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Cross-Country Skiing: Characteristics and Trends, Trail Design, Marketing
Michigan State University Extension Service
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- Characteristics and Trends
- Trail Design
- Marketing

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Cross-Country Skiing: Characteristics and Trends

by Daniel J. Stynes

Demand & Growth

Recent national surveys indicate that cross-country skiing is one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities in North America. In 1978 there were approximately three million cross-country skiers in the United States, about one for every four downhill skiers. The North Central region, with suitable terrain and climate and a substantial population base, accounts for about 4% of all cross country ski activity in the United States.

While precise estimates of growth in this dispersed winter sport are difficult to make, most experts would agree that the current annual growth rate exceeds 25%. Many cross country ski facilities have been doubling their use each year over the past five years. While these growth rates cannot continue indefinitely, the momentum generated ensures the sport an important share of the winter sports market.

Growth in cross-country (or nordic) skiing follows closely on the heels of snowmobiling and downhill skiing, reflecting a general increase in outdoor winter sports activity. A number of factors suggest that cross-country skiing may have a

comparative advantage over its competitors in the future:

- less expensive
- easier to learn
- physical fitness promoter
- better suited for an older population
- energy efficient activity
- promotion, trails, marketing just beginning
- safer

Already, we have seen substantial changes in the character of the sport with modern equipment, waxless skies, groomed trails, and expanded availability of facilities. These changes have opened the sport to a broad market that promises additional growth in the future.

Reasons for Cross-Country Skiing

There are three primary motivations expressed by cross country skiers:

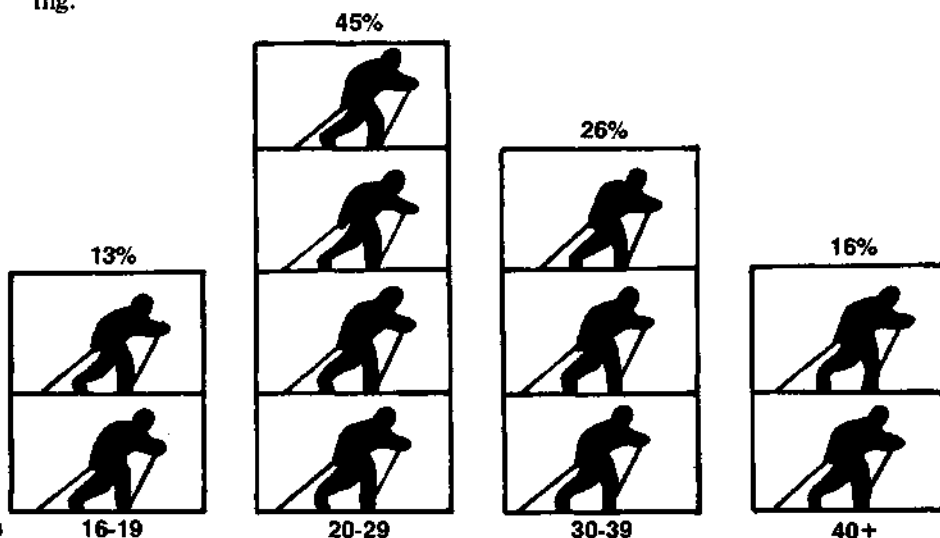
- 1) environmental, nature appreciation, getting away.
- 2) physical fitness and exercise.
- 3) social interaction.

Those switching from downhill skiing often cite the crowding and expense of downhill skiing as reasons for taking up cross country skiing.

Characteristics of Cross-Country Skiers

Who are cross-country skiers? In the past, they were primarily environmentalists and outdoorsmen. With the introduction of planned trails, waxless skies, and other innovations the sport has diffused to a broader consumer market.

Ski tourers are represented in virtually all age and income groups. College students make up the largest subgroup of cross-country skiers. Figure 1 presents an age breakdown of cross-country skiers. Generally, cross-country skiers are highly educated, even more so than downhill skiers. Females are almost as active in the sport as males. Growing numbers of families, small children, and older adults have adopted the sport in recent years. Its appeal appears to be broader in terms of demographics, than either downhill skiing or snowmobiling.



Percentage of skiers 16 years and older, by age-group

Age in years

Expenditures of Winter Recreation Visitor Parties, Per Trip, By Major Recreation Activity, Wisconsin, 1978-79.

Expenditure Category	Snowmobiling Avg. Spending	Downhill Skiing Avg. Spending	Cross-Country Skiing Avg. Spending
Lodging	\$103.93	\$111.22	\$102.05
Restaurants & Taverns	91.44	63.74	51.55
Food Stores	15.38	12.85	12.06
Liquor Stores	8.54	7.23	5.14
Souvenirs & Gifts	8.74	7.25	6.03
Gasoline	43.07	27.59	22.80
Auto & Related Expenses	11.68	5.68	3.80
Snowmobiles	154.79	44.05	2.87
Skis	4.14	17.60	9.31
Other Sporting Goods	4.52	4.69	2.61
Sporting Goods Rental	2.55	6.01	3.35
Lift Fees, etc.	3.38	39.95	13.85
Clothing	15.97	9.86	5.82
Equipment	8.28	2.16	2.47
Other	2.62	3.09	2.58
TOTAL	\$479.03	\$362.97	\$246.29

Source: Wisconsin Winter Recreation Visitor Survey, Recreation Resources Center, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1979.

\$19.00 for snowmobilers. The price differences are a result of lower rental fees and equipment-related expenses for cross-country skiing.

