

SECTION 23: TRAPP FAMILY LODGE TO EDSON HILL MANOR

SNAPSHOT:

This section of the CT runs mostly, but not entirely, on groomed trails of Stowe's four ski touring centers: Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe Mountain Resort (a/k/a Mt. Mansfield) Touring Center, Topnotch Resort, and Edson Hill Manor. Many possibilities for shorter tours covering one or two of the three legs are feasible. For example: between Trapp's and Mt. Mansfield TC, between Mt. Mansfield and Topnotch or Wiessner Woods, or Topnotch and Edson Hill. The distances of any required car shuttles are quite short – 5 miles at most. Parts of the last three miles of this section - between Topnotch and Edson Hill Manor – are groomed only occasionally, if at all. This stretch is generally well traveled, however, and includes the popular Wiessner Woods.

NOTE: On this tour you will ski through the trail systems of all four Stowe ski centers and therefore, you will need a trail pass. Purchase a pass wherever you park to start your ski. The pass will be honored at all four centers.

LENGTH: 12.7 miles

DIFFICULTY:

While this section includes some long, steep climbs and fast descents, the groomed trails make it easier for skiers to snowplow for better control on steep descents. Skiers new to cross-country skiing can enjoy short ski tours within the four Nordic centers along this section. Those looking for a more challenging day can choose to ski through some or all of the Nordic centers in this section. Good endurance will be required as many hilly climbs, and possibly some trail breaking, await you.

If you intend to tour this entire section, do *not* assume that skinny racing skis are the right equipment. Parts of this section are, at times, sporadically groomed, especially so early in the season or soon after winter storms. This is true of the Stowe Derby Trail, including the substantial “Pipeline” descent. The one-mile segment between Topnotch and Wiessner Woods is never groomed. And the leg from Wiessner Woods to Edson Hill will likely be well-traveled but not groomed. Metal-edged skis would be a safe choice for these sections if snow is crusted or heavy. Otherwise sturdy touring skis should suffice.

Keep in mind that snow cover can vary considerably with elevation. The lower segments of this section (especially through the Topnotch Resort) may have significantly less snow cover than Trapp's, Mansfield, or Edson Hill Touring Centers, which are at a higher elevation. If you are planning to ski through, check out or inquire about snow depth on the valley floor.

DIRECTIONS TO TRAIL

ACCESS/EXIT POINTS (south to north):

1. Trapp Family Lodge Touring Center

From I-89 exit 10 in Waterbury go north on Rte. 100 for 7.5 miles. Turn left (west) onto Moscow Rd. Go 1.4 miles and turn right (north) onto Barrows Rd. At a stop sign, turn left onto Luce Hill Rd. Follow this steep, winding road, bearing left onto Trapp Hill Rd. The ski center is on the right, just past the main lodge.

Alternatively, from the intersection of Rtes. 108 (Mountain Rd.) and 100 in Stowe village, head north on Rte. 108 for about 2.75 miles. Turn left on Luce Hill Road. Continue past Barrows Rd. (on left) and then follow the directions above.

2. Stowe Mountain Resort Touring Center (Rte. 108)

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe, go north on Rte. 108 for about 5.4 miles. The entrance to the touring center is on the left. To join the CT, take either Ranch Valley Cruise Trail (which starts with a plunge down to Ranch Brook and then climbs up join the Derby Trail) or the Burt Trail.

3. Topnotch Touring Center (Rte. 108)

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe, go north on Rte. 108 for about 3.8 miles. The Topnotch Nordic Barn (a very large red barn) is located on the left opposite the entrance to Topnotch Spa & Resort on the right.

