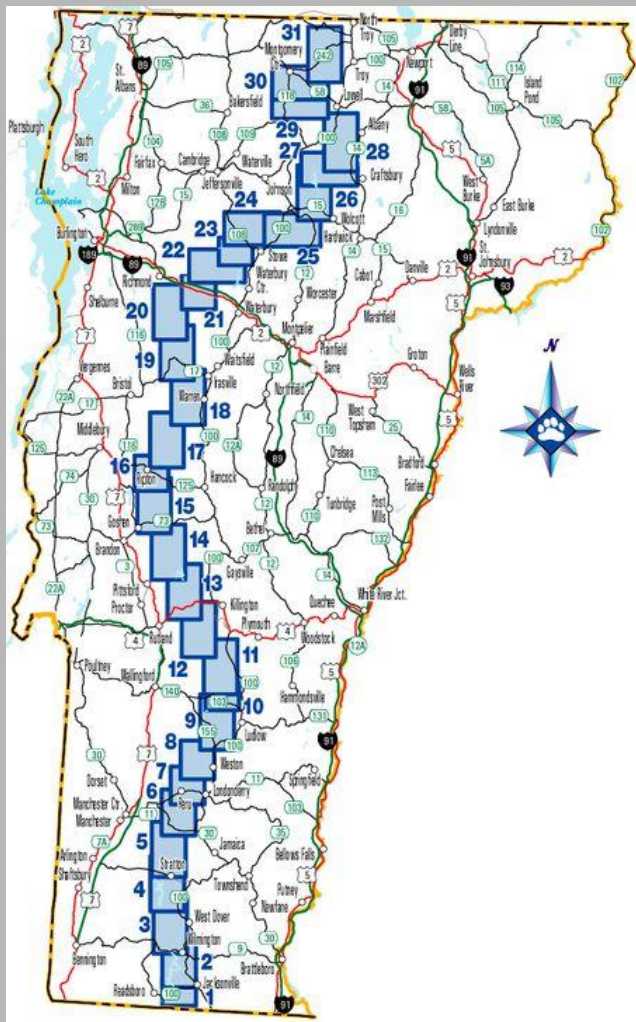


WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS BACKCOUNTRY ALLIANCE

DCR Stewardship Council Presentation 2024

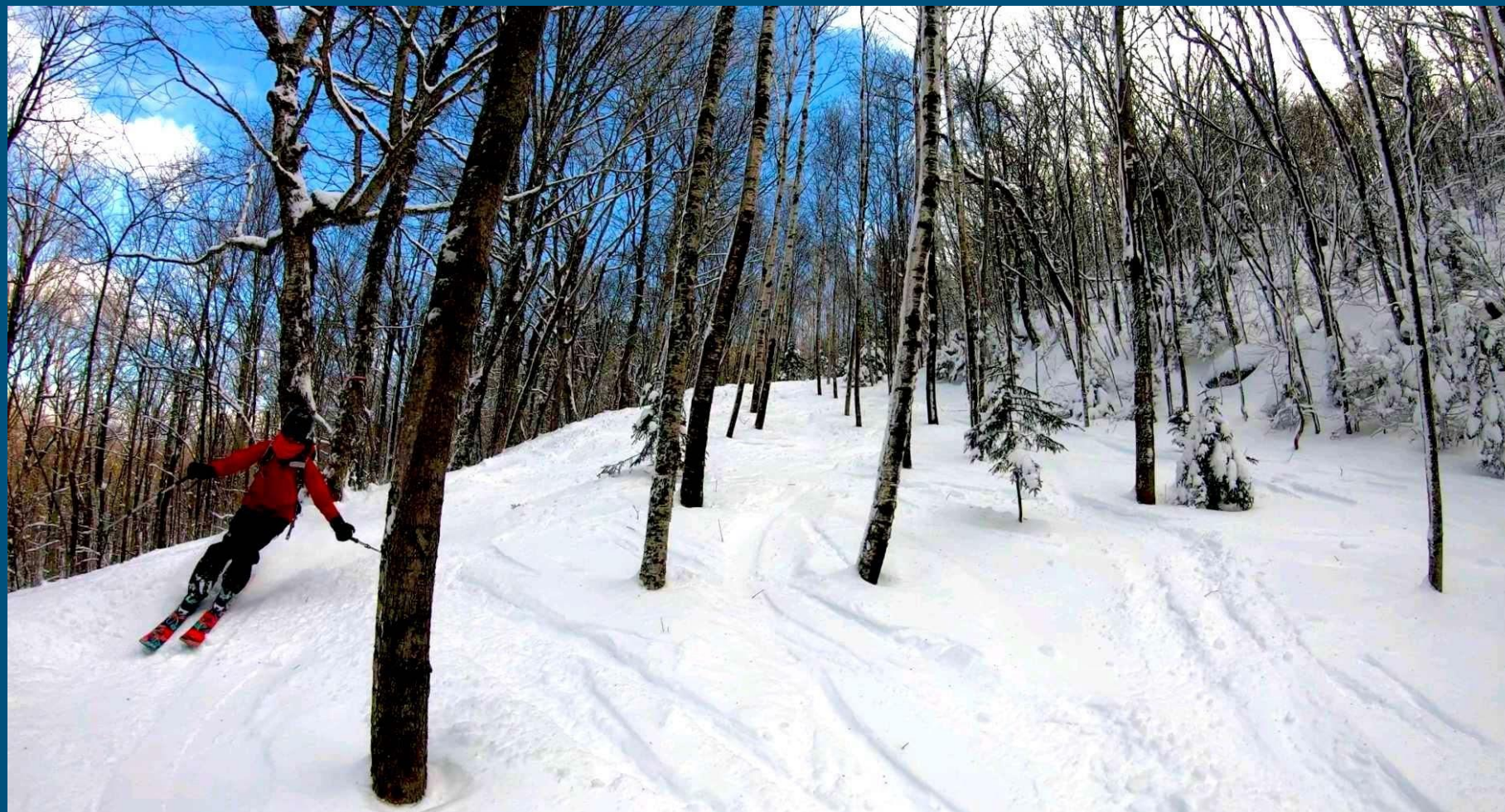
The Catamount Trail Association (CTA) & Backcountry Chapters

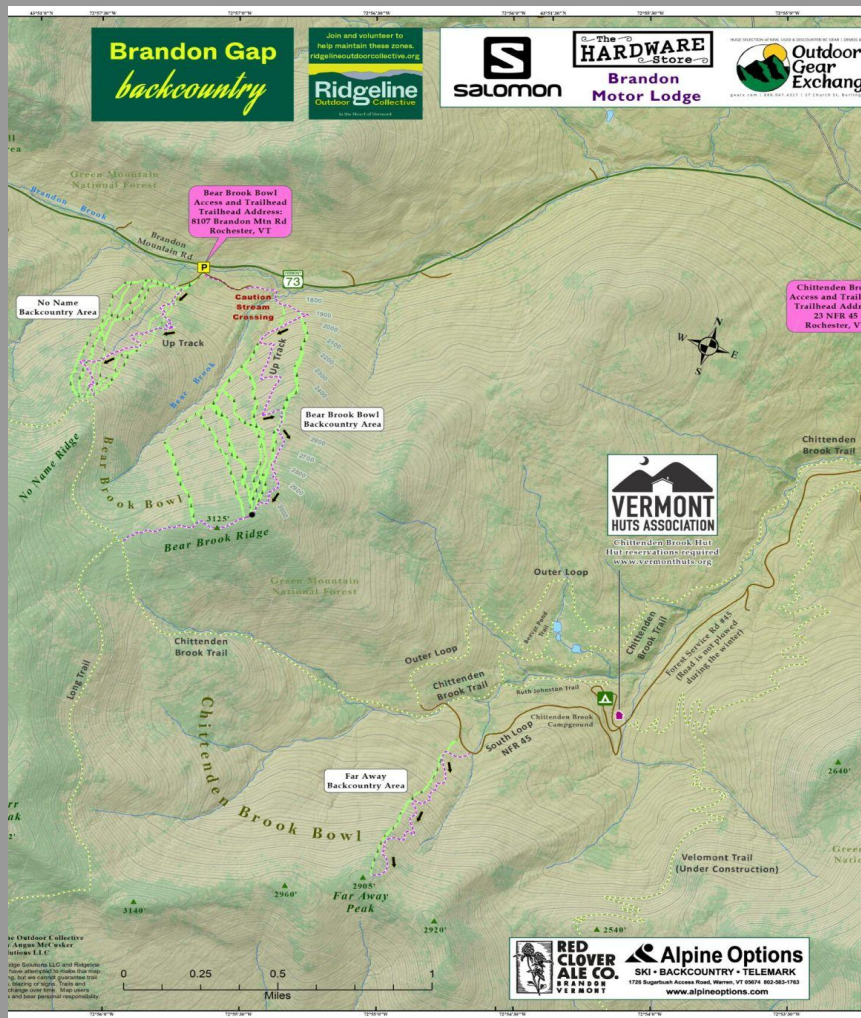






Site of
former
CCC
ski area at
Mt. Grace
State
Forest in
Warwick,
MA.