Product Life Cycle

The growth pattern of cross-country skiing resembles historical growth in downhill skiing and snowmobiling. Most activities or consumer products exhibit an S-shaped pattern of growth. They tend to start out slowly, enter a takeoff period of rapid growth, begin a maturity phase of growth at a decreasing rate, eventually reach a peak, and perhaps begin to decline. The resulting pattern is often termed the product life cycle curve.

Comparing cross-country skiing with downhill skiing and snowmobiling may shed some light on its future. Snowmobile growth was greatest in the early 70's and has since declined in both sales and activity. Downhill skiing appears to have reached the maturity phase of its growth, possibly nearing the peak. Cross-country skiing is still in the takeoff phase, a period of rapid growth. Although the timing and extent of the peak is impossible to predict, the sport can be expected to follow a pattern similar to its predecessors. This suggests that growth will continue for a few years. The sport's characteristics and market makeup may also change.

Participation Patterns

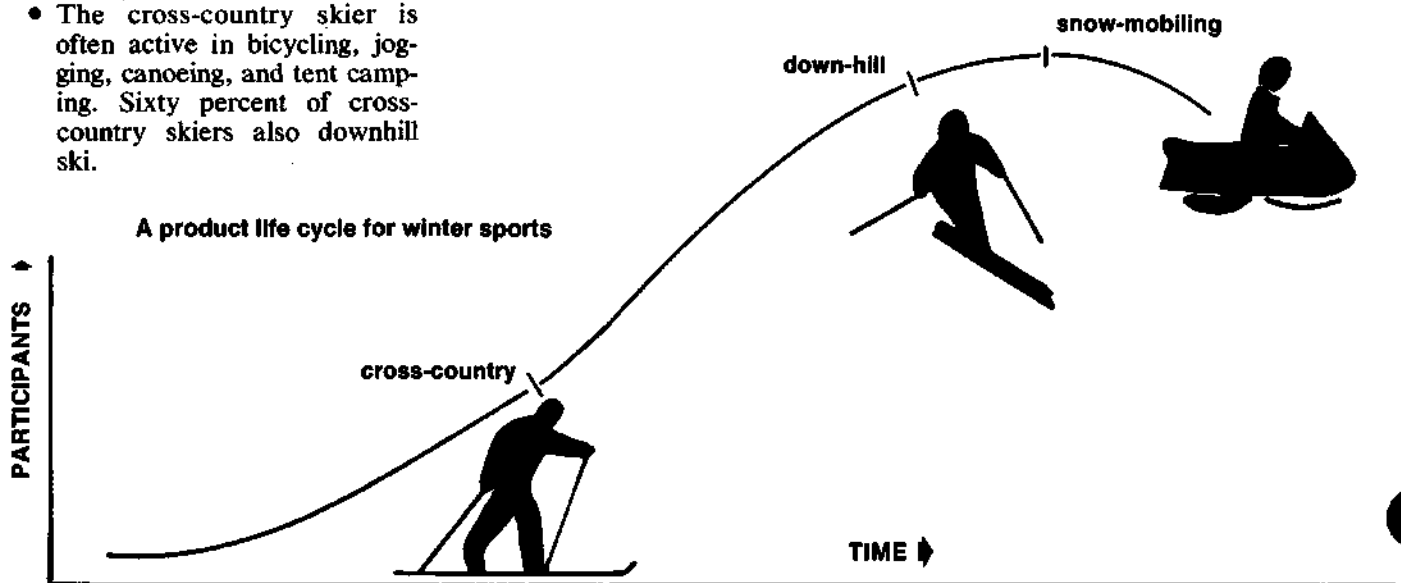
A general profile of cross-country ski participation may be assembled from recent studies:

- The cross-country skier averages about 13 days of skiing a year. Close-to-home outings last from two-three hours and cover from two-seven miles of trail.
- One in three skiers takes a cross-country ski vacation each year. This often involves several hours of travel to an overnight ski resort or area where higher quality and more extensive trail systems can be found.
- 70% of cross country-skiers have started within the past three years.
- The cross-country skier is often active in bicycling, jogging, canoeing, and tent camping. Sixty percent of cross-country skiers also downhill ski.

Expenditure Patterns-Economic Impact

A common stereotype is that cross-country skiers do not spend much money. While some may fit this image, it is not typical of the vast majority.

A recent study of overnight winter visitors in Wisconsin provides comparative data on skiers and snowmobilers. Cross-country skiers averaged three nights on overnight trips. Traveling in parties of four-five people, they spent an average of \$246 per party. Spending per person per day was \$18.00 for cross-country skiers compared to \$22.00 for downhill skiers and



Cross-Country Trail Design

by Gaylan A. Rasmussen

Introduction

With a growing demand for cross-country skiing, proper design and layout of cross-country ski courses is essential.

Once the decision to provide cross-country skiing is made, a natural sequence should be followed:

1. Pick the proper location
2. Design the trail
3. Construct the trail
4. Maintain the trail

If adequate time and decisions are made in these four areas, the trail will be well-designed.

A well-designed and marked trail will provide maximum enjoyment and safety, keep skiers from getting lost, and allow skiers to measure their abilities against the course and natural elements. A well planned course should also reduce crowding and minimize impact on the land.

Area Selection

Suitable landscape and facilities are the most important factor for cross-country ski trails. Some of the following information sources are available to provide technical information about the suitability of a proposed site.

Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs can be taken in several ways: black and white, stereo coverage, infra red, normal color, etc. While the stereo coverage gives a three dimensional view of a given area, any type of aerial coverage will help determine general locations of:

1. trails, paths, etc.
2. roads
3. utilities, fences, etc.
4. vegetation masses and types
5. streams, rivers, marshes, ponds, lakes, etc.
6. structures
7. land use practices, i.e. farming, wood harvest, etc.