4. Wiessner Woods (Edson Hill Rd.)

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe village, take Rte. 108 north for about 3.2 miles. Turn right onto Edson Hill Rd. Look for a small sign on right, about 0.5 miles uphill, for Wiessner Woods. (If you reach the top of Edson Hill Road, you have gone too far.) About 100 yards up this drive, take your first left into a parking area where you will find a CTA trail register box. To go northbound on the CT, ski across an open field to an entrance to the Wiessner Woods/CT trail system on the far side of the field. Southbound, the CT leaves the parking area heading toward Edson Hill Rd, then turns right (uphill) along the road for several hundred yards. Cross to the south side of Edson Hill Rd., climb over a wooden fence and ski through the pastures on the northwest (right) side of a wooden fence.

5. Edson Hill Touring Center

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe village, take Rte. 108 north for about 3.2 miles. Turn right onto Edson Hill Rd. Go about 1.3 miles and look for a sign for Edson Hill Manor on the left. The Ski Touring Center is about 200 yards up the Manor access road on the right.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION:

In comparison to other sections of the CT, this section of the CT crosses or follows many established and marked Nordic trails. Keep an eye out for blue paw print trail markers at all intersections.

From the Trapp Family Lodge Touring Center (0.0), take Sugar Road on a short gentle upgrade to Picnic Knoll. From this clearing take Owl's Howl and then Cabin Trail, climbing much more steeply to reach Trapp's Slayton Pasture Cabin (2.1). The cabin (open 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.), at the height of land, is a great place to buy snacks or lunch, dry out by the fireplace, and bundle-up for the breezy descent. From the cabin, continue north on the Haul Road, offering spectacular views of Mt. Mansfield and Smuggler's Notch.

You will pass Slayton Pasture Trail on your left, and Hareline Trail on your right. After about 0.6 miles of steady descent from the cabin, take the first groomed trail on your left, called Ranch Camp Trail (3.0). This trail connects the Trapp and Stowe Mountain Resort trail networks. Ranch Camp Trail traverses for half a mile, then descends for another mile. Ranch Camp Trail ends at a 4-way junction at the bottom of the hill. If you plan to finish or make a pit stop at the Stowe Mountain Resort Touring Center, the most direct route is to turn right (downhill) onto the Burt Trail, then left on Crosscut 1 or 2, then right on Timberlane - about 2 miles total, mostly downhill. To bypass the Stowe Mountain Resort Touring Center and continue on the CT, *backtrack* uphill from the 4-way intersection about 100 yards, and turn left (east) on Ranch Valley Cruise (4.4). After about a mile, the Stowe Derby Trail (5.3) will be on your right. The Derby Trail may not be groomed.

The CT follows the Stowe Derby Trail southeast toward Topnotch Nordic Center. After a traverse and climb, the CT intersects and crosses Adams Camp Trail (6.5), continuing a side hill descent on Lower Valley View. Approaching the Covered Bridge condominiums, the CT (Derby Trail/Lower Valley View) turns right and climbs for about 200 yards. Here, one could continue uphill on “Triple Bypass” to Trapp’s Haul Road. Instead, turn left. The CT/Derby Trail descends through the condominium complex – study the blazes and stay on the Trail - and plunges for half a mile down the "Pipeline" to a farm meadow on the valley floor. Bear left on Meadow Trail (8.3), under a power line. After about 500 yards, join the Stowe Recreation Path at a metal pedestrian bridge. Continue upstream (left) for about a mile along the West Branch of the Little River. The Topnotch Nordic Barn (9.1), a large red barn will be on your right, next to Rte. 108.

The next mile of the CT is uphill, less traveled and not groomed. From the Topnotch Nordic Barn cross to the north side of Rte. 108 and walk up the driveway of Topnotch Spa & Resort (about 200 yards) to the hotel parking lot. The CT enters the woods on the northeast side of the parking lot – directly opposite the main entrance of the hotel. The CT immediately ascends through a stand of large hemlock and white pine (near a condominium complex on your left). The climb levels off where the woods abut large pastures. Instead of entering the pastures at this point, veer left into the woods again to bypass a small barn. Come out of the woods on the north side of the barn and ski about 200 yards along the left (northwest) side of a wooden fence to reach Edson Hill Rd. (10.1). Cross Edson Hill Rd., turn right (southeast), follow the utility right-of-way for several hundred yards, then turn left (northeast) and proceed 100 yards to the Wiessner Woods parking lot. This is a convenient intermediate starting and finishing point along the CT.