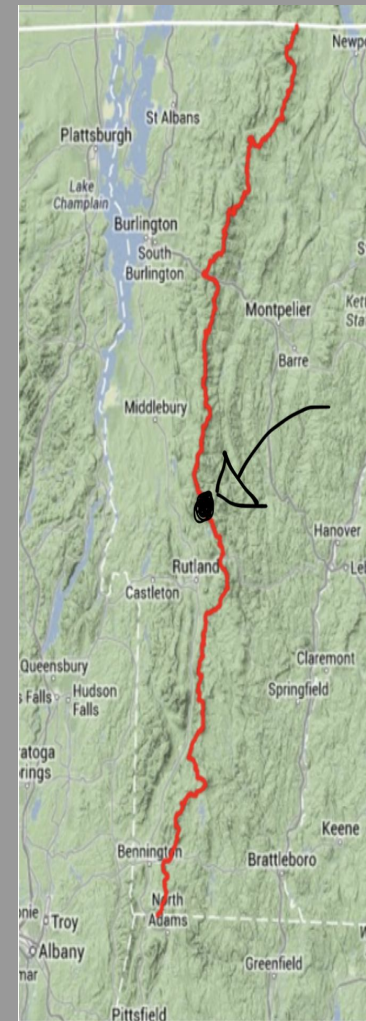




Brandon Gap on
the Long Trail in
Vermont.
(right)

USFS and
Ridgeline/CTA
Partnership to
Manage
Backcountry Ski
Zones (left)

First in the U.S!





Zac Freeman and Angus McCusker, Founders of Ridgeline Outdoor Collective (formerly RASTA)

Photo Courtesy of ROC

Welcome to the Green Mountain National Forest

BACKCOUNTRY SAFETY

EMERGENCY CALL 911

Your Location:
Brandon Gap
Long Trail
Parking Lot
3255 Gap Rd
Brandon, VT

SKI THE TREES SAVE THE FOREST

NO VEGETATION CUTTING IN THIS AREA

The future of
recreational
opportunities
here on your
Respect public
and private
lands, no
cutting



Recreation Area Managed in Partnership by:

CONTACT: Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests • Rochester-Middlebury Ranger Districts



to the Mountain National Forest

Brandon Gap Winter Recreation Area Green Mountain National Forest

WINTER SAFETY: YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Every year people are injured, lost or even die in winter recreation related accidents. You are entering a remote, unpopulated area where hidden hazards, changing conditions and varied terrain all affect your safety. Be prepared for a backcountry emergency by carrying enough gear and extra warm clothing to be self-sufficient for an extended period of time. Help can be difficult to summon and there may be significant delay in receiving emergency assistance. Never ski/hike alone.



Recreation Area Managed in Partnership by:

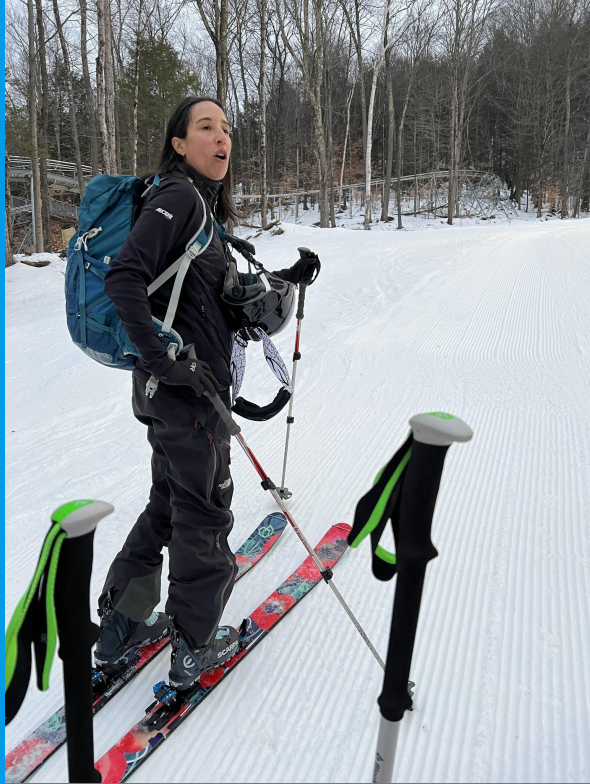
Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests • Rochester-Middlebury Ranger Districts

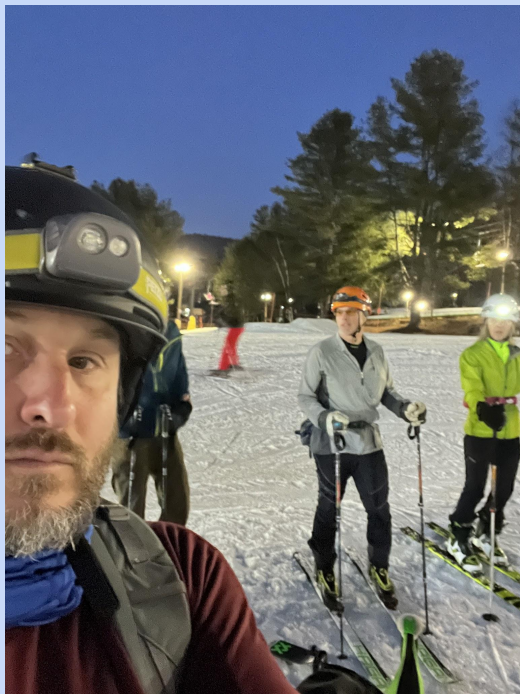
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer



A gorgeous Fall trail work day
at Beartown State Forest,
South Lee, MA.

What is backcountry skiing, anyways?





'Uphill' racers at a
WMBA Skimo
event @ Berkshire
East Ski Resort



Solitude and fresh
snow at
Berkshire Snow Basin,
Cummington, MA.



Beatown in January 1938

Busy Day at
Beatown:
No lifts to be seen!

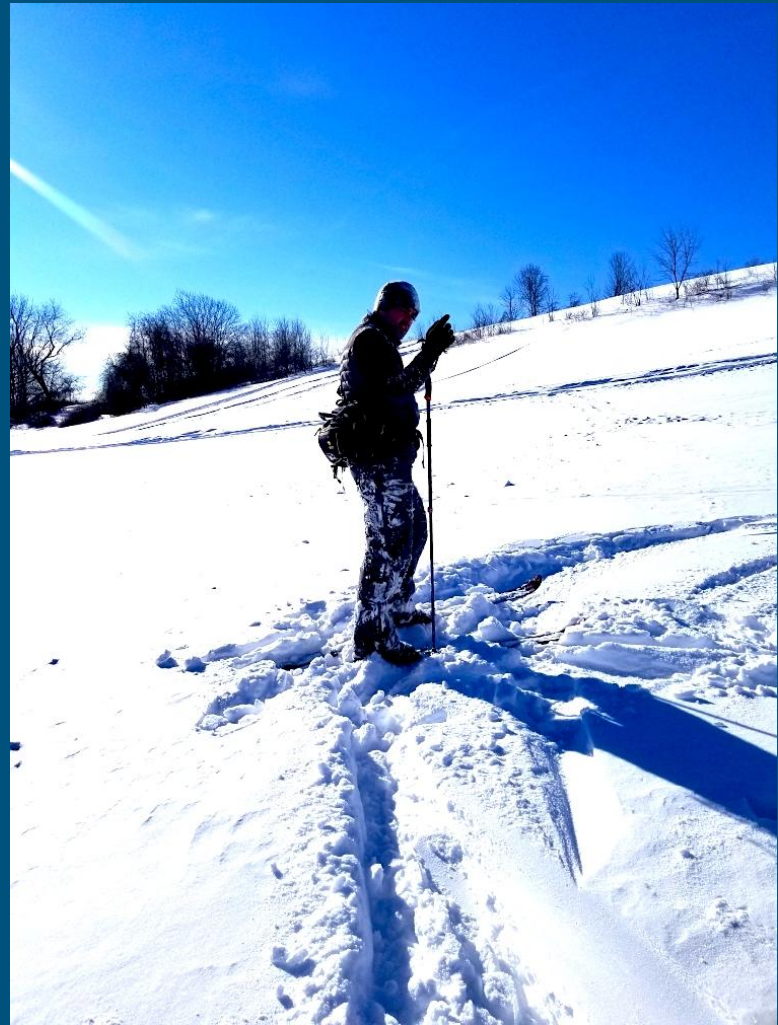
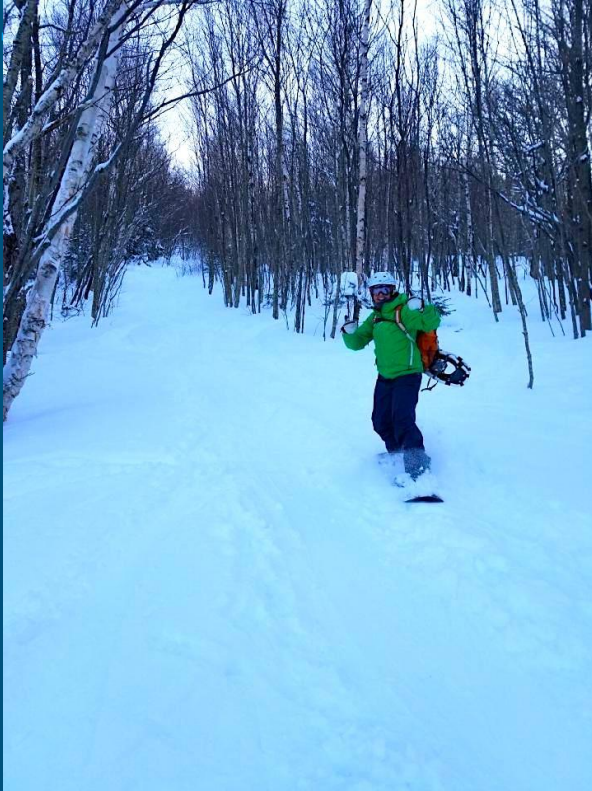
Photo Courtesy of DCR Archives

Modern backcountry gear:

- Extremely
lightweight
- High density, super
strong composite
materials
- Bindings adjust for
uphill/downhill use
- Flip a few levers,
pull those skins,
and ready to rip!