A good trail will fulfill a skier's expectations

Topographic Maps

Topographic maps are used more than aerial photographs because they provide detailed information of site elevations. The unique feature of topographic maps is the contour. Slope percentages, drainage patterns, property boundaries, high and low points, and calculations as to cut and fill are found by using the contours.

Master Plans and Earlier Studies

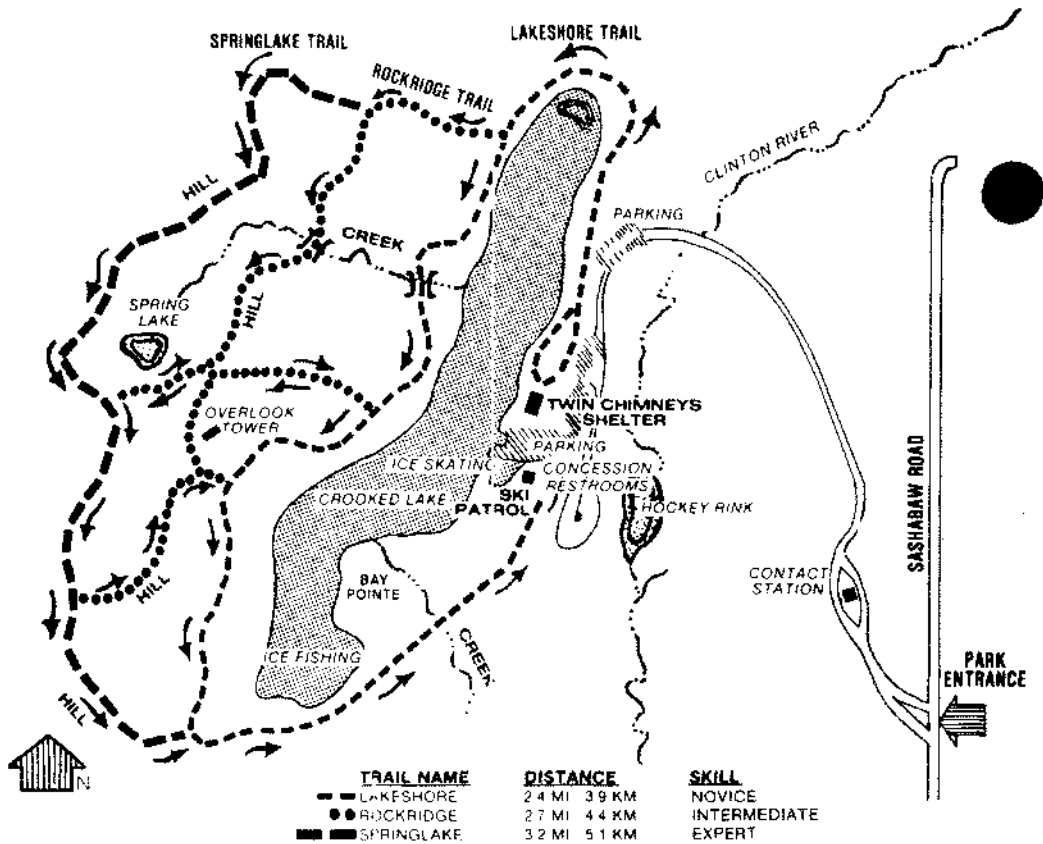
Information from studies will help make decisions on development, expansion, marketing, site limitations, etc. The data concerning proposed use and the ski market should be included.

Zoning Maps

The local planning commission should have a map of the present land use categories as well as any proposed changes (i.e., residential to commercial, commercial to industrial, etc.).

Ground and Surface Water

Water is a critical resource when planning a ski trail. Running water or spring water will not freeze and only frozen water is safe. Also, the length of the season can be determined by thawing temperatures. Simple bridges can be used to cross water drainage areas. Bridges should not be used to cross large areas of surface water.



An example of master plans and/or trail layout

Land Use Maps

Plat maps will identify potential land use conflicts. These land uses may be private property, Federal and State lands, Easements, Rights-of-Way, etc.

Vegetation

A variety of vegetation will add enjoyment to your trail. Heavy stands of conifers will reduce the snow depth and will provide an aesthetic-quality with the contrast of snow and deciduous trees. The wild life habitat provided should be of a main concern, both for food and shelter. Plant material can also be indicators of soil type, soil PH, ground water, etc.

Climate

Data is available on average snowfall, temperatures, early and late snow dates, etc. An extension bulletin *Climatic Factors E715* provides this information for the State of Michigan.

Rigid Design Criteria

The following criteria should be considered carefully when planning a cross-country ski trail.

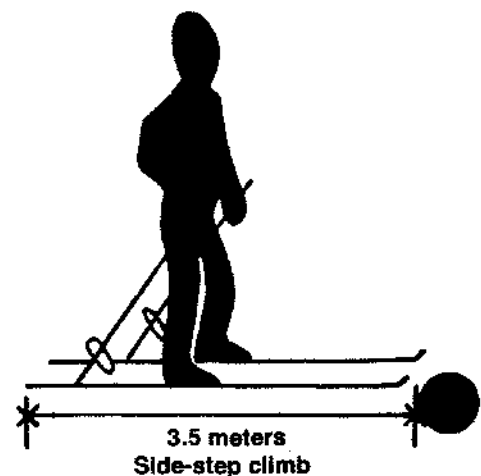
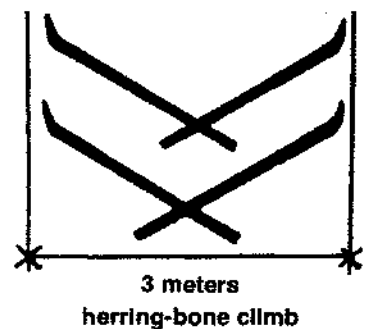
Rigid Controls

The width of a trail depends on the volume of traffic, type of trail (one-way or two-way), steepness of grade, etc. A general rule to follow is: steeper the slope — wider the trail. While an average trail width is 1.5 meters to 3 meters, a trail with a 20-30% slope may be 6 meters wide.

