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Message from the President

WAG MORE, BARK LESS

BY DAVE KNUTSON

The GMNC website [comments](#) about dog use on our trails show that we all have a lot in common. We love Nordic skiing, which is the best ever this year thanks to the new grooming machine and our dedicated Ops crew. Our members are again supporting us financially (this includes dog owners) through both membership income and trail box donations. Please renew if you haven't yet.

For more than decade, the GMNC has asked users to help us keep Skyway dog-free, but this has always been GMNC policy, not an official US Forest Service mandate. Last March, the GMNC Board formally asked the Forest Service to make the Skyway Trail system dog-free. Many of you have seen the USFS postings at trailheads and on our website. At present there is no regulation of dogs on any of our trails.

Now we are asking for your input on enforcing the Skyway rule. We have no plans to ban dogs elsewhere on the Grand Mesa. Your comments to the Forest Service will help them make a decision.

Our goal is to find a solution that maximizes enjoyment of our trails. Let's put our heads together and work toward an outcome that respects the needs I've heard from our members:



- Access to dog-free beginner terrain and other trails for those with balance issues or who are not comfortable around dogs.
- Access to enjoy significant kilometers of dog- friendly groomed trails with family pets.
- Ability to ski an uninterrupted distance workout with pristine skate lanes and perfect classic tracks.
- Opportunity to have fun on the trails and enjoy the natural beauty of the Mesa.
- A **safe** parking lot, with leashed dogs, and a **clean lot and trails**, with owners picking up waste and disposing of it properly.

President’s Message, cont.

The comment period for the USFS on dog use on groomed trails wraps up on March 1, 2017. In your comments, please include suggestions to minimize conflicts and show respect for the needs of all GMNC members and trail users.

We took the Gliders out on the County Line System on February 5th and skied the Overlook and Tower Trails, encountering several skiers with dogs. Here are two great examples where the dog owners were being responsible by maintaining control using voice commands or restraints:

- One skier saw us approach, called her dog over to her, and held the dog by her side as we approached and passed her.
- Two other skiers chose to ski with their dogs on leashes attached to their waists.

May all continue to enjoy our trails and let’s all be creative, respectful, and unified to find the best way forward.

BE OUR VALENTINE

We need your love!
Membership donations are down significantly for 2016-17.

Your annual support keeps Skyway, County Line and Ward the sweetest spots in Western Colorado.

Please click [here](#) and join or renew your GMNC membership.



USFS Requests Comments on Grand Mesa Winter Dog Management

BY TERRI STRIGHT

In late January, the US Forest Service posted notices at the trailheads of Nordic ski trails on Grand Mesa seeking comments on the management of dogs within the Nordic ski areas on the Grand Mesa. The US Forest Service, Grand Valley Ranger District has received requests from members of the public for “additional restrictions and/or closures related to the possession of dogs on Nordic Ski Trails on the Grand Mesa National Forest.”

Currently, dogs are allowed on all trails in the Grand Mesa National Forest. However, the Forest Service has regulations in place requiring dogs must be under physical control, including a leash not longer than 6 feet, in parking lots and trailheads.

Beyond the trailheads, both Mesa and Delta Counties have ordinances requiring dogs to be under “control” of the owner and prohibitions against off-leash dogs that create a public safety hazard. Dog owners are responsible and liable for their behavior and actions and should have proof of current rabies vaccinations.

Due to input received recently, the USFS is soliciting comment on **“the possible need to close one or more Nordic ski trail system(s) to dogs and/or the need to implement other restrictions to increase the level of control”** of dogs. The specific area(s) being considered are not identified.

The USFS announcement and instructions for submitting comments are available on GMNC’s website:

<http://gmnc.org/us-forest-service-requests-comments-dogs-gmnc-trails/>

The USFS comment opportunity on dog use on Nordic ski trails is open until March 1, 2017.

Love the Loppet!

21K /42K Freestyle Nordic Ski Race

BY KYLE STONE

With over six feet of snow and the new PistenBully packing it down, Nordic skiing on the Grand Mesa has been wonderful! If you want to test your abilities on a longer course, the GMN Loppet is the race for you.