Backcountry snowboarding
at 'lost' ski area
Petersburg Pass, MA/NY border





Backcountry skiers on
Hillmans Highway,
Mount Washington, NH



Boulder hopping at Brandon Gap, VT

town and are traversing a golf-course or want to noodle around in some lower pitches of woods behind your house. These metal-edged skis can be as skinny as 60 cm underfoot or as wide as 100 cm underfoot. The skinnier skis can be mounted with NNN-BC bindings that resemble traditional Nordic bindings, but are a bit beefier. You have to use an NNN-BC boot with these bindings. You can choose from a few styles of boot depending on how wide your skis are. The widest skis in this category may be used with 3-pin bindings (described below) or a light Alpine touring binding (described below).

The leather boot with 3-pin binding has been standard issue backcountry gear for decades and has been used to access all kinds of terrain, including flat, undulating, low-angle, and the occasional steep slopes. Reinforced leather boots with buckles and/or an adjustable heel cable provide additional stability and maneuverability. Some rigid boots and bindings are suitable for low-angle touring as well. The plastic telemark boot is far more rigid and can be used on rolling and flat terrain as well as the steep and is a better choice if longer tours with steep uphill and downhill are in your adventure.

Safety equipment

The ten essentials are always a necessity when going into the backcountry. These include things like extra



Overview of Backcountry Skiing

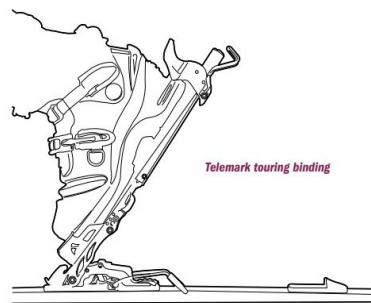
ascending (using climbing skins) and re-attached as a snowboard for descending. Previously, snowboarders were at a distinct disadvantage in accessing the backcountry and were usually confined to access using snowshoes while carrying their board.

Taken together, the advancements in telemark, alpine, and snowboard technology have greatly expanded the ability and desire of outdoor winter enthusiasts to venture deeper and higher into the backcountry using the equipment of their choice. Technological advances in cell phones and GPS made getting out with this newer equipment even easier. You can see where other people are skiing by looking at Strava or share a geo-located map with a friend of a good spot to try out. Freed from the limits of developed ski areas, skiers in increasingly greater numbers have started to explore the backcountry and 'earn their turns' on previously inaccessible terrain.

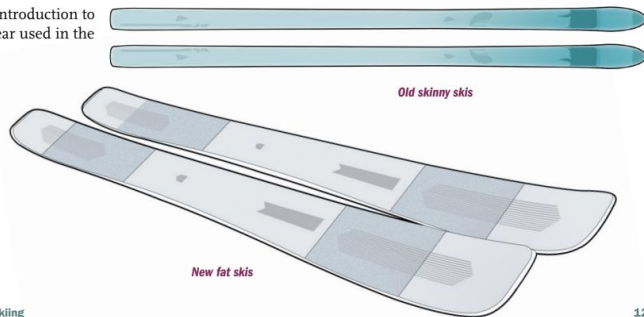
Backcountry Skiing and Riding Equipment

Backcountry equipment has advanced considerably in recent decades and covers a broad spectrum of needs. Skiers use specific gear (or 'set ups') to meet their preferences, skill level, and budget. Not all equipment is suited for all backcountry terrain. Weather, snow conditions, terrain, and difficulty levels all influence a skier's choice of equipment. Leather boots and skinny wax less skis, for example, may be appropriate for low-angle backcountry touring but would be inadequate for more advanced terrain such as Tuckerman's Ravine on Mount Washington or even the Teardrop Trail on Mount Mansfield.

Following is a brief introduction to common forms of gear used in the backcountry today. This information is based on knowledge available at the time of this document's publication (2023).

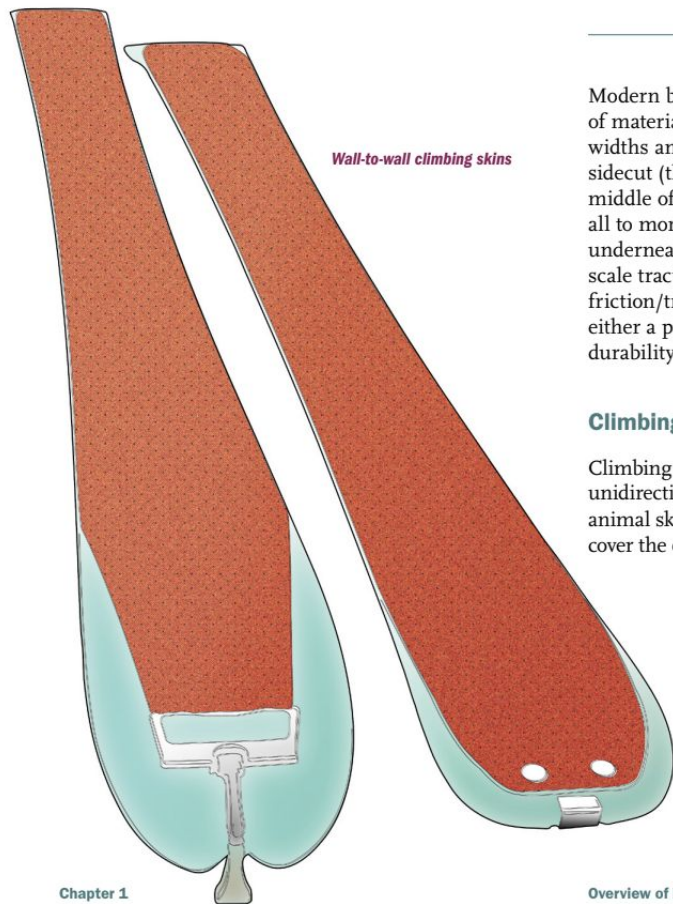


Telemark touring binding



New fat skis

Images courtesy of CTA's
'Vermont Backcountry Ski
Handbook'



Wall-to-wall climbing skins

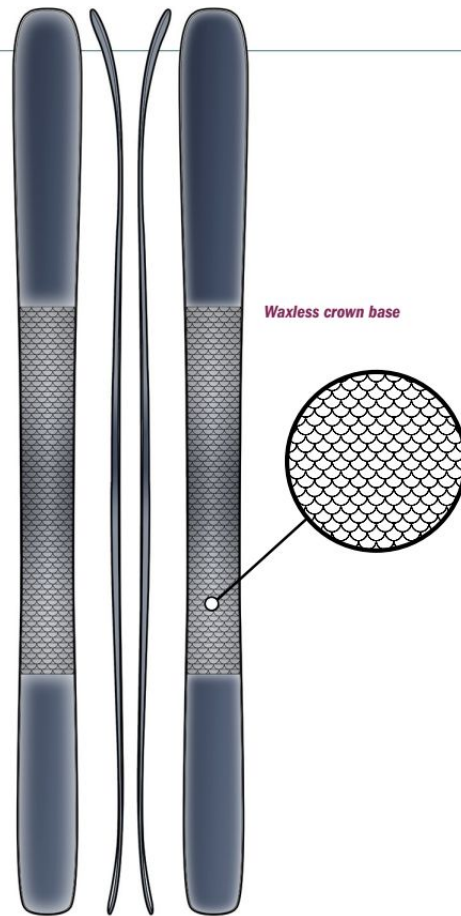
Modern backcountry skis are made with a variety of materials and come in a number of lengths and widths and feature various degrees of camber (flex), sidecut (the difference in width between tip/tail and middle of ski), and rocker (curvature at tip and tail), all to more easily tour or turn. Skis are either smooth underneath (for less friction) or have textured fish scale traction (also known as waxless base, for greater friction/traction). Most backcountry skis feature either a partial or full length metal edge to add durability and influence turning and edging.

Climbing Skins

Climbing skins are strips of fabric that are covered in unidirectional hairs (historically these were literally animal skins attached to the bottom of skis). Skins can cover the entire base of the ski or just the middle 'kick' zone of a metal-edged Nordic ski. The unidirectional hairs mat down when you glide forward/go uphill and then engage to prevent you from sliding backwards downhill. Skiing uphill using skins is called "skinning" or "skinning up."