General guidelines for trail width would be:

1. One-way trail — 1.5 meters
2. Two-way trail — 2 meters
3. On a groomed trail a skier will pick up speed on a 10% gradient. With this in mind, a two-way trail should reflect this by increasing the width. One direction will reflect the down run and the other a climbing/herring-bone or side-step pattern. If the run is 20' long, climbing is necessary. Run-outs at the bottom of slopes should also be considered.
4. Passing areas should be provided on long flat areas, tight corners and steeper slopes. This will accommodate skiers of various skill levels.

5. Wider trails are necessary on turns; especially when they occur at the end of a long downhill run.





Turns & Run Outs

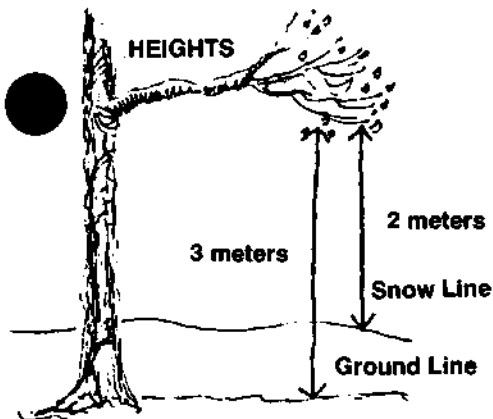
Turns and Run-Outs

Turns can be slightly “super-elevated” or banked, but not “tracked”. Caution should be taken not to bank the turns if the skier does not generate sufficient speed.

Heights

The trail should be cleared in the fall by using the following rules of thumb:

1. Three-meter clearance from groundline to tree overhang.
2. Two-meter clearance from snow line to tree overhang.



3. Pull or cut all stumps at groundline. Minimal snow depth can then cover any obstacle and lengthen the ski season.
4. Remove all deadfall that could unsuspectingly reach the trail.

Signs

All signs should be standardized throughout the trail. Here are a few of the more important signs and locations that should be considered:

1. Caution signs are used for difficult areas or areas with obstacles.

Use standard signs throughout

2. Trail closed signs should be used at all points of access.
3. Trail markers should be placed so they are visible in a snowstorm and close enough to eliminate straying from the trail.
4. Informational signs are usually found at the trail heads. The following information may be available:
 - a. routing map
 - b. trail lengths in distance and average time
 - c. locations of rest area/warming shelter/sanitary facilities.
 - d. trail difficulty determination, along with location of hazards.
 - e. rules and regulations.
5. Optional distance and time signs can be placed along the trail.

Orientation

Trail orientation can make skiing more enjoyable and add length to the season. Wind, sun, and vegetation should all be considered. Review the following checklist in order to make a positive decision.

1. North slopes are exposed to cold winds and drifting snow.

Heavy drifting makes tracking the trail more difficult and time consuming.

2. Avoid steep, open, south facing slopes. They lose the snow early due to the sun.
3. Avoid open water, springs, and running water unless you plan on bridging.
4. Take advantage of:
 - a. wind sheltered valleys
 - b. tree shaded hillsides
 - c. tree stands (not heavy conifers) that will help in avoiding bad windchill, wind erosion, early thaw, and drifting.

Waste Receptacles

Trash cans should be placed conveniently along the trails. Areas most suitable would be based on the activity of the skiers. Suggested locations are:

1. At the beginning and end of a trail.
2. At shelters, rest areas, and sanitary facilities.
3. At natural breaks: i.e., in areas before or after a long climb.

Sanitary Facilities

The number of facilities will vary with the number of skiers. A normal



criterion in locating sanitary facilities would be three to four mile intervals to match the average skiing time on the trail.

Shelters

Shelters should be designed to match their location. One at the trail head is important for control, fees, etc. Other shelter types should be placed along the trail for weather protection and/or rest and eating. Shelters are a must for overnight trail systems. The following list gives a few shelter types:

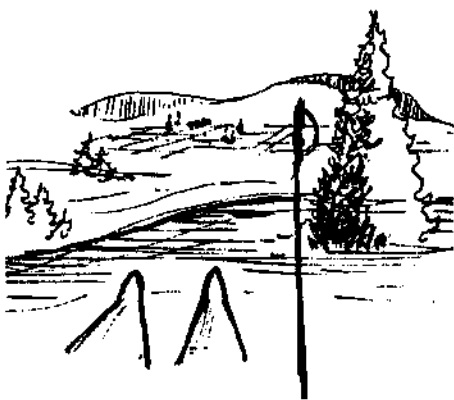
1. Lean-to
 2. Pole structure — open-sided
 3. Cabin — enclosed
 4. Vegetation (tight conifers)
 5. Caves
- Serving shelters is important.

Flexible Design Criteria

The following criteria are included to help make the decision process of trail development something more than haphazard.

Terrain

Natural variations in topography will relieve monotony. Gradual



Use high points for observation and orientation

climbs and descents cater to a wider range of skiers. A successful trail will allow the skier to observe various natural phenomena such as plant associations, terrain analysis, etc. Take advantage of high spots as overlooks, for observation and orientation. A good rule of thumb is the one-third rule. One-third of the trail should be uphill, one-third downhill, and one-third level.

