



SNOWSHOE MAGAZINE FEATURED ARTICLE:

## Snowshoeing Bethel, Maine



Written by [Sherry Hanson](#)

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2

Sunday River Resort is not the only action in this part of Maine, but it is a hub of activities available to those who snowshoe, cross-country ski or ski downhill. Actually, snowshoers have a choice of three distinct areas to try out, two in Bethel, one in Newry, and all within an eight-mile area. Special events include fireworks, guided moonlight hikes and marshmallow roasts, even racing.



THE OUTDOOR CENTER, formerly associated with Sunday River Resort, is under new ownership, with Steve Wight at the helm, and offers three miles of trails exclusively for snowshoers, with opportunities at all levels of ability. Novices can try out their equipment on the Barred Owl walk along Barker Brook through pine and hardwood forests, or three other novice and beginner-level paths. Summit Circle follows mostly moderate terrain and leads to Grand Summit Hotel and Moonstruck Café, with a part of the trail following the edge of the downhill ski trails.

Intermediates might like Valley View, Flying Squirrel or the lower section of Raven Ridge, the latter shares the snowmobile trail, Upper Raven Ridge for advanced snowshoers climbs sharply along a narrow trail along a cliff with spectacular views.

Special events at the Outdoor Center include Friday night guided hikes with a marshmallow roast over a bonfire, and Thursday and Saturday guided hikes to prime hillside to watch the fireworks at Sunday River Resort. This facility even has a groomed dog trail!

Snowshoe rentals for all ages are \$14 and trail fees for snowshoers are very reasonable at \$8/day.

BETHEL NORDIC SKI CENTER is associated with the Bethel Inn and Country Club, and is located only eight miles from the above facility, so easy to take in activities at both. Located in the village center this classic New England cross-country ski area comprises 30 km of forests and fields, old stonewalls and mill dams with the Mahoosuc Mountains as a backdrop.

While snowshoers are welcome on all trails, eight kilometers are devoted exclusively to snowshoeing and lie just outside the back door of the Inn, perfect for a half-day outing. Rentals are available in all sizes



including kids. As you trek through forest and field and you may see the tracks of snowshoe hare, maybe hear a pileated woodpecker rap-rapping into a tree in search of bugs.

Beginners can take the Big Easy loop, about three miles of rolling terrain, or Hedgehog, another easy loop trail. Intermediate skiers and snowshoers can step up to the



Paradise Trail, while the more advanced terrain of Corkscrew is accessible off Big Easy and Hedgehog. Corkscrew is an exhilarating groomed area made up of what was once a series of separate trails. This five-mile groomed and tracked loop is a series of flat, rolling and challenging terrain, for a “hair-raising rollercoaster ride over bridges, swooping through dips and climbing a few hills,” for a two-hour workout on the area’s most difficult rated loop.

The Center holds its annual 5K Maine Snowshoe Series, second in a series of three races, on Sunday, February 12 at 1 p.m. Call Western Hills Land Trust at [\(207\)739-2124](tel:2077392124) to reserve running snowshoes for a \$10 fee. Entry is \$15. Pre-register at [www.runreg.com](http://www.runreg.com), or pay \$20 on race day. For more info on this event call [\(207\)824-6276](tel:2078246276) or [skishop@cariboucreation.com](mailto:skishop@cariboucreation.com).

Snowshoe rentals run \$14/day. Trail fees are \$8/day.



CARTER’S X-C SKI CENTER is a family-owned business in Bethel, founded in the 1790’s by Dr. Timothy Carter, the first physician in Western Maine. The 1000-acre property along the Androscoggin River features over 35 km of trails. All groomed terrain is shared by both skiers and snowshoers, but there are also 20 km designated for back country snowshoeing and skiing by the more advanced and adventurous.

“We have excellent snow here, says owner Dave Carter. ““If you’re an alpine skier, you’ll like our hills. We have elevation, but if you’re not, we have flat too.” The owners have focused on keeping their business green, with a lodge built of wood cut on their land and rental cabins “off-grid,” but comfy and warm heated by wood cut on the property.

