



Cross-country: The snow-covered fields and trails around Traverse City are popular with cross-country skiers and snowshoe enthusiasts.

Michigan ready for wintertime fun

By HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

Michigan is the water-winter-wonderland. Michiganders don't get frozen in place when the weather outside turns frightful. They find a growing number of activities based on ice and snow to keep them amused and physically fit.

Up North, the Traverse City area and the Boyne resorts are open for ski enthusiasts - downhill and cross-country, snowmobilers, ice fishermen, snowshoe hikers, snow boarders and dog sled mushers.

And, oh yes, warm fire lovers. Wendy Dwooskin of Farmington Hills admits she doesn't ski, preferring needlepoint and knitting to moguls, but she loves going to Shanty Creek in Belleville.

"It's the happiest place to be. I've been going since I was 18 years old," she said. "The first time I was there I said to my girlfriend, someday I'll come back and I'll bring my husband."

Wendy and her husband, Mark, a Farmington Hills dentist, make it up to Shanty Creek, winter and summer, seven times a year.

"But I won't buy a condo," she said, "because I have to be in the lodge, that's home. We have a suite named after us."

Though Wendy doesn't ski, her husband and her three adult children, Jeffrey, Jonathan and Jacki, enjoy skiing there, even though they've been to the more demanding slopes out West.

This year the Dwooskins will be celebrating Hanukkah there.

"It's the warmest place to be. Everybody knows you," she said.

Here's what's happening in winter country:

Shanty Creek/ Schuss Mountain

The resort is building a new golf course, designed by Tom Weiskopf, and someone got the idea that with all that earth being moved, maybe it would be a good idea to place it on top of Schuss Mountain and increase the vertical for skiers.

So, 300,000 cubic yards of dirt have been moved to the peak to create an additional 40 feet of fun, or about six more turns down the mountain for weekend fans. Also new this winter: four quad chairlifts, 12 additional ski runs, night skiing at Schuss Mountain and quadrupled snow-making capacity.

Shanty Creek has 41 runs total, with the longest run at 5,280 feet. It welcomes snowboarders and also features 30 kilometers of cross-country trails.

Lift tickets for adults range from \$26 for a one-day midweek to \$89 for a three-day weekend pass. Night skiing is available at Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for \$10 after 5 p.m. and \$8 Sundays-Thursdays.

The resort offers a variety of getaway packages from a one-day midweek getaway for \$69 to a four-day holiday package for \$474. For reservations and information, call 1-800-678-4111.

Crystal Mountain Resort

This 1,600-acre, year-round resort is 28 miles southwest of Traverse City in Thompsonville. It features 25 downhill slopes and 35 kilometers of cross-country trails.

This year it will host the third annual National Women's Ski & Snowboard Festival, Feb. 2-8. Designed for both novice and veteran women skiers and snowboarders, the festival includes instructional clinics, equipment demonstrations and other informational activities.

Crystal Mountain features the

new Inn at the Mountain, which opened in October with 29 new suites at the base of the slopes. The Inn is adjacent to the original lodge.

Lift tickets range from \$16 for two-hour, after 6 p.m. tickets to \$37 for all-day tickets for adults. Cross country trail passes are \$10 for all-day. Ski packages range from \$69 per person for one-night in a studio to \$285 a night for a weekend in the 1-bedroom condo. For reservations and information, call 1-800-Your-MTN.

Sugar Loaf

Sugar Loaf in Cedar offers seven ski lifts, 24 slopes, 24 kilometers of groomed cross-country trails, alpine-style lodging, indoor and outdoor pools, snowboarding and tubing.

For the 1997-98 season, a weekend, two-day lift ticket will be \$55 per person, with an all-day pass (midweek) priced at \$28. Tickets are \$10 for night skiing after 4 p.m. Sunday through Friday. Lodging and lift tickets are \$69 per person for one night of lodging and a lift ticket from 4 p.m. on day of arrival and midweek ski packages that include one night of lodging, one dinner and breakfast and a lift ticket beginning at 4 p.m. on the day of arrival are \$79 per person based on double occupancy.

For reservations and information, call 1-800-952-6390.

Boyne

This is the granddaddy of Michigan ski resorts, operating Boyne Mountain in Boyne Falls and Boyne Highland in Harbor Springs. This year it is celebrating its 50th anniversary. For the 1997-98 ski season, the resorts are offering a gold season pass to every 10-year-old child. This season pass affords the children unlimited skiing or snowboarding at both Boyne Highland and Boyne Mountain. To start the kids off right, a specialized "learn to ski" will be offered at \$19 for 90 minutes of instruction in skiing or snowboarding and equipment rental.

New this year at Boyne is 10,000 additional feet of snow-making capability and 60 new snow guns.

Boyne Mountain has 41 runs, a 500-foot vertical drop, four quad chairlifts and 38 kilometers of cross-country trails. Boyne Highland features 42 runs with longest more than 5,200 feet and 26 kilometers of groomed cross-country trails. Lift tickets start at \$33 for midweek to \$187 for a five-day holiday ticket. Ski packages including lodging begin at \$88 for a one-day Sunday-Thursday ski packages up to \$830 for a weekend ski package in a luxury suite.

For reservations and information, call 1-800-GO-BOYNE.

Grand Traverse Resort

Grand Traverse doesn't have a mountain, or even a hill, so its winter emphasis is on cross country.

The resort, recently purchased by KSL Recreation, is offering two wintertime packages. The Winter Escape and the Romantic Escape packages will be available through April 30. The Winter Escape is priced at \$139 per person and includes two nights lodging, dinner one evening, breakfast on two days. The Romantic Escape includes champagne at \$169 per person.

Grand Traverse includes cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, horse-drawn sleigh rides and ice skating. It also sells lift tickets for nearby Crystal Mountain and Shanty Creek.

For information and reservations, call 1-800-748-0303.

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