Length

Time and distance for trail length are important considerations. While a trail may vary from three to 15 miles for a family or day-use skiers, the distance a skier travels in one hour is more beneficial in laying out a trail. The following are average times per individual skier in the three levels of experience:

1. Beginner — two kilometers/hour (one and one-fourth miles)
2. Intermediate — five kilometers/hour (three and one-eighth miles)
3. Advanced — 10 kilometers/hour (six and one-fourth miles)

Types of Trails

There are three basic types of trail designs. Point to point, out and back, and loop trails.

Point to Point

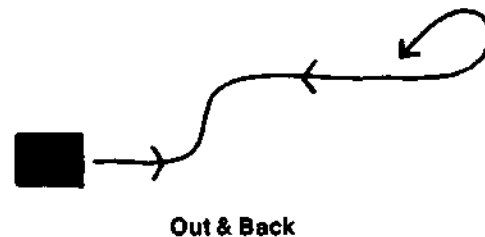
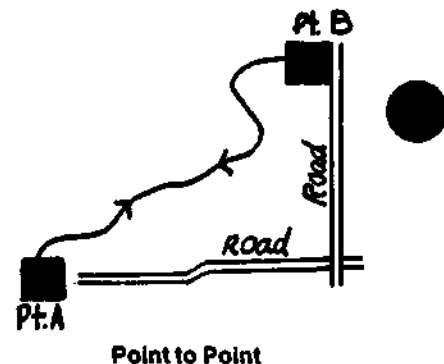
Point to point — this trail will connect villages, touring centers, and/or overnight structures. Trail features should include:

1. a length between stops or shelters that is a convenient one day distance.
2. a double tracked trail for two-way movement.
3. design features to accommodate the skier's ability.
4. trail markings to prevent wrong turns in a snowstorm.

Out and Back

Out and back trails are two-way trails where the same route is used for the return. Trail features should include:

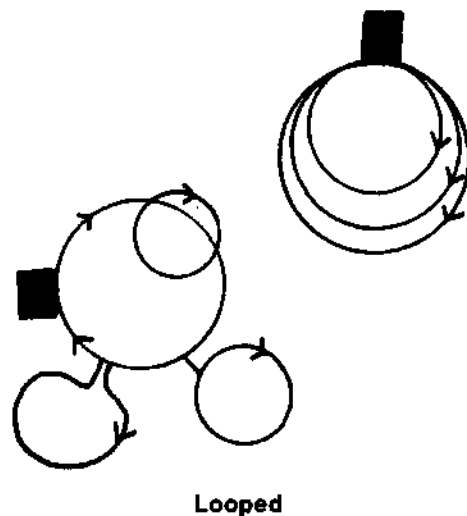
1. adequate passing areas.



2. marked distances to and from the starting point.
3. trail markers that can be seen from both directions.

Looped

The looped trail can be either stacked or satellite in design. This is the most popular type of trail. Both of these systems are one-way systems with a major or primary loop designed for the beginner while additional loops challenge the various abilities of the skiers.



Slopes

Slope or gradient of trails can be separated into three categories:

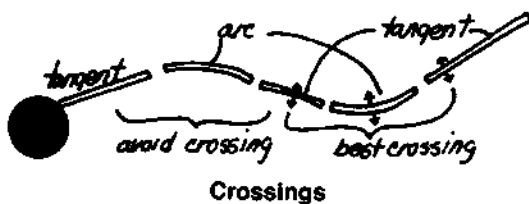
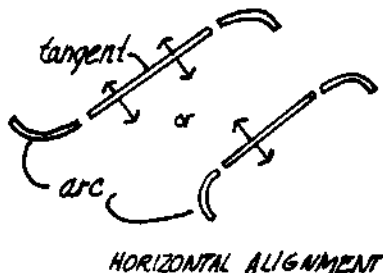
easy, intermediate, and difficult.

1. Easy trail design should consist of:
 - a. 10% maximum slopes.
 - b. short climb and descent areas.
2. Intermediate trail design should consist of:
 - a. 20% maximum slopes
 - b. climb areas short but perhaps steeper
 - c. longer down slopes with run-out room at the bottom. These areas should not be tracked since the snow-plow technique is used by the skiers.
3. Difficult trail design should consist of:
 - a. 40% maximum slopes
 - b. one-half the trail with an uphill grade
 - c. trails not necessarily tracked.

Crossings

Road crossings and trail crossings are potentially dangerous and require more maintenance than the regular trail. Satisfy the following questions with respect to crossings:

1. Can this crossing be avoided?
2. Is the crossing at a right angle?
3. Are snow banks cut back for good visibility? (250 feet in each direction)
4. Are adequate signs placed? (Caution signs for cars and skiers, a stop sign for skiers)
5. Is there a level entrance and exit to and from the road crossing?

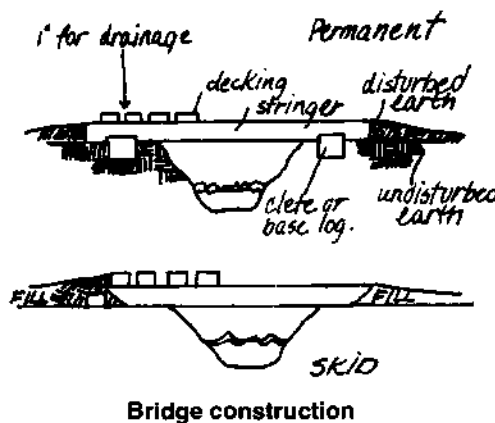


6. Can or will the crossing function as a drop off and pick-up area? Will there be parked cars?
7. Have you avoided conflicts with the horizontal and vertical alignment of the road? (cross on tangent areas as opposed to the arc or curves)

Bridges

Bridges should be used at water-crossings and severe gullies. In the areas where water drainage is slow and of small amounts, bridges are of marginal benefit. If bridges are used, consider the following:

1. There should be a flat approach area at both sides of the bridge.
2. The bridge width should be at least as wide as the approaching trail.
3. If the elevation between bridge and water is one meter or more, railings should be considered.
4. The bridge should accommodate the weight and size of all machinery that will use the bridge.



