

PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

Annual ASPA membership dues are due.

If you want to continue your membership, please complete the form included, and send it in with your dues. Thanks!

March Trail Tours every Sunday

Janna Miller
479-5585

March 5th Birch Hill Race

Creamer's Field
Lisa Stuby
458-7657

March 16 Fun Race #2

Location TBD
Check ASPA Website

March 19-20

Lee's Cabin Event
Don Atwood
474-7380

March 20

Orienteering Race
Creamer's Field
Pat DeRuyter
479-7853

Stage #3 of ASPA Race Across the Valley, February 12, 2011 at UAF

The third and final stage of the Race Across the Valley will take place for the third year at the UAF Ski Trails. Previous years have seen over 25 skijorers show up to race so please come join in the fun. Trails will be freshly groomed before and after the race. We will meet and start in the area behind the IARC building just below the UAF Ski Hut. Please be sure to clean up after your dogs so we can continue using this venue in the future. Please see the website for a map of the race course. **NOTE: This will be the ONLY time you will be able to skijor on these trails. Like Birch Hill, UAF Ski Trails are meticulously groomed and maintained for skiers only.** We are very grateful to UAF for allowing us to hold this race.

REGISTRATION: Race day registration begins at 11AM with bib pickup at 11:30AM. The race starts at noon. The race distances are 4 miles for the short class and 8 miles for the long class. Racers can compete in either distance in a one-dog class or a mixed class of two or three dogs. The cost of this race is \$10 for ASPA members and \$15 for non-members. Half of the entry fees will be donated to the UAF trails club. Membership forms will be available at the race for skijorers who are interested in joining the club. If you would like to preregister e-mail Brian Charlton at bcskijor@yahoo.com or call 479-3665. Volunteers are needed for the race day to help with handling, timing, and registration

START ORDER: The start order will be determined by random draw with the longest distance going out first. There will be 1 minute start intervals between racers. If you miss your start within 30 seconds, you may start (your time begins with your official start time). If you are more than 30 seconds late you will be sent to the end of the field. Your time will still begin with your official start time which was your assigned start time.

TEMPERATURE CUT-OFF: The race will be postponed if the temperature at 458-3745 extension 1113 is colder than -15 at 9:30 am. Updates on race status can be obtained from the ASPA website (www.alaskaskijoring.org) or hotline (457- 5456) shortly after 9:30. A course map and description are posted on the ASPA website.

AWARDS: There will be prizes for the fastest times each day in each class, as well as prizes for the fastest overall times in the 3-day Stage Race classes. The stage race prizes will be awarded at the last race. There will also be a random drawing for prizes for all participants and volunteers. Participants who complete all three RAV races in the same distance/dog number class will be eligible for additional prizes at the final race in February.

Unlike RAV Stage #2 that took place at Creamer's Field on February 5th, there will not be an endurance class at UAF. The second and final leg of the Endurance Class will be offered in conjunction with the Distance Race on February 26, 2011. This race will be held in the White Mountains but details are still being worked out. Check www.alaskaskijoring.org. More on this race on the next page

MANY THANKS to the 2011 Race Across the Valley Race Directors: Sara Elzey, Pat DeRuyter, Sara Tabbert, Brian Charlton, Janna Miller, and Carol Kleckner. Organizing these races is very time-consuming. Without dedicated volunteers like these, NONE of these races or events would happen.

First Annual ASPA Distance Race, February 26, 2011

ASPA will hold this year's distance race in the White Mountains! This is a 24 mile round trip excursion with a race one direction and a slower tour on the way back.

We will be racing from the trailhead at mile 28 on the Elliot Highway out to Eleazar's Cabin. This is a distance of approximately 11 miles, with an additional 1 mile uphill climb to the cabin. Human food and drink and water for dogs will be provided for all participants, who can then travel leisurely back to the trailhead. Participants are welcome to stay at the cabin on Saturday night on a first come basis and we will have snowmachine support for limited amounts of personal gear.

More details will be available via the email list and the website as we get closer to the date.

If you are interested in reserving a bunk in the cabin or have any questions please contact Sara Tabbert at stabbert@hotmail.com or 479 0456. Volunteers are needed to help start the race, and a second snowmachine would be very nice for hauling gear for racers.

Come out and enjoy this great trail and cabin system!

A Nice Walk by Lisa Stuby

Per Page #1 of this newsletter, "No skijoring or dogs are allowed on groomed SKI TRAILS at UAF". However, this doesn't mean that dogs and their owners can't enjoy a nice afternoon on some of UAF's trails, more specifically, the Pooch Loops. If you remember back to 2006, the UAF Chancellor approved a three-phase plan that would establish a network of designated walking and snowshoeing trails in the North Campus area. As a result, existing trails were upgraded with miles of new walking trails, many of them parallel to existing UAF ski trails. In addition, another phase of this plan gave improvements to the Pooch Loops, an area designated for winter dog walking. When Killae was a puppy, we took many long walks on the Pooch Loops. Most of these trails are great for walking, but much too narrow for skiing and/or skijoring even with a small, calm, easy to control dog like what I have.

During the cold snaps of January, I decided to revisit these trails with a happy dog who apparently had good memories of his puppyhood and was happy to be back on them. I was pleased to see brush had been cut and signs placed at trail junctions. The Pooch Loops can be a bit of a maze. Much of these loops are in a black spruce forest that aren't popular for moose. However, moose are present and one must always be vigilant. It is also very nice to be in a wooded area and allow my dog the entire 16' of his retractable leash without worrying he might step into a trap since this activity is not allowed on university lands. Potty bags are available at the trail entrances and users are encouraged to clean up after their dogs.

