

# New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club



February 2021

NEWS

## January Club Meeting Re-cap

For those of you who may have missed our January general club meeting, Gary Fenchel gave a wonderful presentation on the sport of Skijoring (skiing with your dogs). Gary explained what kind of dog is best suited for this sport, the equipment needed, and caring for your snow companions. Great job Gary!

As many of us know, COVID has wreaked havoc on every aspect of our lives and our hut trips are no exception. We have canceled hut trips for this year. Although it is a royal bummer, we are still a very active club. Jim Whitfield has been introducing new

skiers to the wonderful sport of XC skiing during his beginner/level I classes in the Sandias and many of our club members have been sharing their outing experiences via our eGroups email and Facebook page. So what's next? Check out our MeetUp page, Facebook, and eGroups email for invites and outings for the remainder of the season!

<https://www.meetup.com/New-Mexico-Cross-Country-Ski-Meetup-Group/>

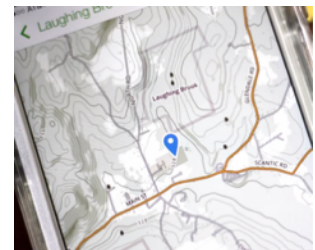
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1663936723893594/>

## Next General Club Meeting - February 11 via Zoom

Want to learn about apps and technology to use on your skiing adventures? Our next club meeting will consist of a presentation by *Gerry Trujillo* “**Mobile Technology for Outdoor Activities**”.

This presentation, updated for the Zoom platform, is a continuation of a presentation provided at the January 2020 NMCCSC meeting. An “Evelyn Wood style” review of GPS technology will help reinforce concepts for those who attended last year's presentation and provide new information for those not familiar with the inner workings of the GPS system.

This month's presentation is focused on an overview of software and mobile apps that harness the power provided by the GPS system. The world of mapping and location based applications has experienced a



**TECH OUTDOORS**

seemingly exponential growth, which reflect consumer demand and creative software applications development.

This month's presentation combines a traditional slide presentation with live demonstrations to review of sampling of "Mobile Technologies for Outdoor Activities". Due to time constraints, but through the power of Zoom, short demonstrations from a few web sites as well as my mobile device will be shown.

## **Board Meeting Summary**

NMCCSC Board members met virtually over Zoom on January 28. Good news! We have lots of new members, renewed old members and no outstanding expenses. We received our credit from our cancelled hut trip and the credit will be used at a later time. We are still discussing how best to accommodate our new skiers, and how to handle local outings in small groups. Chris has been doing a fabulous job on our website and Jim's instructional videos are so helpful.



**Mailing list:** [NMCCSCEgroup@mailman.swcp.com](mailto:NMCCSCEgroup@mailman.swcp.com) **Website:** [www.nmccskiclub.org](http://www.nmccskiclub.org)

**Meetup:** <http://www.meetup.com/New-Mexico-Cross-Country-Ski-Meetup-Group/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Sports-Club/New-Mexico-Cross-Country-Ski-Club-199720217573925/>

## **WHERE TO GO IN THE SNOW** by Guy Miller

I know it seems that someone reached up and turned off the snow switch, but that's the way it goes sometimes. And then, sometimes that switch gets turned back on; we just have to be ready to jump on it when more snow comes. It seems that often the newer, class I skiers often don't know where good places to ski can be found. In thinking about some of the easier places to ski, I recalled two of my absolute favorite class I - II tours I ever did, way back in the day.

**Bluebird Mesa:** This is the place to head when the forecast calls for snow in the Cuba area. Head to Cuba on US 550. Right in the middle of town you'll find the junction with NM 126. This road heads east toward Jemez Springs. I know exactly where the trailhead is, but I have to rely on Sam's book to give more precise info for folks who haven't been there. Sam says

it's 9.7 miles from the junction. Getting close to the trailhead, you'll be climbing steadily. You'll know you've passed it if you reach a divide and start heading downhill. If you've ever been out to San Pedro Parks Wilderness, you'll know this spot. There is an obvious parking spot on the right hand side of the NM 126, and the trail (it's actually a jeep road) takes off from there.

Initially there is an easy climb of a couple of hundred vertical feet to the top of the mesa. You'll make quick work of that, and, once there, the road curves to the south. Ski along the mesa top as far as you want to go. You'll likely have the whole place to yourself.