Trail Start and Finishes

Consideration should be given to both ends of the trail. If the beginning and end of the trail are different, the amount of parking needed will be affected. Remember each car requires approximately 300 square feet of space; 10' x 20' parking and a 20' roadway.

1. Considerations for trail beginning:
 - a. good access to main roads is provided.

- b. an adequate parking area with room to pile plowed snow is provided.
 - c. the trail for the first 100 yards is level. This allows skiers to test the wax and be able to adjust equipment.
 - d. the entry is designed to restrict motorized traffic.
 - e. controlled rental office, maintenance area and rest rooms are adequately placed.
2. At the trail's end there should also be ample parking. A warming area is not essential but an area for cleaning equipment is needed. This serves as a transition area from skiing to parking.

Non-Compatible Uses

Snowmobiles may be used in grooming and track setting. The following five reasons show why cross-country skiing and snowmobiling are non-compatible.

1. Snowmobiles pack the snow and cause icing. This hinders technique by causing side slippage of the skis.
2. Snowmobiles cause bumps and moguls.
3. Snowmobiles need different turning radii and wider trails.
4. Ridges form from snowmobile use that make skiing difficult.
5. Snowmobiles are noisy.

Other recreational uses that are non-compatible with cross-country trails are:

1. Snow shoes — compact snow and create ice spots.
2. Sledding and tobogganing — create icy runs.
3. Dogs — break up the track and may be objectionable to some skiers.

Maintenance

Maintenance occurs in the on and off-season. Each task must be completed in the proper season for best results.

Off-Season Tasks

1. Brushing — all rocks and woody material should be

cleared to the ground. Caution should be taken to avoid the creation of erosion problems, along or adjacent to the trail.

2. Existing erosion areas should be fixed. Do not interfere with existing drainage on or off the trail.
3. Trim overhead and branches. See Sec. III. C.
4. Repair bridges, shelters, rest-rooms, signs, etc.
5. Install snow fencing to control drifting snow.

Seasonal Tasks

1. Periodic inspection of trails for fallen branches, eroded areas, etc.
2. Grooming the trail as often as necessary. Grooming requires three different tasks:
 - a. packing the snow.
 - b. preparing the surface.
 - c. setting the tracks.

Note: A snowmobile can be used to groom a trail. A snow tractor however will work the best. The snow tractor rakes the snow to the center of the trail and then spreads the loose snow evenly. The tracks are then set in the loose snow and allowed to set up. Dry snow should be packed as soon as possible or else it will drift off the trail. A wet snow should be allowed to drain before grooming. This grooming should be done after every four to six inches of snow fall. Set tracks only when it is cold enough to have tracks set up.

Summary

Innovative ideas will evolve as you gain experience in maintaining your cross-country ski trail. Keep records of skier attitudes and recommendations. Applying this feedback to a scaled drawing of the course, will enable you to plot areas

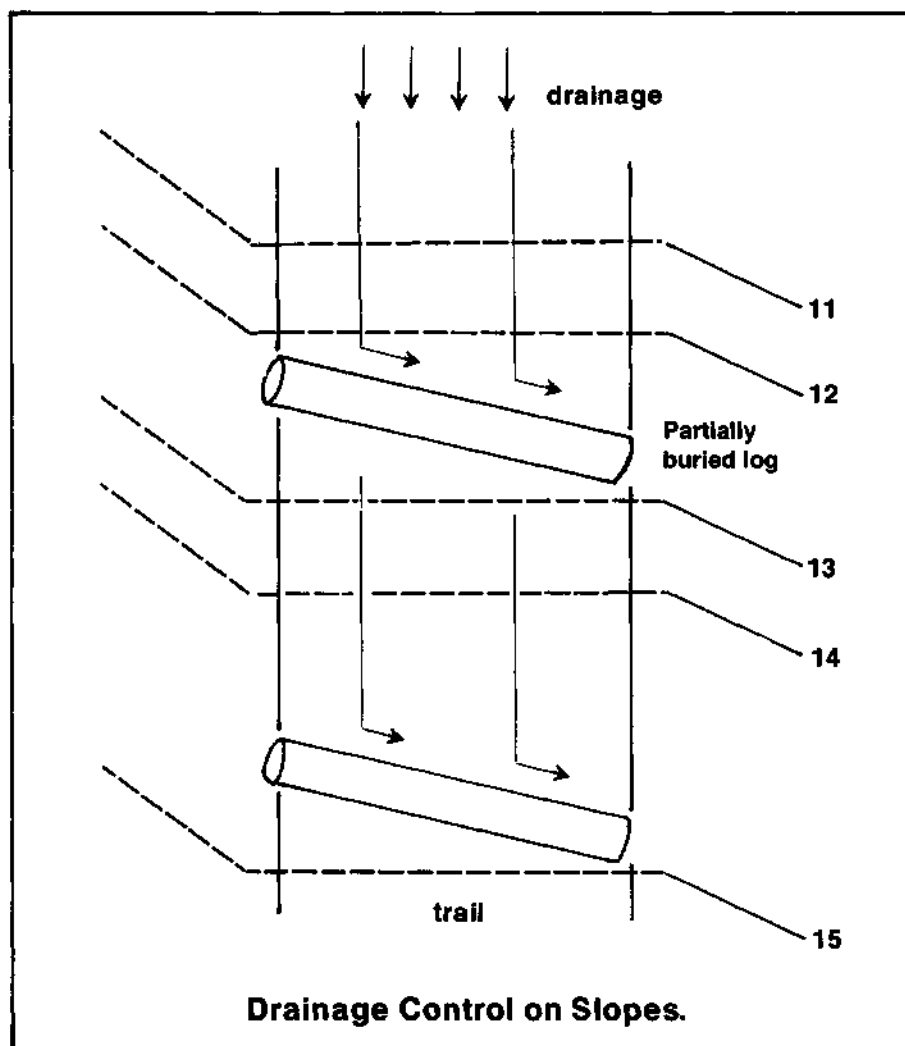
of concern on the trail. The areas that have a tendency to erode, to drift closed, ice up, or be the first to thaw can be identified and modified to improve the trail network. Areas of high interest should also be noted. The trail system can be expanded to include more of the high-interest experiences. Interest in a trail can be added if the trail has a specific point of interest like a scenic outlook, cabin, summit, etc. Share your findings with other trail owners.

