

HORNBECK CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA, EDSON

The Essentials

Name of Area	Hornbeck Ski Area, Edson
Location	215 km west of Edmonton or 15 km NW of Edson
Km trails	25 km
Km classic	25 km
Km skate	25 km
Trail Rating	Easy to intermediate
Signage	Fair to Good
Grooming	Good
Facilities	Basic shelter at trail head with outside washrooms
Trail Fees	None
Access Points	From shelter.
Other facts	Trails looked after by Muskeg Fliers Club
Loppet	Mooseheart freestyle loppet: 5,10 &15 km in late February or early March
Description of trails	<p>All trails are set with a classic track & a skating lane. They undulate through aspen & birch forest. The scenery is quite similar to parts of Blackfoot without the lakes. All loops are signed for distances e.g. 2.5, 5 km etc. at each junction but there are no maps at these junctions. The signs generally direct skiers in a clockwise direction from the trailhead.</p> <p>There are some short easy loops close to the shelter that are ideal for beginners. The 15 km loop, is the main perimeter trail and the middle part offers the most challenging skiing with some short & steep ups & downs with a few tight corners. The 5, 7.5, 10 km loops offer mainly easy skiing with some steeper downhill sections. These loops take short cuts off the main perimeter trail via firebreaks.</p>
Trail map	Folded map usually available at site
Website	
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 200km to Edson. • Continue on Hwy 16 through Edson and 8 km west of Edson turn right onto a gravel road called Shlick Rd (Range Road or RR181A) by the brown ski area sign • Immediately turn left & after 0.5 km the road bends north & becomes RR 183 • After 5 km turn left at the T junction (signed) onto Township or TWP road 540 • After 1 km turn right (north) at T junction onto RR 184. • After 1 km turn left into the ski area. • Park by the ski shelter • Travelling time about 2hr 15m from centre of city.

Mike's Two Skis Worth

It's a bit of a long haul out for a day trip particularly in the early part of the season when the days are short, but it's not so bad later on in the season. It can also make a nice diversion on the way either out or on the way back from Hinton & Jasper.

To be honest I've sometimes found the grooming at least for skate skiing, a bit rough on occasions, but to be fair this was probably partly due to the lean snow years we have had. There are a few places where the trails are a bit narrow or have a marked camber that makes skate skiing a bit tricky.

For a pleasant ski, I find the 10 km loop pretty good especially for skate skiing. It starts with a not too steep climb followed by a long gentle downhill section. It then undulates for several more kilometres before the split with the 15 km loop. The 10 km then follows a firebreak for a long straight 1 km descent. From the point where it rejoins the main perimeter trail it is basically flat all the way back to the trailhead. This last section I find more suitable for skate skiing.

For a more challenging ski, continue onto the 15 km loop from the junction with the 10 km. These 5 km will stretch your skills a bit. They should be avoided by novice skiers.

The Mooseheart Loppet is one of my favourite events on the loppet circuit because it is much more casual and low key than some of the others. Medals are rarely given out as prizes but all competitors receive some of the famed home made sausage made by one of the local members. After several years when they could not hold the loppet for various reasons, they have held them again since 2007 and although it is a freestyle loppet, there are separate categories for classic & skate skiers. I really recommend this loppet to skiers who want to start some recreational racing and are intimidated by some of the larger events. The 10 km distance is a great one to do if you want to enter your first skate skiing event.

Compiled by Mike Stern 11/11/08