grooming. Follow the snowmobile trail to a fork in the road and turn left across the river. It is recommended that snowshoers avoid the campground and stay to the right. This groomed route goes to the Salmon la Sac trailhead. Turn right at the yellow gate before the trailhead to explore Section 9. Or go to the trailhead and find the Cooper River Trail. Another option is to follow the Waptus River Trail. Snowshoers should be experienced at finding routes, because the trails are not always obvious in the snow. The area is officially closed to snowmobiles, except for cabin residents.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Low.

**Swauk / Teanaway**

**\*\*JUNGLE CREEK ROAD**

Easy to moderate difficulty, depending on conditions. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at the winter recreation staging area at the end of the county road at 29 Pines Campground. No permit required. Shared with snowmobilers.

TRAILS: The route follows FS Road 9701, and is shared with snowmobiles for about ¼ mile. The snowmobile route turns left at Rye Creek and the non-motorized route goes straight along Jungle Creek. The trail is ungroomed. This area is unofficially closed to snowmobiles.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: None.

**\*\*IRON CREEK ROAD**

Easy to moderate difficulty, depending on conditions. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park in a turnout where FS Road 9714 meets Highway 97. This is not a Sno-Park, and may not be plowed by WSDOT immediately after storms. Space for 5-6 cars. No permit required. The area is unofficially closed to snowmobiles.

TRAILS: Not groomed. Follow the road along Iron Creek, or explore side roads. FS Road 111 takes off from the same parking area and goes up Hovey Creek.

**\*\*SWAUK CAMPGROUND**

Easy to most difficult. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at Swauk Campground Sno-Park. Permit required.

TRAILS: Not groomed. Several marked trails take off from this area, which is closed to snowmobiles. The campground and its immediate surroundings are suitable for snow play. The trails quickly access steeper ground through the forest across Swauk Creek. This area is underutilized by snowshoers and offers some great opportunities.

**\*\*PIPE CREEK**

Easy to moderate difficulty, depending on conditions. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at Pipe Creek Sno-Park, which is set aside for non-motorized recreation. A Sno-Park permit is required.

TRAILS: Several marked trails take off from here, including Pipe Creek and Swauk Meadows. It’s possible to go to east to Blewett Pass and west to Swauk Campground. These marked trails are popular with cross country skiers. Avoid user conflicts by staying to the side of ski tracks and yield the right of way to skiers coming downhill.

**\*\*BLEWETT PASS**

Easy to moderate difficulty, depending on conditions. Dogs OK.

PARKING & ACCESS: Park at the Blewett Pass Sno-Park, which straddles highway 97. Permit required. Shared with all other winter users, including snowmobiles. Can be crowded on weekends.

TRAILS: Not groomed for non-motorized use. Follow snowmobile routes to winter trails, such as:

Wenatchee Ridge Road (FS 800)

North of Highway 97. Takes off from FS Road 7324 and follows a level to moderate grade near the top of a ridge, with views toward Mt. Stuart and the Enchantments. No avalanche terrain, but wind can create drifts across the road.

Swauk Meadows and Swauk Discovery Trail

South of Highway 97. Both trails cross FS Road 9716 about a half mile from the Sno-Park. This is a groomed snowmobile route, but snowmobiles are prohibited from the adjacent. Pipe Creek and Tronsen Meadows areas. Refer to a winter recreation map. The terrain ranges from rolling to steep, and there are numerous openings in the forest for exploration.

AVALANCHE HAZARD: Usually low in this area, but there may be isolated higher danger in certain places at certain times.