A trail prepared correctly in the off-season will check erosion in the spring. Running water under the

snow at the earth's surface can be controlled with simple surface treatments. This is essential on trails that are used extensively in the off-season as hiking trails.

The problem areas are the slopes on the trail that run perpendicular to the contours. The figure below shows how drainage on sloping areas can be handled.

Socializing is an important part of cross-country skiing. The rest areas and the trail's end should accommodate this. Pole and ski tripods will encourage people to rest a little longer and at the same time keep equipment out of the way.



Cross-Country Skiing — Marketing

by Robert Christie Mill

Introduction

Marketing consists of a combination of activities designed to determine, stimulate and satisfy the needs of selected segments of the market. In the case of a privately owned area, the object is to make a profit.

A publicly operated facility may not be required to make a profit. However, the facility may be expected to produce revenue from user fees. The revenue generated will be directly related to the degree to which the area meets the users' needs. Even if no fee is charged, there is a desire to have the facility utilized. If the area is not designed, developed and managed to meet the needs of the market, under-utilization will occur.

Marketing, then, occurs before, during and after the ski trail is developed.

Know Your Skiers

It is important to market the *experience*, not the *trail* (although a good trail is a vital part of the cross-country experience).

A marketing oriented operator or administrator can turn a trail into an experience. This can be done by developing various activities or constructing a cross-country package.

The type of trail to be developed is determined by the natural features available and by the number and type of skiers desired. (See Extension Publication E-677 *In the Lodging Industry . . . Marketing Management*).

A marketing orientation must be taken throughout the entire planning and development process. This means knowing what the needs and wants of the cross-country skier are and constructing the kind of *experience* that will satisfy them.

(Read "Do Your Objectives Reach Your Skiers?", Extension Bulletin E-912, for information on how to conduct your own survey.)

Activities

In addition to cross-country skiing, there are related activities which can be part of a winter program. They can be offered at a ski facility or as part of a winter festival to bring people into the area.

Cross-Country Ski Workshop Timetable

A workshop can be sponsored for local skiers or as part of an education program for vacationers. A simple workshop itinerary might contain the following:

Morning Session

- two or three speakers knowledgeable about cross-country skiing.
- a brief overview of cross-country skiing. A brief history, growth, benefits, etc.
- a short film demonstrating technique. (many ski manufacturers supply films)
- a waxing demonstration.
- discussion of clothing for cross-country skiing.
- presentation on safety and protection when skiing.
- an outdoor demonstration of techniques by one or two good skiers.

Afternoon Session

- luncheon with good, energizing food.



- practice working with instructor.
- skiing on the trails,

Evening Session (as an added attraction)

- dinner (possibly with some Scandinavian specialties.)
- films on cross-country skiing.

Cross-Country Ski Races

Cross-country ski races are becoming popular winter attractions. Many ski facilities, towns and tourist areas are staging cross-country races to attract visitors and publicity for their region. Races must be carefully planned to draw participants and to ensure a smooth running event.

Citizen Races

The first step is to determine what kind of a race is wanted. The "citizen" cross-country race is one possibility. This is an open race for all entrants. There are no required rules, but a good set of guidelines has been developed by the United States Ski Association (U.S.S.A.).

Competitive Races

The other possibility is to stage a national championship, Olympic or International Ski Federation race. These races must be sanctioned by the U.S.S.A. and their rules and regulations must be strictly adhered to. Contact the U.S.S.A. for information on these types of races.

Race Checklist

Once the type of race has been determined consider the following items:

- Get a sponsor. A sponsor will absorb some of the costs in return for publicity.
- Get permission from landowners to race across their property. This may not be necessary if the race is held at a cross-country facility.
- Clear the ground and prepare the trail before the first snowfall.
- Buy the necessary race bibs, course markings, and finish line materials.
- Determine the prizes.
- Distribute entry blanks to appropriate places in the state.
- Advertise the race explaining where to obtain entry forms.

- Publicize your event by press releases and fliers. Invite a sports writer from a prominent newspaper as your guest to cover the event.

- Estimate the necessary costs involved.

There are other aspects that should be considered such as parking, medical assistance, clearance for road crossings and notification of police. Entertainment, a workshop, or even a downhill race in conjunction with the main cross-country ski race can also be included. Race kits are available that include materials such as bibs and course markings.

