

## DRAYTON VALLEY CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA

### The Essentials

Name of Area	Pembina Nordic Trails, Drayton Valley
Location	150 km south west of Edmonton
Km trails	+15 km
Km classic	+15 km
Km skate	+15 km
Trail Rating	Easy to intermediate
Signage	Very good - maps at all major trail junctions
Grooming	Very good to excellent. Usually done over weekends.
Facilities	New lodge (Oct 2019) with wood stove and washrooms. There is also the old cozy ski chalet a with wood fire
Trail Fees	None. But a small donation can be made via Zone4
Access Points	From ski chalet. If gate to access road is locked you can park on secondary road in two spots, where trails come next to road.
Other facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails managed by Pembina Nordic Club</li> <li>• Ski lodge and chalet are open over weekends when trails are used by local skiers. When someone has lit the wood stove, it is a good spot to take a lunch break</li> </ul>
Loppet	Eagle Point freestyle in mid January
Description of trails	<p>All trails are set with a classic track &amp; a skating lane. They undulate through aspen &amp; birch forest along the side of the N Saskatchewan River. To the west, there is an easy 4km trail called the Ridge Loop, which is ideal for beginners. Off this loop is the 2km advanced Bridge Loop that descends a steep windy hill. This trail can easily be bypassed &amp; should be avoided by beginners or when icy.</p> <p>The trails to the north &amp; east traverse more undulating terrain &amp; are great for some intermediate classic or skate skiing. There is a perimeter trail with a series of shortcuts and side loops. There are a few steeper sections but the trails are wide enough for all but the very novice skier to negotiate.</p>
Trail map	Available at lodge
Website	<a href="http://www.dvhta.ca/attractions/pembina-nordic-ski-club/">www.dvhta.ca/attractions/pembina-nordic-ski-club/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/PembinaNordicSkiClub/">www.facebook.com/PembinaNordicSkiClub/</a>
Trail conditions & more information	Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website. Also Pembina Nordic Facebook page
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proceed west from Edmonton on Hwy 16 for about 100km.</li> <li>• Turn south onto Hwy 22 near Enthwhistle</li> <li>• After about 40km turn left (east) onto Twp Rd 494 just north of Drayton Valley, (at the south end of the DV golf course).</li> <li>• Continue east on Twp Rd 494 for 5km. Note after 3km it becomes a gravel road.</li> <li>• Turn right opposite the County gravel pit &amp; drive into the chalet parking lot.</li> <li>• If you miss the 494 turn off &amp; end up in DV, just turn around at Boston Pizza, head north on 22, &amp; you will find RR 494 about 1 mile north of BP's (it's the first right after BP's).</li> <li>• Travelling time is about 1hr 30m from centre of city.</li> <li>• Note: Those people living in the far south of Edmonton may prefer to get there by going south on Hwy 2 to Leduc then heading west to Drayton Valley &amp; turn north onto Hwy 22 to reach Twp Rd 494.</li> </ul>

## Mike's Two Skis Worth

This is another one of those hidden gems of ski areas that I discovered quite a few years ago after seeing a notice in one of Edmonton's ski shops. The trails are rarely busy. They are looked after by a small and very friendly bunch of dedicated local skiers. Grooming is to a high standard and done regularly throughout the season as conditions dictate. The trails are usually well prepared for the weekends. Being located further west than Edmonton this area generally receives more snow which often results in good early and late season ski conditions.

The new lodge that opened in the fall of 2019 is a great asset. It has a wood stove and proper washrooms and with the fire going it is a great place to take a break or have lunch. There is also the old cozy old wooden ski chalet that can be rented. It is also fitted with a wood stove.

If I want a nice easy warm up ski, I take the Ridge Loop on the west side of the chalet. I normally bypass the steep Bridge Loop if the conditions are slick or icy. The trail back above the river has some lovely views across the valley. For a more energetic ski I go out on the Evergreen & North Loop trails, either direction is good. If you ski all the perimeter trails it is about 13km. For novice skiers there are also a couple of short easy loops close to the chalet.

Further along the same side of the Valley is a small downhill ski area and I understand that there have been long term plans to link

- the areas up with a cross-country trail
- up with some ski trails nearer the town.

I have found it useful before going to check the Pembina Nordic Facebook page for an update on current conditions & grooming.

If you want to contribute to the trail grooming and upkeep consider like me joining the Pembina Nordic Ski Club. You can register on-line via Zone4 and if you are a member of an existing affiliated Nordic ski club like Edmonton Nordic you get a discount on the membership rate. You also receive the code for the entry gate to the trail system so that you can drive right up to the lodge and chalet.