

CHIKAKOO LAKE CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA

The Essentials

Name of Area	Chikakoo Lake Recreation Area
Location	45 km NW of Edmonton or 15 km NW of Stony Plain
Km trails	14 km
Km classic	14km
Km skate	~10 km
Trail Rating	Easy to difficult
Signage	Poor
Grooming	Fair
Facilities	Outside washrooms & unheated shelter at trail head
Trail Fees	By donation
Access Points	Two parking areas at south end of Chikakoo Lake
Other facts	Trails looked after by Parkland County
Loppet	None
Description of trails	<p>These trails are located in a beautiful wooded hilly area around several small lakes. Farms & cottages are tucked away nearby. The terrain is quite rugged. The easy loops follow the lake shoreline and are suitable for novice skiers. The intermediate & advanced loops have some quite challenging up & downhill sections that wind down on narrow trails through the trees. They should be avoided by less experienced skiers particularly when fast or icy.</p> <p>All trails are set with a classic track but be warned that the trails are often messed up by dog owners & even horse owners who think it is quite fine to use the ski trails in winter.</p> <p>Signage at junctions used to be good but the maps at the points where they exist are now so faded as to be almost eligible.</p>
Trail map	Download from website
Website	www.parklandcounty.com
Trail conditions & more information	Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed west from Edmonton on Hwy 16 for 30 km to the town of Stony Plain. • Take the campsite road exit onto Hwy 779 on the west side of Stony Plain • Head north for 3 km & turn left onto Twp Rd 534 (signed) • After 4 km turn right onto Range Rd 13 at sign • Turn right at "T" junction & then left at next junction • Continue a short distance to the end to a parking area by the main trail head • Travelling time about 45 minutes from centre of city.

Mike's Two Skis Worth

If you want thrills & spills and some more exciting classic skiing this is where to go. I also think it is one of the prettiest of our outlying ski areas and it is well worth taking a camera along. I usually wait until just after a good dump of fresh snow. The advanced loop & even sections of some of the intermediate loops can be tricky when the conditions are fast and icy. I've often left my imprint on quite a few steep corners that I didn't quite make under these conditions.

My favourite trail is the advanced loop which is called Woodland Lookout or trail #3. This trail can be skied in either direction. It is reached from the main trailhead by skiing along some of the easier loops along the lakeshores. At one junction leading onto this trail, there is an old sign warning novice skiers of the dire consequences of proceeding further. Either direction has its challenging bits. If you go round in an anti-clockwise direction the finale is an exhilarating long winding descent that even has hay bails strategically placed at one of the more dangerous corners, in case you don't quite make it.

On another section of this trail there is a steep dip called The Wall. If you approach from the higher side, you should have enough momentum to reach the top of the other side. The trick is to shift your weight at just the right moment when you are in the bottom of the dip otherwise; you face plant into the up slope. In my early skiing days, my success rate was less than 30%.

Another of my favourite routes is to go out via trail #2 or Nature's Way and then ski anti-clockwise on the intermediate Cranberry Corner (#4) & Woodland Lookout trails.

In years past, the grooming was sometimes a bit uneven and this maybe due to the experience of the groomers and type of equipment that was available. It is also unfortunate that some locals feel that they have to exercise their dogs & even their horses on these trails. I don't think they realise how much they can mess up groomed ski trails.

Compiled by Mike Stern 14/10/07
Revised 22/12/07