Ski Orienteering

Ski orienteering is gaining in popularity and can be used as a unique event to draw skiers and tourists. In ski orienteering a participant makes his/her way from one point to another using a compass, map reading ability, landmarks and common sense. It requires quite a bit of space, check points and a variety of terrain to be successful.



Cross-Country Ski Package

A cross-country ski package can be a useful marketing tool to attract individuals or groups to a facility. The mechanics of putting a package together are clearly defined in the publication "Vacation Packaging" (Extension Bulletin E-793).

Package Components

There are several items which are particularly appropriate for cross-country ski packages:

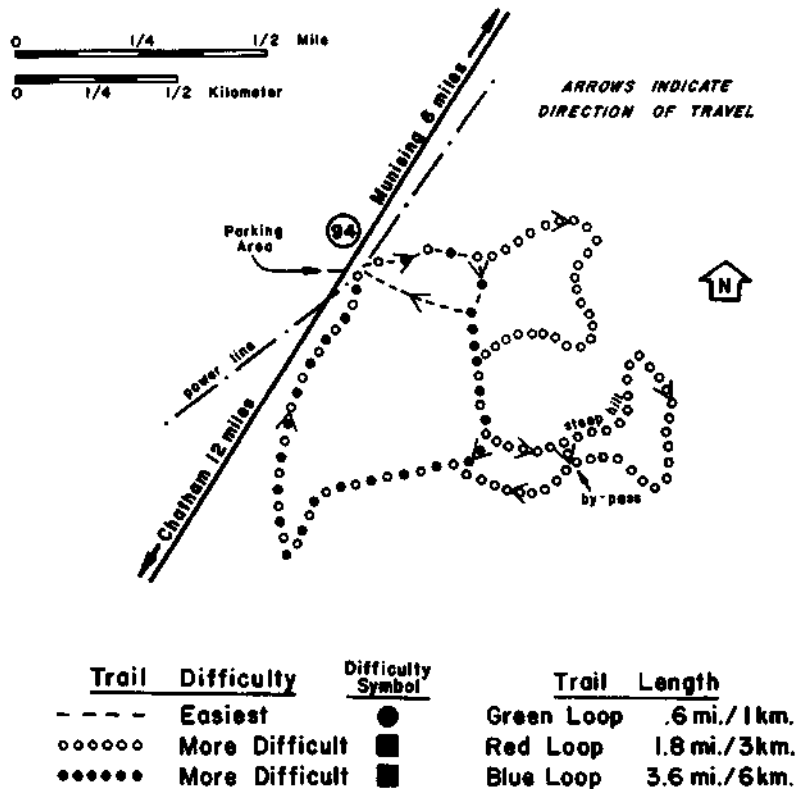
- Ski rentals, including skis and bindings, shoes and poles. People with their own skis will occasionally require extra equipment because of damage to their own skies.
- Ski lessons with qualified instructors. This is not a necessity but many people want lessons or helpful pointers.
- Accommodations.
- Food and beverage. If meals are part of the package, the food itself should give consideration to the energy demands of cross-country skiers. Quality and amount are very important.
- Transportation. This may include transportation from the vacationer's home; from the accommodation facility to the trail head; from the end of the trail to the trail head if the trail does not loop.
- Additional activities which would tie-in with cross-country skiing.

Advertising the Cross-Country Ski Program

Advertising is an important part of a good marketing program. In developing a successful advertising program it is necessary to ask many questions, including:

- To whom should I advertise?
- What do I say in my advertisement?
- Where should I advertise?

Valley Spur Cross Country Ski Trail



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When sending out pamphlets to cross-country skiers, make sure a map of the ski area is included

The Cross-Country Skier

Before putting together an advertising campaign, know about the person you wish to attract. Refer to the section on the characteristics of the cross-country skier on page 3.

For advertising to be effective it must be developed with the cross-country skier in mind. Know the skier's characteristics as the advertising campaign is being developed.

What To Say To The Cross-Country Skier

For advertising to be effective it should follow the A.I.D.A. formula. It should:

- Attract Attention
- Gain the reader's Interest
- Create Desire
- Induce Action

For this to happen write the advertisement in the language of the

person it is intended for. This means creating images, through words, which excite and appeal to the market. These images can only be created from an understanding of what people want from cross-country skiing (outlined on page 3). Incorporate this understanding into an advertisement aimed at the present and potential skier.

Advertisements attract the reader's attention by pointing out why people enjoy cross-country skiing.

Having gained attention, the advertisement will continue to keep interest, create desire and induce action if written in an appealing language.

Pamphlet Contents

There are a number of specific items which should be included in a pamphlet prepared for cross-country skiers:

- A location map showing how to get to the area. This might include a Michigan map indicating the ski area in relation to major cities and highways and brief directions on how to reach the facility from a nearby town or highway intersection.
- Address and phone number, including zip code and area code.
- Brief description of the trail system. Include lengths, types and the degree of difficulty (e.g., beginner, intermediate or expert). A map is particularly helpful to the beginning skier.
- Details of available package plans, including prices.
- Description of any supportive facilities in addition to the trails (e.g., lodge, warming house, restaurant).
- Inclusion of the surrounding area's attractions or activities. Skiers need a reason to travel to a trail because many can ski very close to home. The presence of a nearby attraction may give them the incentive to travel farther.

Summary

The key to attracting and keeping cross-country skiers is to adopt a marketing orientation. This means knowing the needs of cross-country skiers *before* developing a trail system. Once the trail has been developed, skiers must be informed of what is available. This is accomplished by knowing the skier's characteristics, writing advertisements in the skier's language, and placing those messages in places where the skiers will read them.

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