LOPPET is a Norwegian word meaning “a large, long distance (approximately 35+ kilometer) cross country skiing event.” There are a number of great “Loppet” length Nordic races in Colorado: the Alley Loop in Crested Butte, the Stagecoach Classic at Devils Thumb Ranch, and the Frisco Gold Rush, to name a few. The GMN Loppet is a high-quality racing event that could become our signature race for Western Colorado, featuring many of the great trails we maintain on the Grand Mesa.

This year’s Loppet has a slight change in the format and the addition of a Junior Race Team youth race shortly after the start of the main race. The race course will be the same as the last two years, however, the 42km racers will continue in the same direction (counter clock wise) for lap #2. This should eliminate issues with racers going in opposing directions. To review a course map, results, or register online please visit <https://racesonline.com/events/gmn-loppet-2017>.

The GMN Loppet is a ‘freestyle’ race, which means you can use classic or skate skis, or even both, during the race. The course will be one (21km / 13 miles) or two laps (42km / 26 miles) on a 21km loop of rolling terrain (663 feet of climbing per 21km loop). The course circumnavigates the entire Skyway and County Line Trail Systems.

Starting at Skyway, the course follows Lions Loop to Scales Lake Road, then Tower to Dog Loop. Aid Station #1 is at the Country Line Trailhead, approximately 8.5 km / 5.3 miles from the start. From here, the course continues via Overlook to Tower to Kannah Crossing, back to Vista Valley, Lions Loop to Sunset with the finish at the Skyway parking area. Aid Station #2 (21km / 13 miles) is at the Start/Finish line.

The 42km racers will repeat the course in the same direction and will find Aid Station #3 at County Line TH at 29.5 km / 18.3 miles, 12.5 km / 7.7 miles from the finish at Skyway.

This is a great opportunity to explore GMNC’s stunning alpine trail systems with other racers and support. The quality of snow and high altitude (lowest elevation is 10,611ft, highest is 10,854 feet) typically offer terrific skiing well into April.

For more information, contact Kyle Stone (970) 488-0057 or email kbstone13@me.com.

GMN LOPPET

Saturday, February 25th
Skyway Trail System
10 A.M. Freestyle Mass Start
21K & 42K

Cost: \$30 (21K) \$35 (42K)
GMNC Members = \$5 discount

Registration: <https://racesonline.com/events/gmn-loppet-2017>

Race Day: cash/checks only

DIRECTIONS

From I-70: Take Exit 49 - Powderhorn/Grand Mesa. Travel south on Highway 65 through Mesa and past the Powderhorn Ski area. Continue on Highway 65 for 10 miles; the Skyway parking area is on the left.

From Highway 50: At Delta, take Highway 92 to Cedaredge. Then take Highway 65 North to the top of Grand Mesa, continue past the County Line trailhead to Skyway trailhead.

OPERATIONS

BY WINSLOW ROBERTSON

Following a challenging month for our grooming crew, we finally saw a break in the weather, allowing the new Pisten Bully 400 snowcat to show what it can do.

The preparation for the CMU Sprints and the Grand Mesa Classic 10 km really paid off, with a beautiful sprint course laid out by Kenton Shaw that included a spectator area to watch the races. The 10 km Classic provided a triple-tracked course, something we've never had the ability to do in the past.



Since then, the skiing has been incredible. The trails have held up well, requiring less grooming from the snowcat. We had hoped to be able to groom the Sunset trail with the new machine, but with so much snow, we'll wait until summer to finish the trail work.

The snowmobiles and attachments continue to require both major and minor repairs. It's a struggle to keep everything in working order, and we ask a lot from our crew to both groom and maintain the equipment.

Thanks to each of you who donated some extra dollars to help us purchase the PistenBully 400. With our new equipment, it is **even more important** that we maintain a **strong membership base and a reliable operations budget**. GMNC is currently \$8000 short on membership contributions compared to last year at this time. The new cat will no do us any good if we don't have the extra money to run it on an annual basis. So, if you have not yet renewed your membership, please consider making an annual membership donation and encourage your friends support GMNC, too!

Ski with Your Sweetheart

Private & Semi-Private Lessons with GMNC

BY CALLIE WEST

GMNC's professional instructors offer private and semi-private ski lessons throughout the season on the date and time of your choice.*

Private: (1 skier)
 \$65 Members
 \$90 non members

Semi-private: (2 skiers):
 \$ 85 total
 \$120 total non members

Semi private (3 skiers):
 \$ 105 total
 \$150 total non members

*Please request lessons at least 5 days in advance.



