

TAWATINAW VALLEY CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA

The Essentials

Name of Area	Tawatinaw Valley
Location	90 km north of Edmonton
Km trails	14 km
Km classic	14 km
Km skate	14 km
Trail Rating	Easy to advanced
Signage	Good new maps and trails signs at all major junctions
Grooming	Good to very good
Facilities	Modern heated ski chalet at base of ski hill with washrooms, change area & cafeteria serving hot snacks
Trail Fees	\$6/day. Season pass available with very good rates for seniors.
Access Points	<p>Ski lodge & upper parking area.</p> <p>The trails are to the side and behind the downhill ski area. Main access is from the north side of the ski lodge although this entails a 1.6 km climb up to reach the rest of the trail system. You can avoid this by driving round to the upper parking lot. (From ski lodge return to main road turn left, proceed past a farm & take first left & follow dirt road RR240A uphill for ~2 km to the upper parking area on left. Note: This road is not always ploughed so 4-wheel drive or winter tires are recommended).</p>
Other facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downhill ski area & lodge open Fridays, weekends & holidays • Also sometimes open on other days when there is a school party booking • When closed you can access trails from upper parking lot – but no bathroom facilities here.
Loppet	Classic 7.5 ,15 & 25 km in late January or early February usually before the Birkie
Description of trails	All trails are set with a classic track & a skating lane. They undulate through aspen & birch forest. One trail goes past some abandoned farm buildings. A long 3.5km flat loop called Vowel Howel to the north borders fields & is great for skating. The inner area bounded by the Hwy 101 trail has a maze of nicely undulating trails that are good for both classic & skating. The Yodeller trail goes up from the lodge and is also now the ski out. Unfortunately, in recent years they have lost a few trails including the exciting Home Run trail back to the lodge that has had to be abandoned due to ice flows. Also the Geiger counter trail through a farm is no longer available for skiers. To compensate a few more loop trails have been added to the north of the system.
Trail map	Available at chalet or download from website
Website	tawatinawvalley.ca
Facebook	Friends of Tawatinaw Ski Hill: Tawatinaw Valley
Trail conditions & more information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 780-698-2212 • Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed north from Edmonton through St Albert on Hwy 2. • Continue on Hwy 2 for about 60 km through Clyde Corner where the highway doglegs right & left. • 21 km north of Clyde Corner turn right (east) at the Tawatinaw Valley sign. • After 3km you descend into a valley & can see the ski hill on the left. Park in the parking area by the ski lodge. • Travelling time about 1hr 10m from the centre of Edmonton

Mike's Two Skis Worth

The ski hill nearly closed but in 2017 the local community rallied together to save it under the banner of "Friends of Tawatinaw Ski Hill" and have been successfully running it ever since.

Some of you that know me well, may know that this has been one of my favourite ski areas. Why may you ask? Well it's relatively close to Edmonton, it has a modern heated lodge that serve hot snacks, a warm changing area and the trails are great for both classic & skate skiing and what's more they are never crowded, plus the scenery is lovely. In a typical (if there is such a thing now) ski season it frequently retains the snow long after Edmonton. Often you can still have great skate skiing here until early April.

The trail system is like a maze on top and is rather confusing. There are now in Dec 2019 new maps and trail signs at most major junctions with "you are here indicators." Copies of these maps can be obtained from the ski lodge or downloaded from the website.

Unfortunately, some of my favourite trails in the south part of the system are now no longer available for skiers. The Little Secret trail which after a windy descent to some abandoned farm buildings climbs up steadily through a small hidden gully is one of my current favourites. If I want a long easy ski, I take either the recently extended Vowel Howel loop or go out & back on the Nice 'N Easy trail. There is a steel warming hut with a picnic table and also an outhouse on the Vowel Howel trail.

One of the new trails called Deer Meadow, loops down in a very steep descent to the north of Little Secret before climbing just as steeply back up the side of the valley. Although very beautiful it should only be attempted by experienced skiers and in good ski conditions.

I have found it useful before going out to Tawatinaw, to contact some of the local cross-country skiers to find out about the current conditions as the website and information desk does not always have the latest information.

The 25 km loppet here is a good primer for the 55 km Birkebeiner ski race, occurring as it usually does a week or so before the Birkie. The 25 km course is two laps around the trail system.

If you decide to go to Tawatinaw mid week when the downhill area is closed, you can either park near the lodge or in the upper parking area.

Compiled by Mike Stern 04/08/07
5th Revision 28/03/20