**Fenton Hill Road:** Take US 550 to San Isidro and then turn on NM 4 and head toward Jemez Springs. Past Jemez Springs

you'll find the junction, known as La Cueva, of NM 4 and NM 126. Look for Forest Road 144 six miles from the junction. It's been a while since I've been out there, so I'm not sure if you'll see a sign, but there is a parking area that should be pretty obvious (at least it was the last time I went there). Fenton Hill Road is 9 miles one way, so an out-and-back tour encompasses class I, II, and III in terms of distance. Skiing along this road, you'll encounter gently rolling terrain and a moderate grade.

These are just two examples of class I tours that can be found in Sam Beard's book, *Ski Touring in Northern New Mexico*. If you haven't already snagged a copy, I strongly urge you to contact Sam and make arrangements to get one.

Watch the forecast, and be ready to go, go, go !!!



## A Word From Our NMCCSC Ski Instructor

*By Jim Whitfield*

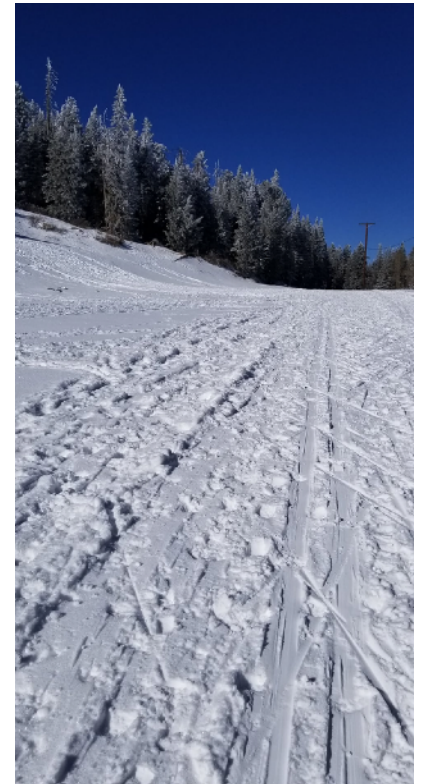
COVID-19 and la Niña has made beginner lessons a bit harder, but we had a couple of small classes, where we got 6 people started in Cross country Skiing. We had our first ever introduction to skiing basics class over Zoom and the session was recorded. The recording was posted to the YouTube (<https://youtu.be/eb01SH8zzvl>). Also, with fear of being completely locked down during the winter, I also made a series of videos covering the basis of our on-snow class. ([https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiPy2BQCShKEoFCbcp960\\_GGbhUFgUGc4](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiPy2BQCShKEoFCbcp960_GGbhUFgUGc4)).

I hope people can learn from these videos. We organized around a proposed date and time over our meetup page (<https://www.meetup.com/New-Mexico-Cross-Country-Ski-Meetup-Group/>). Everyone was listed as a wait-listed person. The plan was to verify club membership and move them to "attend" status. However, after the first lesson, we found the snow not good enough (except for the most enthusiastic student) and canceled the class until later for better snow. This was earlier in January...before our glorious storm.

We met at Ellis Trail head on Thursday and then later Monday and skied on "good enough" snow along the service road next to the parking lot. Everyone arrived in their own car in accordance with the COVID rules and were met by a nearly empty parking lot, something that will be different on a weekend. We all were masked up for the lessons. Since it was a weekday, we had the lesson area almost to ourselves. The weather was cool enough to bundle up at first, but as the lessons moved on, we all were warmed by the bright sun. It was a beautiful day for skiing. The students learned the basics of skiing. As with most of our first-time skiers, they were surprised with the activity of getting down on the snow and then getting back on top of their skis. After that they learned basic skills of how to handle the skis and poles and how to make basic

turns. They built these skills as they advanced to going up and down gentle slopes with several techniques. They kept learning and pushing themselves and falling and getting up only to try again and doing better. By the end, our students were skiing along the flat and up and down gentle hills. Several students went on a tour after the class. This instructor was pleased and delighted how well they navigated some of the trails. What's next? More snow hopefully.

When we have more snow, we will propose a date and time to teach more students. Again, we will use our meetup page to organize our trip and communicate. We again will allow people to sign up as a "wait-listed" person, then verify membership and move them to "Attend". We are shooting for a weekend lesson date, but it will be crowded. So, if any of our students can make mid-week lessons, please send a message to [instruction@nmccskiclub.com](mailto:instruction@nmccskiclub.com) or message through our meetup sight. Otherwise, look for an announcement through our meetup page.