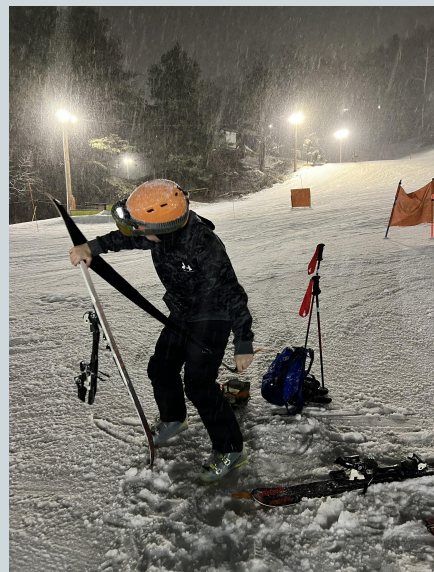
Boots and Bindings

Metal-edged Nordic skis offer a way to get out into the snow whether you live in



Waxless crown base

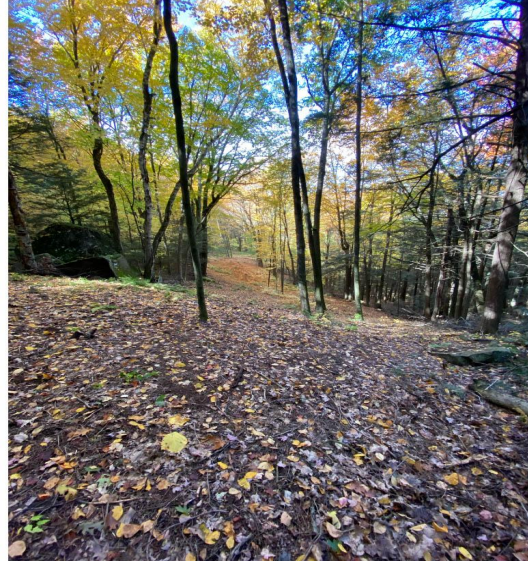
Tele skier dropping
the knee....and
freeing his soul!



Pulling skins on an AT 'frame'
type binding

Splitboards,
for the
backcountry
snowboard
enthusiast





Lower
elevations in
New England
definitely
require
'brushing'..

@Beartown S.F



CTA Membership Levels

Student/Limited Income - \$25.00

Individual - \$40.00

Family - \$60.00

Patron - \$100.00

Benefactor - \$250.00

Protector - \$1000.00

Business - \$200.00

Lifetime - \$1500.00

Lifetime Family - \$2000.00



FASTEST GROWING SPORTS

1. Pickleball: 171.1% increase
2. Alpine touring: 115% increase
3. Winter fat biking: 69.4% increase
4. Off-course golf: 67.5% increase
5. Snowboard touring: 59.1% increase

Source SIA SNOWSPORTS



ALPINE TOURING
PARTICIPATION
SKYROCKETED BY
MORE THAN

90%

Once again, backcountry/Alpine touring interest continues its meteoric rise in the industry, including resort uphill travel. Last year, Alpine touring saw an increase of more than 90%, and this growth was seen broadly across all demographics. While FREESKIER's core audience has been trending in this direction for years, it seems that the broader industry has caught-on to Alpine touring too. And growth was seen in all demographics, including: age, gender, race/ethnicity, income and education.

2.2 MILLION
UNIQUE ALPINE
TOURING
PARTICIPANTS

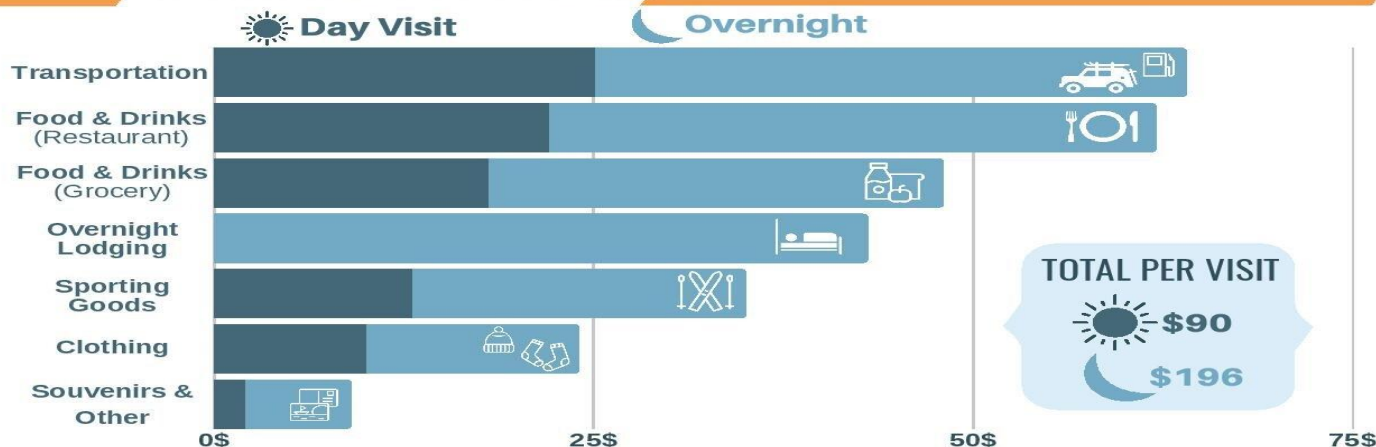
Over the past three years, the number of Alpine ski touring participants has grown from 701,000 in 2019-20, to 1.1 million in 2020-21, and now up at 2.2 million in 2021-22. The age demographic with the most Alpine touring participants: 25-34 which represented more than 37% of all touring participants. The participation by gender generally mirrors that of the Alpine market with men comprising 66.7% of Alpine touring participants, and women 33.3%.

Insights, data & more: A closer look at skier participation around the United States

Published on February 16, 2023

by FREESKIERmation from Freeskiier magazine

VISITOR SPENDING PROFILE



CRESCENT RIDGE ZONE



MAPLE VILLA ZONE



BALDFACE KNOB ZONE



GRANITE BACKCOUNTRY ALLIANCE

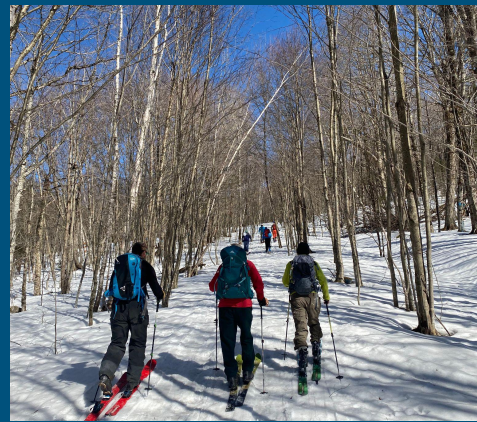
"The GBA has made a serious impact on winter recreation visitation here in the MW Valley."
Ragged Mountain Equipment—
Intervale, NH

BACKCOUNTRY BY THE NUMBERS



Economic data from just over the border in VT. Hyper local economic drivers for rural communities.



