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MARCH 05, 2010 08:59 AM

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## Finding my (nordic) center

## Bachelor's trails good place to relearn cross-country skiing

By [Alandra Johnson](#) / *The Bulletin*

Published: March 04, 2010 4:00AM PST



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The groomed trails at Mt. Bachelor made relearning to cross-country ski a lot easier. The area features more than 50 kilometers of trails.

**Photos by Alandra Johnson / The Bulletin**

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### If you go

**What:** Cross-country skiing at the groomed trails at Mt. Bachelor Nordic Center

**Getting there:** Drive up Century Drive to Mount Bachelor, turn at signs for the West Village and park on the right-hand side of the lot. The Nordic Center is across the parking lot from the mountain.

**Cost:** Weekend trail passes cost \$17 adults, \$10 ages 6-12, \$10 ages 65-69, free ages 70 and older and ages 5 and younger; trail passes for PM hours are \$14 adult, \$7 ages 6-12 and 60-65.

**Contact:** [www.mtbachelor.com](http://www.mtbachelor.com) or 541-693-0909.

My husband, Robin, and I learned how to cross-country ski a little more than a year ago. Despite the numerous falls we experienced on our first outing, we loved the experience and pledged to ski, ski, ski away the winter.

We sure talked a lot about skiing but managed to let an entire year pass without venturing back onto skis.

That changed last Saturday when we (finally!) hit the trails again.

Because we are still so new at this, we decided to hit up the groomed trails at Mt. Bachelor Nordic Center. And we also brought along an experienced friend — fellow Bulletin reporter Kate Ramsayer — to remind us of all the tricks and techniques we had managed to forget in the past year.

Skiers and snowshoers can use the common corridor that begins at the Mt. Bachelor Nordic Center to reach trails on federal lands for free. But a pass allows users access to a series of groomed trails. We arrived at the Nordic Center around 1:30 p.m. and bought half-day passes from the office.

From the center, we walked a few paces to a relatively flat spot before putting on our rented skis. Almost immediately after clipping in our boots and standing up, we were both yelping, “Whoa! Whoa!” and landing on our backs. Turns out, as an added bonus for us newbies, the snow was extra slippery that day.

Once we were finally righted, our party headed to the easy green trails off to the right of the main path. It took us awhile to adjust to skis again. The biggest lesson we had to relearn was a matter of trust. As soon as either of us started to pick up any speed, we freaked out and purposefully crashed to avoid going too fast.

In time we learned to trust ourselves more and let ourselves whiz a bit (well, not really, but it felt that way at first).

From the easy trails, we headed back to the main path and turned left onto a series of trails that branch off. We chose to stick to the outer loop E, known as Woody's Way, which made a 7-kilometer path around the edge of the area. The trail system offered a number of winding and diverse paths, with a total of 56 kilometers of groomed trails.

Each path is quite wide and allows for two-way traffic. We quickly gravitated to two side-by-side grooves. Skiing on this kind of groomed trail helped our learning of curve tremendously. Once my skis were “locked into” the groomed grooves, I felt more secure and sturdy, which was especially important given the slip-and-slide conditions. I felt almost as if I were on a roller coaster and didn't have to worry so much about remaining upright as I did about my technique. But just as I started to feel a bit sure of myself, I tipped over.

Maybe I was a bit over-confident, but the groomed trails definitely made our beginning ski outing much, much easier.

The trail itself was lovely and quiet. And despite our being out on a gorgeous Saturday afternoon, we saw relatively few people out.

Our trail headed steadily downhill away from the Nordic Center, but did so at a meandering, curvy pace. There were fun up and down slopes and plenty of easy curves. And the scenery was idyllic as the trail cut through a large forested area, with peek-a-boo glimpses of Broken Top and South Sister as well as Mount Bachelor.

Throughout the path, we found a few benches charmingly made from old converted chairlifts.

As the afternoon grew later, the snow melted a bit. I blame these conditions for my inability to stand still. Every time we stopped — to take a picture, drink water, snack on Girl Scout cookies or just catch our breath — I found myself unexpectedly looking up at the sky while floundering on my back. After the first 30 minutes, I felt fairly secure while skiing, but the ability to stand still continued to evade me.

As our loop began to, well, loop back toward the beginning, the trail began to ascend. The path continued to weave and offered several flat spots in addition to the uphill. But in general, it was up, up, up. Going up was taxing, in part because my imperfect technique meant I was always fighting my skis to keep them from slipping back down the hill. I did remember to keep my ski poles behind me to give me a bit of leverage.

By the time we finished our loop, our bodies felt tired, but our spirits were still a little hungry for more. Maybe this time we won't wait another year to get back out there.

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