<b>CALENDAR</b>	
February	
Feb 11	Club Meeting via Zoom 7-9pm <b>Ski Technology Apps</b>
Feb 25	Board Meeting via Zoom
March	
Mar 11	Club Meeting via Zoom 7-9pm End of season wrap-up
Mar 25	Board Meeting via Zoom

## **Club Member Adventures!**

*By Amy Mathis*

Are you like me and choose to totally ignore the Pagosa Springs Nordic grooming reports due to envy? Tired of our dry, La Niña winter? Not anymore! We've just entered the Pineapple Express. The Pineapple Express is a term for the meteorological phenomenon characterized by a strong and persistent flow of moisture and associated with precipitation from the waters adjacent to the Hawaiian Islands and extending to any location along the Pacific coast of North America and *sometimes* flows into the Rocky Mountain states. The key word is *sometimes*...

We finally got some real snow in the third week of January!!! Sandia Nordic has been able to groom some beautiful trails with both the roller compactor and the Ginzu for classic tracks. Not into the groomers? The XC trails have near full coverage, the backcountry folk have forged their way through powder, and others have been able to skin and ski down our very own local mountain. Our eGroups and Facebook are crowded with many of our club members activities. The trails in Chama leading to Spruce Hole yurt and Grouse Creek yurt were reported to be phenomenal. All of our local Sandia XC trails are mostly skiable including Survey Trail and Gravel Pit. Folks have also been enjoying Pacheco Canyon, Norski Trail, and Aspen Vista in



**Perfect snow on the Crest**  
Photo by Carl Diegert



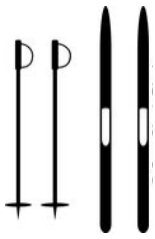
**Dana and Peter on Windsor Trail**  
Photo by Amy Mathis

Sante Fe. We even had a group forge through a foot and a half of powder on Windsor Trail. It is the same story for the Jemez Mountains as people report that East Fork Loop, Coyote Call, Los Griegos, Corral Canyon, and Redondo have all been very enjoyable. For those venturing a bit farther, we had our own Barry and Kathi offering a tele clinic up in Wolf Creek for those able to go to Colorado and a couple members met and skied at Enchanted Forest.

This is New Mexico and that means our window of opportunity is quite narrow. As I write this the conditions from our last storm are fading fast. One day conditions are fantastic and the next....not so great. Keep those snow dances coming so you can get out there and enjoy what nature has to offer!

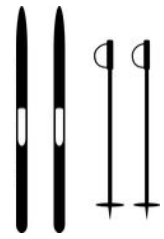


**Kiwanis Meadow**  
Photo by Michael McDonald



## Understanding Cross-Country Ski Bindings

*By Amy Mathis, adapted from Outdoor Gear Exchange*



So you've got a great new pair of cross country skis! Um...now what? Do they have bindings? If not, what type do you get? If they have bindings are they going to be compatible with your boots? The world of skis,

bindings, and boots can be confusing. Without bindings, our skis would be totally useless. Their purpose is to connect you to the technology of the ski enabling you to exert control over the skis. Unlike alpine

downhill-oriented skiing where you need to be "locked in", free-heel mobility is paramount for nordic skiing. To start off, let's look at the three families of nordic boot soles that are currently on the market today.



### **75MM (3-pin) boots**

These have a 75-millimeter "duck bill" at the front of the toe and three holes on the bottom of the bill. The three holes line up with three pins on the appropriate Nordic Norm binding. This is a great choice for off-track/backcountry skiing with metal-edge skis wider than a 90mm tips and 60mm waist.

**NNN Boots**, or New Nordic Norm boots, come in two distinctive varieties. One is the NNN non-BC (backcountry) and the other is the NNN-BC style. The non-BC NNN boot has a single bar at the toe and two channels that line up with the corresponding ridges of the binding. These types of boots are compatible with four varieties of bindings: NIS, Prolink, NNN, and Turnamic. NNN boots and their compatible bindings are meant for classic track skis and very lightweight touring. They are not rugged enough for off-track/backcountry skiing.

NNN-BC bindings have a thicker and wider toe bar are ONLY compatible with their corresponding biding. NNN-BC boots and bindings are an excellent choice for off-track/backcountry touring for metal-edge skis that are a bit beefier and wider than your classic nordic set.

**SNS Boots** are Salomon specific boots. Salomon Nordic System come in two styles: SNS Profil and SNS Pilot. The Profil has a single toe bar while the Pilot has two bars - one at the tow and the other at the ball of the foot. Guess what? The SNS Profil and SNS Pilot are NOT compatible with the same bindings. Each has their own compatible binding. SNS Profil and SNS Pilot are great for classic track skiing and very lightweight touring.