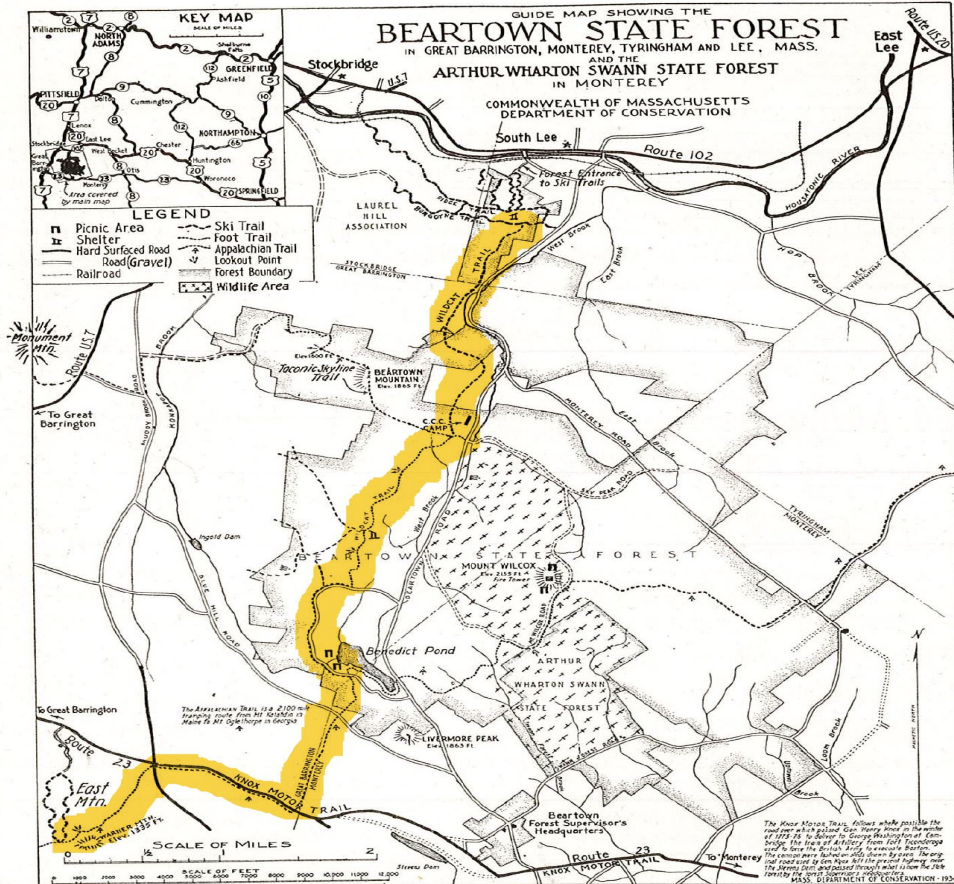
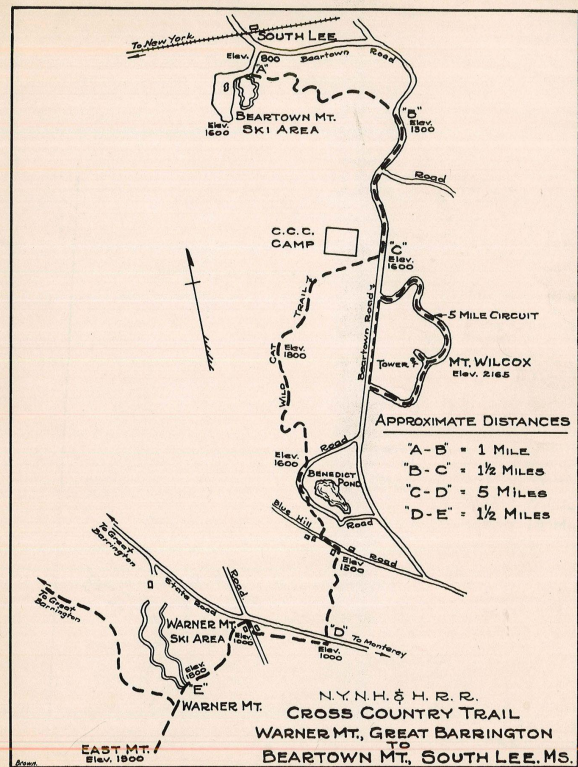


WMBA Mission Statement



- Secure access for ski and snowboard use of backcountry terrain in the region
- Maintain existing terrain and to develop new zones with membership support
- Build community and life-long social connections.
- Provide technical education for safe travel in the backcountry

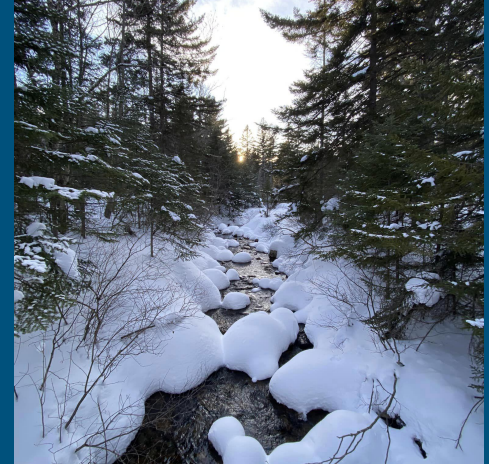


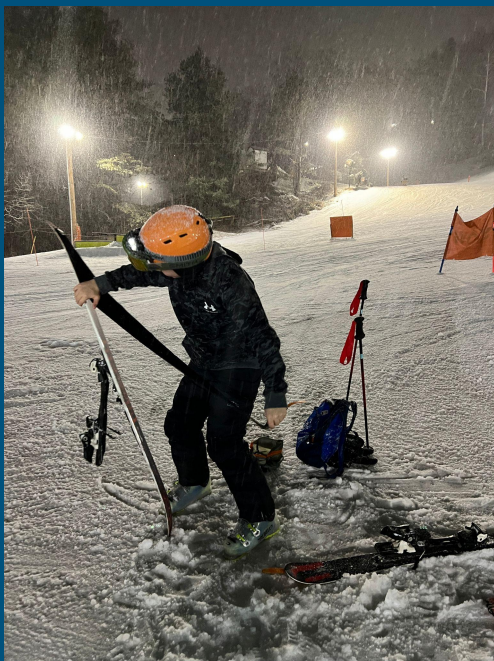




End of season bike ride and
cookout hosted by Lloyd
Crawford at his property
Stump Sprouts in Hawley. A
DCR property with
conservation restriction
maintained by Lloyd

Annual Zealand Falls Hut Trip





WMBA

DAWN PATROL

**FRIDAY
MORNINGS
7:00 AM**

Choose your resort:
Catamount Resort
Hillsdale, NY
or
Berkshire East
Charlemont, MA

The Western Mass Backcountry Alliance is now offering 2 separate uphill dawn patrols. One at each resort! Same day, same time, two resorts.
www.massbcalliance.org



www.massbcalliance.org

DAWN PATROL

Dawn patrol at Berkshire east starts this Friday January 5th at 7 am. Meet in the parking lot. Check out the website for details



Member Topics for Message Board:

- People looking for ski partners
- Pictures of individual trips to our and other zones
- Communicating about upcoming events
- Conditions reports for our zones
- Travel advisories
- Problems at our zone (down trees/parking issues)
- Ideas for classes or seminars





WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS BACKCOUNTRY ALLIANCE

Jeremy Davis of NELSAP
Talk and book signing

Eastern Adventure films presents:

‘300 Miles Melting’

featuring Torey Brooks 2023

winter journey on the Catamount Trail

w/Post-film Q&A with Ms. Brooks.



Vendors and Music
BBQ and BEER
Raffle for skiing Swag

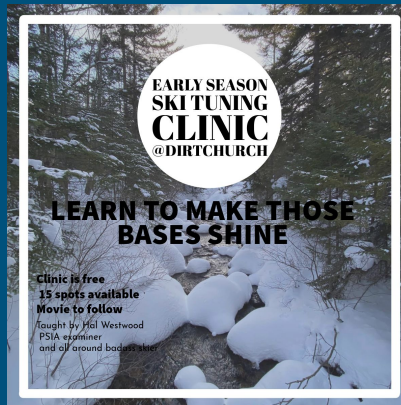
ALL ARE WELCOME
BERKSHIRE EAST
10.12.23 @6PM
RSVP VIA WEBSITE
TICKETS PREFERRED
www.wmassbcalliance.org

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:





CORPORATE SPONSORS



WMass Backcountry Alliance presents:



2023 Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification

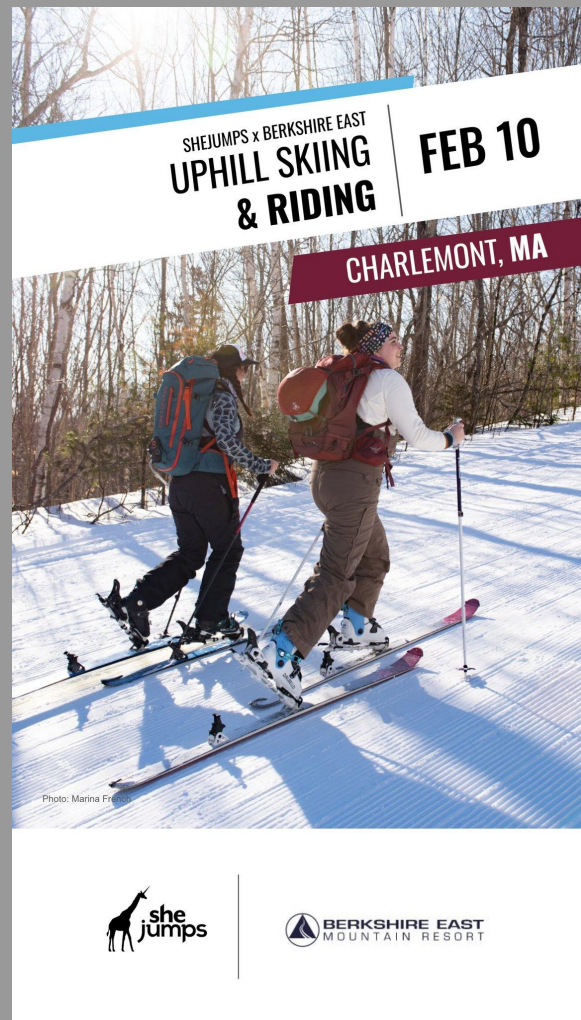
Join us September 23-24th for a 2 day weekend workshop led by SOLO instructor, Jim Helems, as we learn and practice emergency skills critical for spending time in the backcountry. This course provides 2 year SOLO certification and serves recertification requirements.