Views from the trails on this property are among the best, of the Presidential Range, Sunday River and the

Carter-Moriahs and the owners have recently expanded their lodge. “For me I think the fact that we are a family-operated business is the one point that keeps people coming back, adds Dave. Carters also operates a similar business in Oxford, Maine.

For the die-hards, January 26 is a full moon and the Bethel location is the site of a full moon ski and snowshoe event, with another to follow on February 23. There will be a back country clinic on February 10, to include instruction as well as a guided tour of the back country trails. And for Oxford County residents there will be a free trail pass on January 20. Can’t beat that!

Trail fees at both Bethel and Oxford are \$14/day, \$10 seniors and students. Snowshoe rentals are \$12.

For information on all Nordic skiing and snowshoeing opportunities in the Bethel area go to <http://www.bethelmaine.com/index.php?page+nordic-skiing-snowshoeing>.

AREA LODGING prices run the gamut. Check out these facilities for amenities, pricing and available dates.

- Grand Summit Resort Sunday River - [www.sundayriver.com](http://www.sundayriver.com), prices starting at \$87.39, located on the Sunday River Access Road, 97 Summit Road, Newry. [\(800\)543-2754](tel:8005432754)
- The Bethel Inn Resort – [www.bethelinn.com](http://www.bethelinn.com), prices starting at \$110, at 21 Broad Street, Bethel. [\(207\)824-2175](tel:2078242175) or [\(800\)654-0125](tel:8006540125)
- The Victoria Inn and Restaurant B&B – [www.thevictoria-inn.com](http://www.thevictoria-inn.com), with prices from \$99, located at 32 Maine Street, Bethel. [\(888\)774-1235](tel:8887741235)
- Carter’s Cross-Country Ski Center – [www.cartersxcski.com](http://www.cartersxcski.com), with prices from \$99 for both lodge and rustic cabin accommodations, at 786 Intervale Road, Bethel
- Austin’s Holiday House B&B – [www.holidayhouse.com](http://www.holidayhouse.com), priced \$115 and \$125, 85 Main Street, Bethel. [\(877\)224-3400](tel:8772243400)



- Rivendell House B&B – [www.rivendellhouse.com](http://www.rivendellhouse.com), priced \$110, 16 Park Street, Bethel. (207)824-0508
- Mill Hill Inn B&B – [www.millhillinn.com](http://www.millhillinn.com), priced \$79 to \$159, located 24 Mill Hill Road, Bethel. (207)824-3241 or (207)595-3405 (cell)
- Bethel Hill B&B – [www.bethelhill.com](http://www.bethelhill.com), priced \$139 to \$179, located 66 Broad Street, Bethel. (207)824-2461 or (207)233-9192 (cell)

#### SOURCES

- Robin Zinchuk, Executive Director, Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce. (207)824-2282 or (800)442-5826.
- Carter's XC Ski Center, Dave and Anne Carter. [cartersxcski@gmail.com](mailto:cartersxcski@gmail.com) (207)824-3880 in Bethel, or their shop in Oxford at (207)539-4848.
- Bethel Nordic Ski Center associated with Bethel Inn, Mike Cooper [skishop@caribourecreation.com](mailto:skishop@caribourecreation.com) (207)824-6276.
- Steve Wright, new owner, the Outdoor Center, Newry. [swight@wightent.com](mailto:swight@wightent.com) (207)824-0488.
- Dwayne Bond, new owner, Sunday River Inn. (207)824-0166.

NOTE: Mike Cooper is running both the Outdoor Center and the Bethel Nordic Ski Center this season.



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#### About Sherry Hanson

I live in Maine and enjoy the outdoors, running, biking and kayaking. I have published over 450 articles, taking on anything that interests me these days. Visit my website for more information and a selection of published articles, a few photos, a mention of my poetry.

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