<http://gmnc.org/private-and-semi-private-ski-lessons-for-adults/>

GRAND MESA CLASSIC AND CMU SPRINT RESULTS

BY TOM ELA
 SKYWAY, JAN 28-29, 2017

It was a great weekend for skiing on Grand Mesa for five collegiate racing teams as well as an enthusiastic contingent of citizens. Saturday had the college teams duking it out on a challenging 1K sprint course. On Sunday everyone switched to classic mode and skied 10K in an endurance test.

Isaac Lammers, skiing as a citizen for his first season after a collegiate career in Alaska, was the king of the weekend. He won both the Men's Sprint and the 10K Overall. Great job! Bob Maddox, racing for Western State Colorado Univ., was the top female sprinter (yes, female). Gwynn Barrows and Brooke Bosman, both citizen racers but not too long removed from their college careers, led the females in the 10K.

Lots of sunshine buoyed everyone's mood but racing on the fabulous GMNC trails would have made all happy no matter. Bravo to our grooming team!



We love our sponsors. **EVO** energy bars and the always popular bite size pouches of **Justin's Nut Butters** kept us going. **Board and Buckle, Ela Family Farms, Swix** and **Copper Club Brewing** provided excellent door prizes.

Thanks to my crackerjack crew of Bob Major, Danielle and Brad Burritt and Kyle Stone for keeping things flowing. Now it's time to set our sights on February's Grand Mesa Nordic Loppet 21K/42K and gear up for a long one. [View full results here.](#)

Fischer Ski Demo Day
 Saturday, February 25th

Skyway Parking Lot



Starting 10 a.m.

Gliders

BY ANNIE MURPHY

Our last Gliders Lesson Day was February 12th but we aren't finished for the season yet! Our final event is the Gliders Race Day and Kids Ski Festival on March 12th. Come out for a fun day with short races and games for kids.



To learn more about GMNC's Gliders youth programs, [click here](#).

Youth Race Series

BY CHRISTINA STARK

The Youth Race Series is well under way with three of the five races now completed. We are happy to report an increase in participation over the season. We hope that more children will join us at the final two races.

Ten young athletes ranging in age from 5 to 11 competed in the 2 km Grand Mesa Classic race on January 29th. Some of the younger skiers who joined us on the 29th opted to explore the non-competitive obstacle course to improve their skills.

UPCOMING YOUTH RACES

Grand Mesa Loppet Sat. 2/25
Mesa Meltdown Sat. 3/11

- 2 km course for ages 7 to 13
- 3 - 5km courses for ages 14 – 17 (who aren't racing as adults in the regular race series)
- non-competitive course for younger skiers

Please pre-register a week in advance of the races to help us ensure that we have enough volunteers to host great races for your children.

Contact Christina Stark at gmnjrt@gmail.com to pre-register.



Kids Ski Festival

Sunday, March 12th @ 11 a.m.

At the base of Powderhorn
(with trails groomed for Nordic skiing)

\$10/ GMNC members
\$15/ non-members

Skis available for rent (\$5/day) from the Nature Connection.

[*Skis must be reserved in advance. Click here for info.](#)

To register email Annie at murphy@DWK.com

Give the Gift of Nordic Skiing!

Great for friends and family who are passionate about Nordic sports and enjoy using the groomed GMNC trails on the Grand Mesa. Certificates are available for GMNC Memberships and Nordic Skiing Lessons. Visit gmnc.org/gift-certificates/ for all the details and how to purchase.

Grand Mesa Nordic Council

Join or Renew Today!



Grand Mesa Nordic Council (GMNC) is a member-supported, nonprofit organization of people who love to participate in Nordic sports on the Grand Mesa in Western Colorado. GMNC is funded by membership fees, donations, business sponsors, fundraising events, and grants. Monies are used for trail grooming; staff; equipment purchases and maintenance; trail maps and signs; maintenance of the Skyway warming hut; and outreach including youth and adult programs and races. Please click [here](#) and join or renew today!

Stay up-to-date with the information that matters to you most!

If you would like to receive e-mail notifications when GMNC posts new grooming or community trail condition reports, news, volunteer opportunities, etc., click [HERE](#) and enter your e-mail address.

SUBSCRIBE FOR UPDATES