WMBA/CTA Members \$225, Non-Members \$250

Register now to reserve your spot: <https://shorturl.at/elyTU>
and visit our website for more info <https://www.wmassbackcountry.org/>

Cost of touring Equipment

- Touring or backcountry skis \$600
- Touring boots \$500
- Touring or touring capable bindings \$400
- Touring poles \$100
- Climbing skins \$100
- Ski helmet or climbing helmet \$150





BERKSHIRE SNOW BASIN

We're back — the Berkshire Snow Basin is open again this year and we've added snowmaking to supplement nature's own on a hill that holds snow way into the Spring and is groomed to perfection. Our rustic lodge with a friendly, family atmosphere, open fireplace and home cooking provides a place to meet new friends and relax between runs on varied terrain. Learn to ski with our Professional Ski School that has many years of teaching experience at every level. Rent skis, boots and poles from our well-equipped rental shop. The National Ski Patrol is always available to provide trail selection guidance. Remember, the lift lines are short and the people are friendly. Bring your family and friends and enjoy skiing at its best in the scenic Berkshires. Easy to get to on Route 9 between Pittsfield and Northampton, Massachusetts.

Operating Schedule:

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturdays & Sundays, plus Holiday weeks

December 22, 1984 through January 1, 1985

February 16, through February 24, 1985

½ day tickets begin and end at 12:30 p.m.

December 15 scheduled opening day

Area Statistics:

Base Elevation 1,175 feet

Vertical Drop 500 feet

Longest Trail 1 mile

Exposure NNE

Trails & Slopes:

○Easiest ◻More Difficult ◇Most Difficult

Easiest-

- 1 Sugar Run
- 1B Sugar Run-West Loop
- 8 Main Slope
- 11 Ski School Area

More Difficult-

- 2 Forest Slalom
- 3 Merry-Go-Round
- 4 College Highway
- 6 Ruthie's Run
- 10 Spring Slope

Most Difficult-

- 1A Sugar Run-East Loop
- 5 Rumpus Run
- 6A Steep Schuss
- 6B Midway
- 7 Stan's Slalom
- 9 Cascade

Lifts:

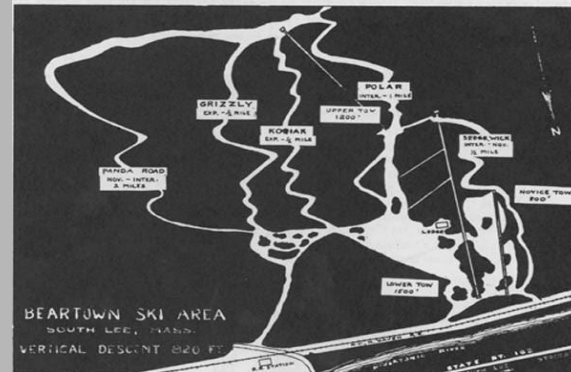
A - 2,750 foot T-Bar

B - 1,500 foot T-Bar

C - 800 foot T-Bar

820' vertical drop! Served by Tows

BEARTOWN



Original ski trail maps from Beartown and Snow Basin.

BERKSHIRE SNOW BASIN

W. CUMMINGTON,

MASSACHUSETTS

2 TOWS SERVING
550 FT. VERT. DROP
LUNCH BAR



2500 FOOT RUN
SKI SCHOOL
REST ROOMS

Easily Accessible by Hard Roads — On Route 9



BERKSHIRE SNOW BASIN

We're back — the Berkshire Snow Basin is open again this year and we're adding snowmaking to supplement nature's run on a hill that holds snow any way the Spry and is prepared to perfection. Our main lodge with a friendly, family atmosphere, open fireplace and downy comfort provides a place to rest, eat, drink and relax before heading out on our snow-covered trails. The National Ski Patrol is always available to provide trail selection guidance. Remember, the lift lines are short and the people are friendly. Bring your family and friends and enjoy skiing at its best in the heart of the Berkshires. Easy to get to on Route 9 between Pittsfield and Northampton, Massachusetts.

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- 6B Midway
- 7 Stan's Slalom
- 9 Cascade

Lifts:

- A - 2,750 foot T-Bar
- B - 1,500 foot T-Bar
- C - 800 foot T-Bar



Courtesy J Noseworthy
NewEnglandSkiHistory.com



The Base at Snow Basin (2000)



Stan and Ruth Brown



Photos Courtesy of Jeremy Clark and
New England Ski History



Catching an
early season
storm at Snow
Basin!

December 2023

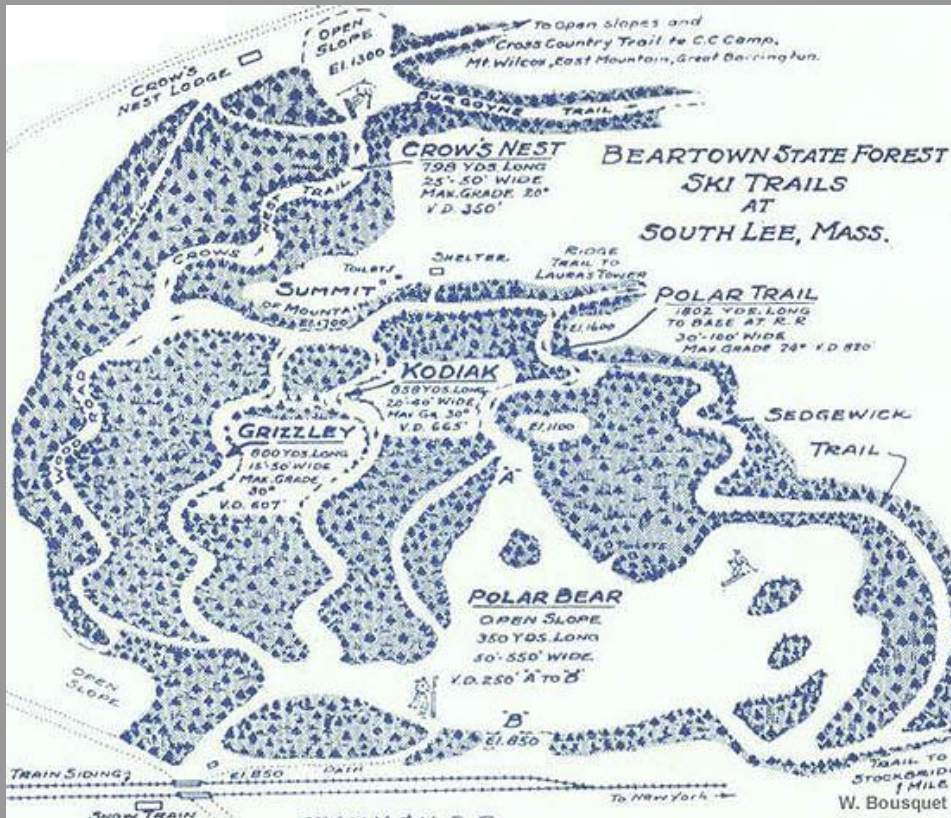
dcr



BEAR

4

Welcome to Beartown



Berkshires Lose Another CCC Camp

**Veterans' Unit at
Beartown To Move
On Nov. 14**

Another Berkshire CCC camp, next-to-last to fold up, will go out of the picture Nov. 14 when the veterans' company at Beartown State Forest, South Lee, moves to Voluntown, Conn.

The only remaining camp will be at the west end of Savoy State Forest, in North Adams. Savoy forest alone, at one time, had three camps.

One hundred thirteen men of the Beartown camp will move into the camp at Voluntown which has just been closed after occupancy by a junior company. The latter company was disbanded for failure of recruiting efforts, and the veterans will carry on their work in the forested area near the Rhode Island state line.

Major work at Beartown recently has been centered on completion of the ski lodge and water system and building more roads.

The Beartown camp is about seven years old, and the work crews have carried out one of the most extensive developments at any CCC center in the county.



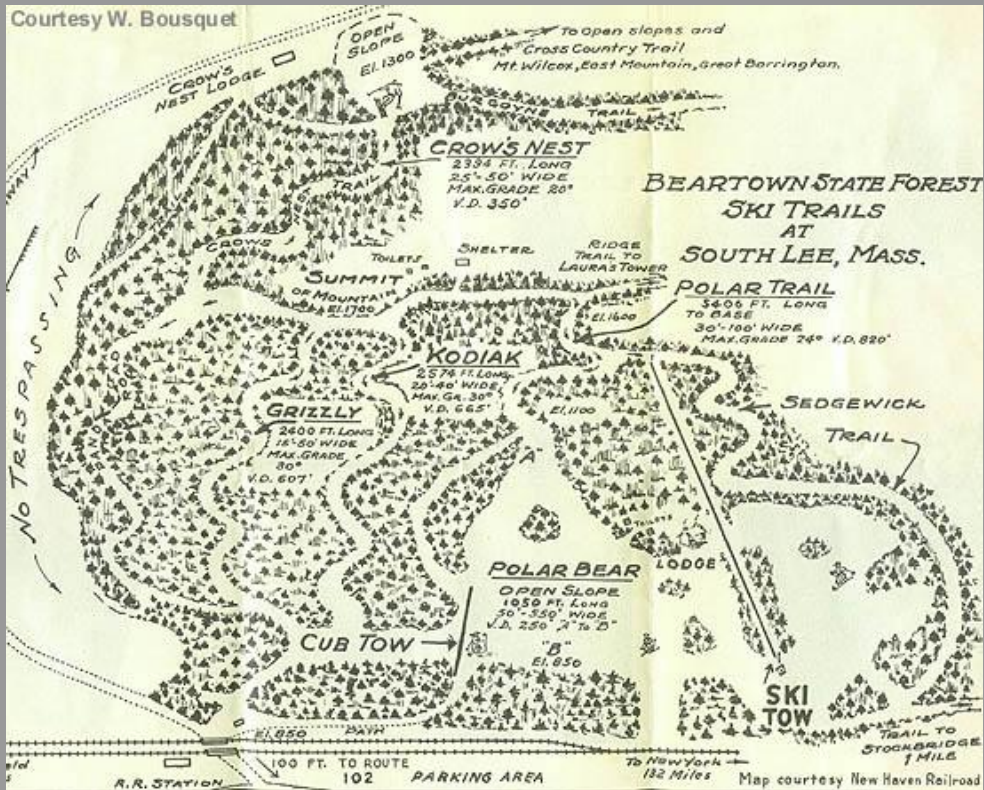


CCC Camp at
Beartown State
Forest

Circa 1933

Photo courtesy of DCR Archives

Courtesy W. Bousquet



Beartown Map with Surface Lifts for the Lower Slopes circa 1940



Beartown After Closing circa 1970

A Crowd at Beartown



Beartown in January 1938



Above: Navigating the crowds at Beartown. Right: Skiing the open slopes of Polar



CCC Trail Work at Beartown
(above).

