

HORNBECK CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA, EDSON

The Essentials

Name of Area	Hornbeck Ski Area, Edson
Location	215 km west of Edmonton or 18 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 Ski 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 have mainly easy skiing with some steeper downhill sections. The 5 and 10 km loops take short cuts off the main perimeter trail via firebreaks.</p>
Trail map	Folded map usually available at site
Website	none
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/groups/266312090182790/
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 5 km west of centre of Edson turn right onto Rodeo Rd (RR 180) by the red Brian Janesk sign • Proceed N for 6.5km then turn left at crossroads onto TWP Rd 540 • After 5 km the paving ends & continue for another 1.5 km & then turn right at T junction onto RR 184. • Proceed 0.6 km & turn left into ski area & park by the ski shelter • Travelling time is 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 either on the way 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 either the 7.5 or 10 km loops pretty good. Both loops start with a not too steep climb followed by a long gentle downhill section. The trail then undulates for several kilometres before the splits with the 7.5 and 15 km loops. 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 makes for a nice skate ski.

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 and should probably be avoided by novice skiers.

The Mooseheart Loppet is one of my favourite events on the loppet circuit because it is 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. Even though 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 skiing event.