

STRATHCONA WILDERNESS CENTRE SKI TRAILS

The Essentials

Name of Area	Strathcona Wilderness Centre
Location	20 km east of Edmonton
Km trails	12 km
Km classic	12 km
Km skate	~8 km
Trail Rating	Easy to intermediate
Signage	Excellent
Grooming	Very good to excellent
Facilities	Heated lodge, ski rentals & lessons
Trail Fees	Yes
Access Points	Main lodge
Other facts	Opening times: Nov – Jan 9 AM – 4.30 PM & Feb – Mar 9 AM – 6 PM
Loppet	Beat the Boogie Loppet in March
Description of trails	<p>During winter the Wilderness Centre becomes a proper Nordic centre with a heated lodge and lounge area where hot drinks & snacks can be purchased and consumed. You can also rent both classic & skate skis & take ski lessons. The trails are well signed with location maps at all junctions. An excellent free trail map is available from the lodge.</p> <p>The trails radiate out from the lodge in a series of short loops through a pretty & hilly forested area. The wider trails are double tracked with a skating lane in the middle. Some recent trail improvements have widened some of the narrower trails and reduced some of the side camber.</p> <p>The terrain is generally very undulating and most trails are rated easy to intermediate with the odd difficult section & steep hill. All trails are bi-directional. A ski around the perimeter loop is 7 km.</p>
Trail map	Free from lodge
Website	www.strathcona.ab.ca/wildernesscentre
Trail conditions & more information	Centre website or from Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website
Directions	<p>From Edmonton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed east on Wye Rd (Hwy 630) past Sherwood Park • Turn left (north) on RR 213 • Right at cross-roads onto TWP Rd 530 (Baseline Rd) • Turn first right onto RR 212 into the centre • Park in the car park by the lodge <p>From Hwy 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed east past Sherwood Park • Turn right (south) into RR 212 to the centre <p>From Sherwood Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed east on Baseline Rd which becomes Twp Rd 530 • Turn right (south) into RR 212 to the centre <p>Travelling time from the centre of Edmonton is 35 minutes & from Sherwood Park is 20 minutes.</p>

Mike's Two Skis Worth

This is my number one out-of-town place to go in really cold weather. There is nowhere on the trail system where you are more than a few kilometres or about half an hour from the comfort of the heated lodge and a hot drink. So I find it is an excellent place to go on those really cold days and ski for a short while and then to come in to warm-up before going out again. It is also an excellent place for families to ski. The only slight downside is that the centre closes at dusk, so there is normally no night skiing. A small trail fee is charged payable at the lodge.

Recently the standard of grooming has improved, so it is a good place to check out if some of the city trails are icy.

Some of my favourite trails are to head out on the west side of the lodge along the Moose Loop. The varied terrain makes for good classic and skate skiing in either direction. Another one of my favourite routes is to take Coyote Run in a clockwise direction and return to the lodge on the Owl Loop. Coyote Run has a few steep hills and sharp corners which are excellent for practising your step turns.

If you want a longer ski, take the trails that form the perimeter loop. This gives a distance of 7 km. This distance can usually be covered by the average recreational skier in about an hour. A pleasant shorter 4 km ski that is suitable for the more novice classic skier is take the Owl and Wagon Loops on the east side of the lodge.

In mid-march the centre hosts The Great Pastry Caper which is a fun event where participants ski around the trails from one cookie station to the next. At the end of the season (snow permitting) the centre is the venue for the Beat the Boogie/Fast Trax Loppet, a freestyle event.

Compiled by Mike Stern 20/11/09