Looking down the 'Upper Rope Tow' line,
Now a steep and narrow skiable chute.
(below)

Overview

Civilian Conservation Corps Companies 108 and 112 were stationed in Beartown State Forest in Lee, Massachusetts in the 1930s.

In 1935 ski trails were developed on the northern peak of Beartown Mountain. Two rope tows were installed on the lower half of the mountain, serving the Polar and Sedgewick slopes. In addition, at least three trails were cleared from the top of the mountain following the bear theme - Kodiak, Grizzly, and Polar.

The ski area closed at some point in the 1940s, but was reopened in 1951-52, featuring top to bottom rope tow lift service.

The area was operated in the 1960s as Beartown Associates, Inc. by William T. McCormack. The area remained open through the winter of 1963-64. It was transferred to Wayne K. McCormack in 1981, then to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1984.

Today the ski trails are grown in, though some remains from the area can still be found.



Courtesy W. Bousquet



Double Chimney Ski Lodge at Beartown

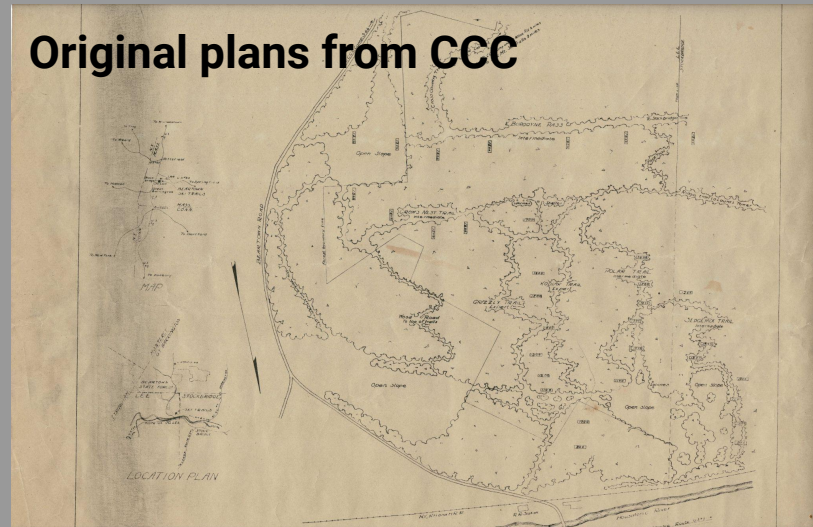


Over fifty years since closing and still the double fireplace chimneys of Beartown's former ski lodge still stand.

The Beartown Heritage Ski Trail Rehabilitation Project: Phase I

- Brush out to trails to historical width...and make skiable Kodiak, Grizzly, Panda, and Polar Trails
- Highlight Polar as intermediate and Kodiak & Grizzly as advanced
- Create one-way traffic (uphill for access) along Panda Trail to top of ski area & widen in areas sufficient for some downhill in predetermined locations
- Mow and trim access road behind gate #4, remove debris in culverts, drainage, and ditches
- Paint and letter gate #4 appropriately
- Put up signage at entrance and along Polar and Panda trails, including paint blazing

Original plans from CCC



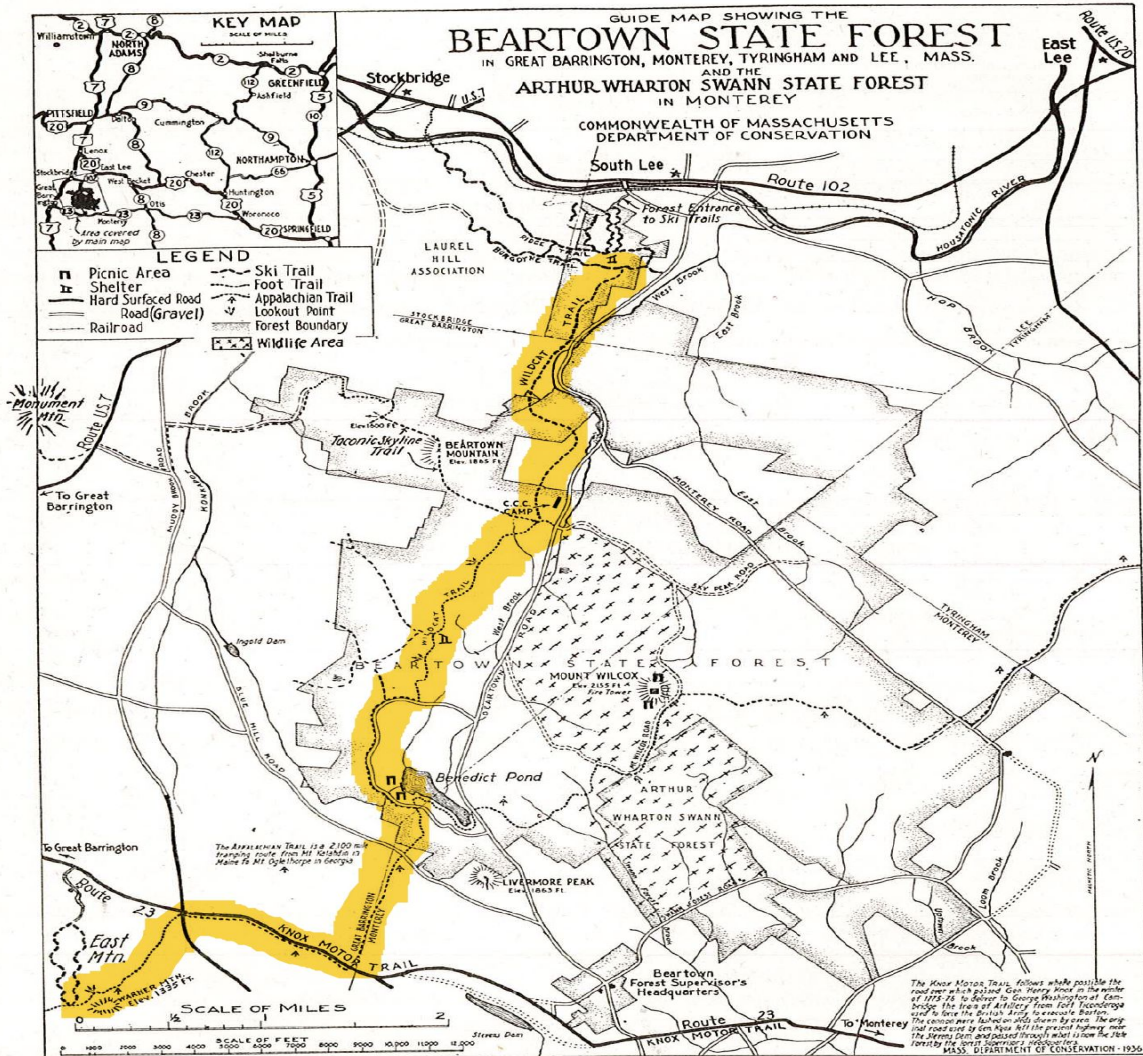
Adam Morris and Neal Chamberlain in attendance at our WMBA Annual Meeting 2023

