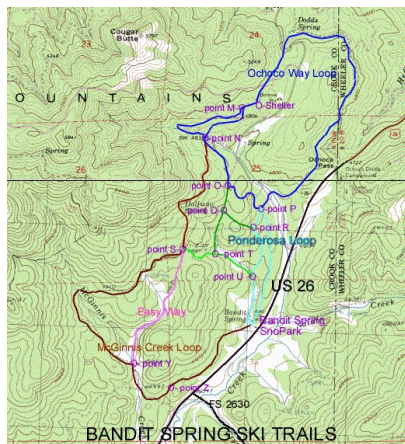


## Bandit Springs Ski Trails – Ochoco Mtns, Central Oregon

The Bandit Springs Ski Trails originate from the Bandit Springs Rest Area on Highway 26 about 30 miles east of Prineville. Winter Sno-Park Permits are required.



These trails are located on the Lookout Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest and are maintained by the Ochoco Chapter of the Oregon Nordic Club. The trails are designed for beginners to advanced skiers. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Big Summit Ranger District at (541) 416-6645.

On the Bandit trail system map (right), trail junctions are labeled with a letter starting with "M" on the north through "Z" on the south. Nearly all trail junctions should be marked with a map board showing the letter designation for that junction.

The **Bandit Springs Cross Country Ski Trail** is probably the premier ski trail in Ochoco National Forest. The trail was cooperatively developed by the Prineville Nordic Ski Club and the Ochoco National Forest. The trail begins at the Bandit Springs State Rest Area 29 miles east of Prineville, Oregon. Parking at the trailhead is limited so carpooling is advisable. The trail begins at the north end of the rest area and proceeds through an old-growth ponderosa forest. Follow the blue diamond trail markers and directional arrows attached to trees.

Other roads open to cross-country skiing connect to the Bandit Springs Area. Here are some other worthy trails, some that connect, some that don't. Maps at the rest area will help you figure out what's where. [Forest Service website link](#) for current conditions. Enjoy!

**Loop A** - 1.4 miles (2.2 km), Beginner (least difficult)

**Loop B** - 4.2 miles (6.8 km), Intermediate to advanced (more difficult)

**PONDEROSA LOOP** - 1.7 miles EASY The loop starts and ends at the rest area so go in either direction. It goes through an incredible forest of open, graceful old ponderosa pine and is mostly flat with a few short easy hills. Excellent skiing on ungroomed trails in powder quality snow in winter; flower-filled meadows in spring and summer await the adventurous. This particular trail in the Bandit Springs area primarily follows an old logging road.

**#810 Woodpecker & #810A Tie Trail** - More difficult

This trail takes off from the #801 Ponderosa Trail after one mile. It follows a ridge, traveling through old ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest. There are many opportunities for practicing telemark turns, as well as enjoying some excellent views of Mill Creek wilderness. This trail connects with McGinnis Creek trail after 1.2 miles for an easy return to the Sno-Park. Tie Trail connects to Easy Trail for a steep 0.4-mile run

**SHELTER** - The shelter is about 1.8 miles from the rest area and can best be reached by following the Ponderosa Loop north to the Easy Trail, at junction "U", then west to next junction "T" then north by "Q", "O", "N". and "M". Many junctions have signs as well as map boards. This route is suitable for intermediate skiers. The shelter has three sides with one side open and is usually stocked with wood for the wood stove.

**#802 MCGINNIS CREEK LOOP** - 4.2 miles MORE DIFFICULT - Although rated more difficult, an intermediate skier should have no trouble here. The trail travels along abandoned roads, through beautiful forests of large old ponderosa pine. The trail leaves the Ponderosa Loop at junction 'V'

about 0.1 miles north of the Rest Area and goes south to McGinnis Creek. The more challenging part is from junction "S" to "N". This can be bypassed by taking the Easy Trail east from junction 'S'. Winter snows provide excellent skiing on ungroomed trails from about mid December to late February.

**#811 Easy** - 1.3 miles, Easy

This trail forks off McGinnis Creek Trail after 2.1 miles, follows level road and connects back into McGinnis Creek Trail for an easy return to the sno-park.

**#806 OCHOCO WAY** - 3.5 miles MOST DIFFICULT - This trail forks off the #801 Ponderosa Loop trail, crosses Forest Road #27, and heads northeast over a foot bridge. Terrain is variable with several steep hills. The first one-fourth mile is a steep climb. There is a second crossing on Forest Road #27, and an easy one-fourth-mile ski to the show shelter. Traveling in this direction the trail goes by the shelter before connecting with the rest of the trail system. This route is not recommended for beginning skiers. Forest Road #27 (a snowmobile route) is an easy alternative route from the first crossing (watch for the 2<sup>nd</sup> crossing), and an easy side trail off Road #27 puts you at point N for a short, but locally steep ski to the Shelter.

**#802A Ridge Trail** - 0.5 mi. (0.8 km.), Most difficult

This trail follows McGinnis Creek Trail for 1.4 miles then heads west. Look for blue diamonds on a hairpin curve. Ridge Trail accesses the snow shelter and connects to Ochoco Way Trail. There are two short sections of moderately steep climbing and slopes for telemark skiing.

**OTHER:** The View Point, at 6181 feet, off the 27 road is another ski destination for experienced skiers. It is about 6 miles each way and requires backcountry skiing experience. Local maps are available from the Forest Service or local sporting goods stores.

**NOTE:** The Rest Area is at 4500 feet with a south exposure and will sometimes not have snow during the winter even when there is snow on many of the trails. When this happens, drive northeast on Highway 26 toward the summit, about 1/2 mile to the 27 road. There is often snow here, or you can drive up this road until you reach snow (if you are equipped for winter driving) . The 27 road goes up to over 6,000 feet elevation.

The Ochoco Nordic Club offers frequent tours for this and other Nordic ski areas in the Ochoco Mountains. To join one of these tours or for current ski trail information contact the club at: (541) 447-5505, or e-mail at [SkiandSew@coinet.com](mailto:SkiandSew@coinet.com).

**ALWAYS CARRY WINTER SURVIVAL GEAR AND BE SURE SOMEONE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE GOING AND WHEN YOU PLAN TO RETURN.**