Now take a look at those skis. If they are bare, you can put any type of binding on them that you want. Many times the skis will come with either **NIS plates** or **IFP plates** already attached to the skis.

How do you tell the difference between NIS and IFP plates? NIS plates have notches along the plate and no numbered adjustment mechanism. IFP plates have the numbered adjustment mechanism.

**NIS** (Nordic Integrated System) plates are **only compatible with NIS bindings**, which are NNN bindings that slide onto the plate.

**IFP** (Integrated Fixation) plates are **only compatible with Turnamic NNN bindings**.



*NIS Plate*



*IFP Plate*

Hopefully this helps clear away the fog of modern Nordic boots and bindings. You can check out Outdoor Gear Exchange website for more information on subject.

<https://www.gearx.com/blog/knowledge/skiing/nordic-ski-binding-compatibility-guide/>



## Important Websites

### Snow Report Sites

<a href="http://OnTheSnow.com">OnTheSnow.com</a>	Has the latest snow report for ski resorts in NM and CO.
<a href="http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snow">www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snow</a>	Includes Snow Telemetry and Snow course data for snowpack information. Click on the blue dots at the site for updated info about current snow conditions.
<a href="https://sandiapeak.com/snow-report/">https://sandiapeak.com/snow-report/</a>	Our own Sandia Peak snow information
<a href="https://www.sandianordic.org">https://www.sandianordic.org</a>	Sandia Nordic's latest grooming report news for the Crest.

### Avalanche Outlook

US	<a href="https://avalanche.org/">https://avalanche.org/</a>
Canada	<a href="https://www.avalanche.ca/map">https://www.avalanche.ca/map</a>
Taos	<a href="http://taosavalanchecenter.org">http://taosavalanchecenter.org</a>
Crested Butte	<a href="http://cbavalanchecenter.org/">http://cbavalanchecenter.org/</a>
Northern NM	<a href="http://www.nnmae.org/">http://www.nnmae.org/</a>
Some of the sites from <a href="https://avalanche.org">https://avalanche.org</a>	
Colorado	<a href="http://avalanche.state.co.us/">http://avalanche.state.co.us/</a>
Utah	<a href="https://utahavalanchecenter.org">https://utahavalanchecenter.org</a>
Tetons	<a href="http://jhavalanche.org">http://jhavalanche.org</a>
Yellowstone	<a href="https://www.mtavalanche.com">https://www.mtavalanche.com</a>
Sawtooths	<a href="https://www.sawtoothavalanche.com">https://www.sawtoothavalanche.com</a>
Central Sierra	<a href="https://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org">https://www.sierraavalanchecenter.org</a>
Eastern Sierra	<a href="http://www.esavalanche.org">http://www.esavalanche.org</a>

## Which Ski Tour is Right for You?

### Ratings

Class	Vertical Climb (ft)	Distance (miles)	Notes
One	Less than 1000	Less than 5	Skiers should be able to execute stops and turns. Some Class I outings are appropriate for novice skiers. Persons with no experience <b>MUST</b> take the beginning instruction offered by the club prior to joining a Class I tour.
Two	Less than 2000	Less than 10	Class II tour requires intermediate skills and ability to maintain control on moderate slopes using snowplow and Turing techniques.
Three	Greater than 2000	Greater than 10	Class III requires advanced skills and ability to competently climb and descend steep, narrow trails. Skier should be experienced with using climbing skins and have plenty of endurance.
Four	Unpatrolled, mountainous terrain, with the purpose of downhill skiing. Slopes can be greater than 25 degrees. Knowledge of use of climbing skins, avalanche gear needed.		

*Steepness of slopes, skill level, and stamina can also dictate the ski tour rating. Please see the webpage for more information.*

<http://nmccskiclub.org/ski-outings/>

### Trail slopes are categorized as follows:

1. Gently slopes have less than 5% grades.
2. Moderate slopes have greater than 5% but less than 15% grades.
3. Steep slopes have grades greater than 15%.



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Long Bus Trips	Bob Potter & David D'Antonio	232-2486 553-2795	<a href="mailto:BusTrips@nmccskiclub.org">BusTrips@nmccskiclub.org</a>
Hut Trips	Guy Miller	306-2628	<a href="mailto:HutTrips@nmccskiclub.org">HutTrips@nmccskiclub.org</a>
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Web Page	<a href="http://nmccskiclub.org">http://nmccskiclub.org</a>		
FaceBook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/1663936723893594">https://www.facebook.com/groups/1663936723893594</a>		
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