Wiessner Woods is a natural area protected by the Stowe Land Trust. Its trails are not groomed, but are well used by snowshoers, walkers, and skiers. From the parking area, ski northeast across an open field to the trail entrance for Wiessner Woods. Follow the CT blazes through the Wiessner Woods trail network to the Sugarhouse (10.9). You are now entering a privately owned trail network. Please be sure to stay on the marked trails and do not ski in the open fields. At the sugarhouse, turn left, following “Headin' Home”, then “Founders' Trail”, “Back Track” and “Maple Run”. Turn sharply left (west) on Maple Run and follow it through a residential neighborhood. Please stay on the Trail and away from houses. The CT crosses Edson Woods Rd. and then follows the Peterson Brook valley. Cross Peterson Brook on a bridge newly constructed by a local mystery bridge builder. You may have to take off you skis to climb on and off the bridge. A little farther along cross another bridge and climb a short steep hill to Weeks Hill Rd. Cross the road. Go left, then right, staying underneath the power lines paralleling Edson Hill Rd, to reach Edson Hill Ski Touring Center (12.7).

DISTANCE TO LANDMARKS:

Mileage Northbound	Landmark	Mileage Southbound
0.0	Trapp Family X-C Center	12.7
2.1	Slayton Pasture Cabin	10.6
3.0	Ranch Camp Trail	9.7
4.4	Ranch Valley Cruise	8.3
5.3	Stowe Derby Trail	7.4
6.5	Lower Valley View	6.2
8.3	Meadow Trail	4.4
9.1	Topnotch Nordic Barn	3.6

10.1	Edson Hill Rd.	2.4
10.9	Wiessner Woods parking lot	2.3
12.7	Edson Hill X-C Center	0.0

SIDE TRAILS AND LOOPS:

Stowe's four ski touring centers: Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe Mountain Resort Touring Center, Topnotch Resort, and Edson Hill Manor maintain many miles of groomed and ungroomed ski trails offering almost limitless opportunities for loops and side trail exploration at all levels of difficulty. Each center charges a fee and provides a detailed trail map. However, if you plan to ski on the trails of more than one of Stowe's ski touring centers in a given day, paying the fee wherever you park will cover you at all four centers.

A couple suggestions for loop tours using sections of the CT:

- 1) Beginning at the Trapp Family Lodge touring center, follow the CT route until the intersection with "Triple Bypass" (see description above), then return to TFL on the Haul Road trail.
- 2) Start at the Stowe Mountain Resort (Mt. Mansfield) touring center, climb to Trapp's Slaton Pasture Cabin for lunch via Timberlane, Cross Cut 2, Burt, Ranch Camp, and Old Camp trails. Return by the same route, or loop around on the Cabin Trail, Bobcat or Hareline trails to the Haul Road, then back down to Mt. Mansfield Touring Center via Ranch Camp or Old Camp.

Several options for shorter point-to-point trips on the CT include: Trapp's to Mansfield TC (about 6 miles trail and 5 mile shuttle), Mansfield to Topnotch TC (4 to 5 miles trail, 1.5 mile shuttle), Topnotch to Edson Hill TC (4 miles trail, 3 mile shuttle. Ski southbound if you prefer down to up), or Wiessner Woods to Edson Hill TC (2.5 miles trail, 0.5 mile shuttle).

Map Adventures' "Northern Vermont Nordic Skiing and Snowshoe Trail" map covers the Bolton-Stowe-Underhill region, depicting the CT, the trails of the four Nordic centers, and many back-country trails. Visit the store section of the CTA website to purchase the latest edition of this map.