From glancing at the UAF Trails map, the Pooch Loops contain about 5 kilometers of trails, definitely a nice afternoon walking distance. The two entrances with easy access to these trails are near the N. Tanana Loop on West Ridge and at Ballaine Lake. Range Road is also part of the Pooch Loops and is a skijorable 0.9 Km trail to the UAF Rifle Range. However and unfortunately, I walked this on a day that the UAF Biathlon team was training and found out my dog

does not like the sound of gunfire. There will usually be signs posted on Range Road stating that the Rifle Range is in use. I was surprised at how many people and dogs were walking this trail the other day; it has become quite popular.

During the summer, Range Road is still walkable, but the rest of the Pooch Loops get fairly boggy, so these are primarily winter dog walking trails. So, if you and your dog ever crave a little change of scenery, consider a nice walk on the Pooch Loops.

Killae at entrance to Range Road which can be accessed from the multiuse path along Farmer's Loop from the Ballaine Parking Lot. Photo by Lisa Stuby



Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association's

11th Annual

Birch Hill Skijor Race

Saturday, March 5, 2011

Birch Hill Nordic Ski Trails

Your one chance to enjoy the Birch Hill ski trails with your dogs this year!
Remember, dogs are not allowed at Birch Hill outside of this one event.

Currently proposed classes are the same as in 2010:

Classes: Fun Races (interval start)

1-dog 4 km

2-dog 6 km

3-dog 6 km

Long Races: (mass start)

One-dog 9 km

Two-dog 13 km

Relay Event: Three one-dog teams per relay team, 3 km each.
May require more than just skiing!

Check alaskaskijoring.org for changes and updates!

Skijoring Class to Be Included in North Pole Championship Race

The Alaska Dog Musher Association's North Pole Championship Races are scheduled for Feb. 26-27. This year a skijoring class is scheduled to be included as part of these races. For more information, please check out the ADMA website and schedule at: <http://www.sleddog.org/races/2010-2011-race-schedule/>



NSCF Touring Group’s Tour of Birch Hill Classic Trails

Well, it has been a bit of a slow news month with the bitterly cold temperatures and cancelled RAV #2 in late January. Although you can’t skijor on this trail, I wrote this article for the Nordic Skier about a skiing tour I led on one of my favorite trails at Birch Hill. I’ll reprise it here. On January 8, 2011, the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks touring group enjoyed a Sunday afternoon adventure skiing Classic Bear and North Star. These “classic only” trails are truly delightful to ski and explore that despite being part of a large, fairly urban cross-country ski complex, can make a skier feel like they are skiing in a more remote area.

The tour first met at the old Birch Hill warm up hut. In addition to myself, Aporn Stein the touring group coordinator and Jamie Marschner the president of the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association joined me and we skied to the start of Classic Bear, being careful to not interrupt a classic ski race of the Chest Medicine Fairbanks Distance Race series. The trail begins on the inbound of White Bear Trail not far from the 0.7 km cut-off. Compared to the rest of Birch Hill with the numerous wide trails for skating as well as tracks for classic skiing; these classic only trails are much narrower. When I usually ski at Birch Hill I am seeking a workout and usually don’t notice the nature around me. However, with the trees so close to these trails and the twists and turns, you can’t help but notice the natural world around you. From White Bear, Classic Bear descends a few kilometers from a white spruce forest to a boggier area with black spruce. During the summer months this boggy area is a good place to pick lowbush cranberries.

After a short ski up Aurora Run, which is a 0.5 trail that connects the classic trails to White Bear Trail, we entered North Star and began an uphill ascent back into white spruce and then into a very nice paper birch forest. One of many aspects I like about these trails is traveling through different types of forest. After a few kilometers of climbing, North Star has quite a long downhill descent with some sharp corner turns. The nice stately paper birch becomes mixed with white spruce, then black spruce, and then we are back at Aurora Run. The temperature changes to warming on the ascents and cooling on the descents. Near the bottom of North Star is an old barrel stove which makes me wonder about the history of these trails and the area. Near the stove is a small, picturesque lake. After finishing up with North Star, we returned on the inbound portion of Classic Bear, which had a gradual ascent back to the White Bear Trail.

Back at the old warming hut we talked about how pretty these trails were and ate brownies, cookies, and fruit. And indeed with distances of 3.5 km for Classic Bear and 3.1 km for North Star, we did get our exercise. With all of the twists and turns, we also had to work on our classic technique. Plus, we had a nice, leisurely ski on a beautiful day with nice scenery. Of course, my dog waited patiently for me in the car and at the conclusion of the tour, we spent some time at the Dog Park.



Lisa and Jamie skiing the Classic Bear and North Star Ski Trails at Birch Hill Recreation Area. Photo by Aporn Stein.



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Race Coordinator: Looking for new Race Coordinators

Hotline: Carol Kleckner, 479-0430, kleckner@ptilaska.net

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Trail Grooming: Pat DeRuyter, 479-7853, patd@gci.net

Beginner's Clinic Coordinator: Sara Elzey, 378-5024, skjorex2@hotmail.com

Board Members at Large:

Sara Tabbert: 479-0456, stabbert@hotmail.com; Don Morton, donaldjmorton@gmail.com

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Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association

P. O. Box 82843 ♦ Fairbanks, Alaska 99708-2843

Hotline: 907-457-5456 ♦ Website: www.alaskaskijoring.org