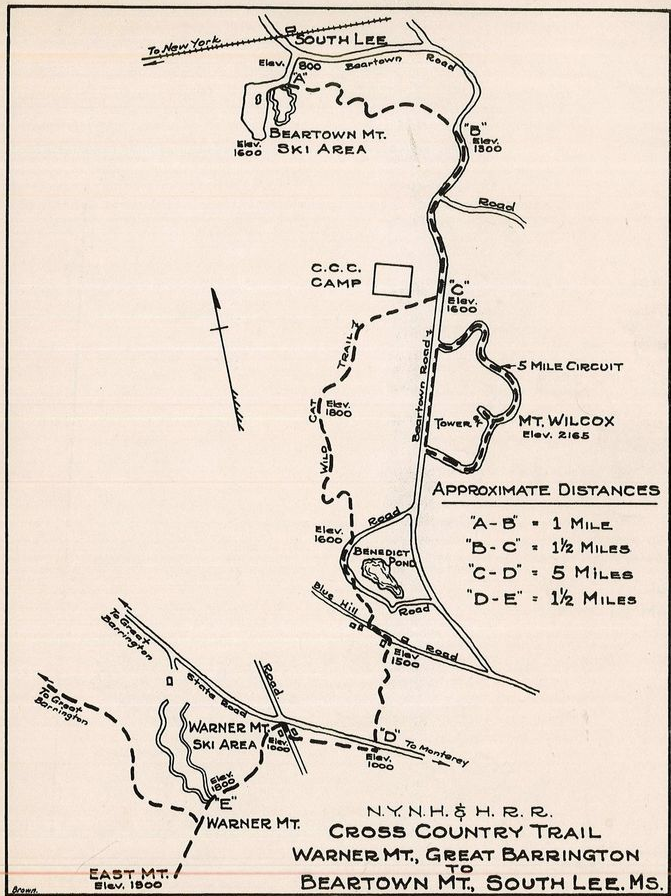




The Wildcat Trail-----

A backcountry ski touring trail, built by the CCC, connecting Beartown Ski area and G Bar S Ranch (now Butternut Ski Resort)





Explore The Wildcat Trail

Come explore
the newly
reclaimed CCC
cut wildcat trail
in Beartown
state forest.

Starts January 6th
but is ongoing

Website for Details



BEARTOWN BACKCOUNTRY CCC Heritage Ski Zone South Lee, MA.

Beartown Backcountry exists as a partnership between WMass Backcountry Alliance (WMBA) and MA DCR at Beartown State Forest. MA DCR maintains this area for year round recreation which includes hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, x-country and backcountry skiing.

No unauthorized trail clearing or cutting is allowed. Contact WMBA for scheduled Fall trail work days.

Respect neighboring private property. Always stay within Beartown State Forest boundaries.

Park to maximize efficiency. If parking is full, consider alternate 'Plan B' options for the day. Never park in a way that would upset local neighbors.

All MA DCR regulations apply



CATAMOUNT
TRAIL
ASSOCIATION



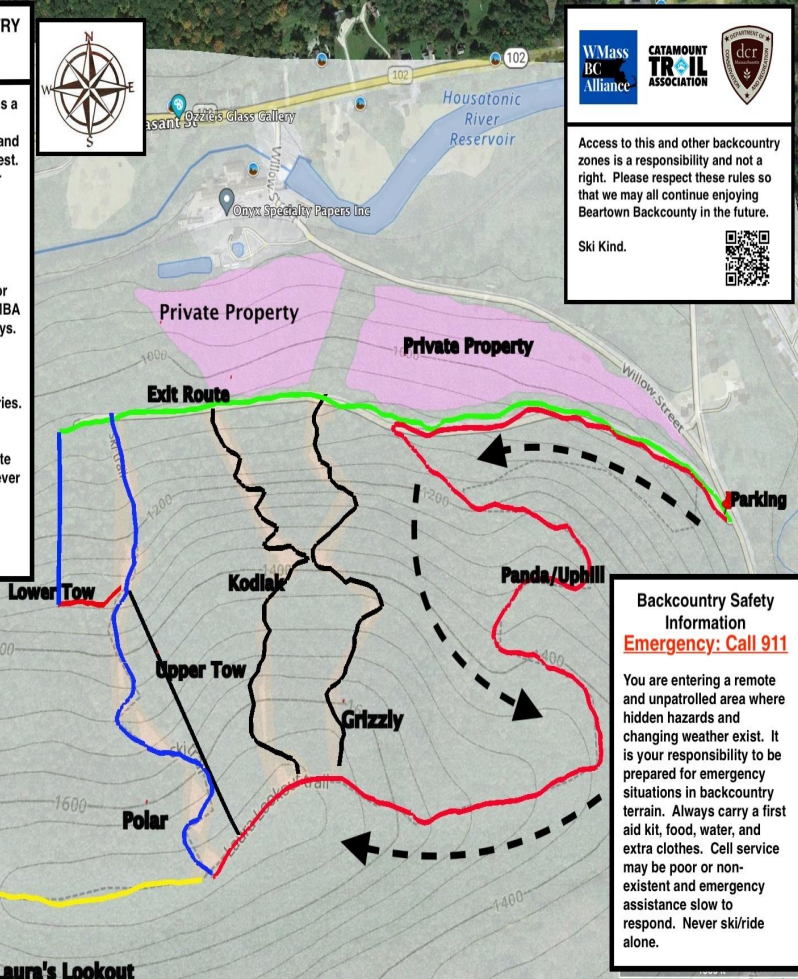
Access to this and other backcountry zones is a responsibility and not a right. Please respect these rules so that we may all continue enjoying Beartown Backcountry in the future.

Ski Kind.



Beartown Backcountry Legend

- Dedicated Uphill
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Exit Trail
- Private Property

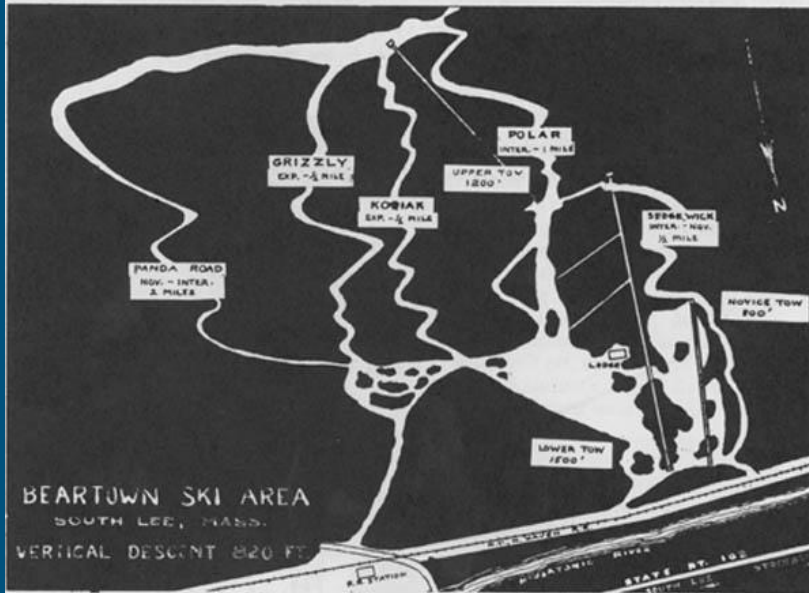


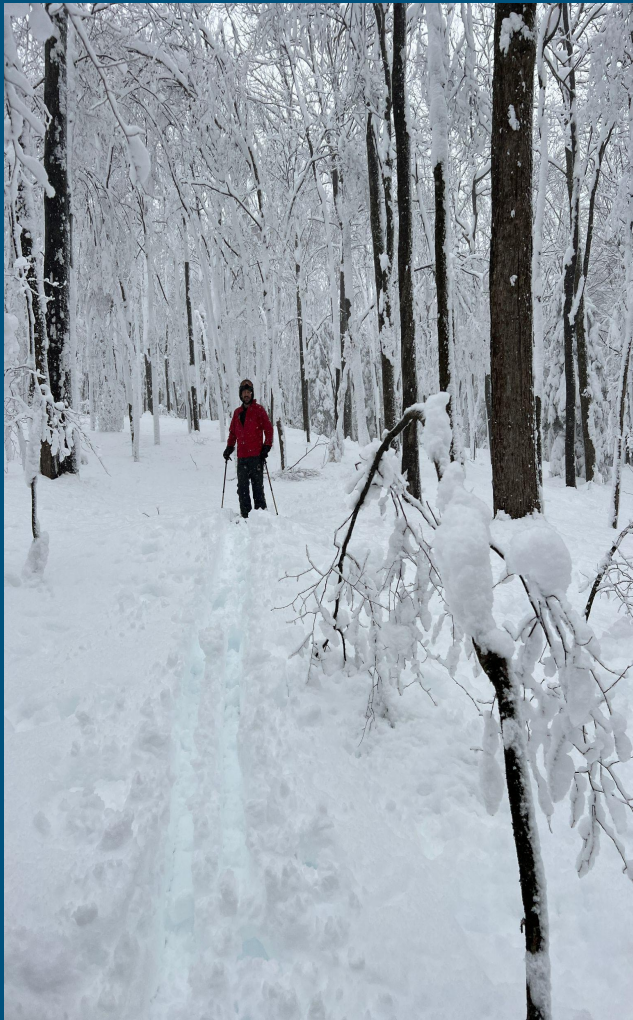
Backcountry Safety Information Emergency: Call 911

You are entering a remote and unpatrolled area where hidden hazards and changing weather exist. It is your responsibility to be prepared for emergency situations in backcountry terrain. Always carry a first aid kit, food, water, and extra clothes. Cell service may be poor or non-existent and emergency assistance slow to respond. Never ski/ride alone.

820' vertical drop! Served by Tows

BEARTOWN







For more info please visit us online:
www.wmassbcalliance.org



Thank you!