

SECTION 24: EDSON HILL TO RYDER BROOK GOLF COURSE (Formerly Farm Resort)

SNAPSHOT:

This section includes groomed ski center trails, ungroomed, backcountry terrain, snowmobile trails, open farm fields, and a golf course. After an initial climb, it gently loses elevation as it proceeds north. A side trail connects to Beaver Meadow and Burling Camp. Wonderful farm fields, beautiful hardwood forests, and some gorgeous mountain views highlight this section.

LENGTH: 12.0 miles

DIFFICULTY:

The section includes moderate hills, requiring minimal technical skiing ability. It is a great intermediate level section that allows skiers to experience ungroomed skiing without too much challenge. Several road crossings allow this section to be broken into shorter tours. Use caution on the stretches shared with snowmobiles, as they can be quite busy on weekends.

DIRECTIONS TO TRAIL

ACCESS/EXIT POINTS (south to north):

1. Edson Hill Ski Center - Stowe

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe village take Rte. 108 north for about 3.2 miles. Turn right onto Edson Hill Rd. Go about 1.3 miles and look for a sign for Edson Hill Manor on the left. The Ski Touring Center is about 200 yards up the Manor access road on the right.

2. Sterling Falls Gorge - Stowe

From the junction of Rtes. 100 and 108 in Stowe village take Rte. 100 north for 1.7 miles and bear left on Stagecoach Rd. Travel another 1.7 miles and turn left (west) on Sterling Valley Rd. (also known as Sterling Brook Rd.) Follow Sterling Valley Rd. for about 3.5 miles to Sterling Forest Town Parking Area. This is the main parking area. Limited parking can also be found by turning sharply left on Sterling Gorge Rd. just before the town parking area and proceeding a few hundred yards. Park near the CT trail register box. Do not cross or block the wooden bridge.

3. Ryder Brook Golf Course - Morristown

Ryder Brook Golf Course is located on the west side of Rte. 100 in Morristown, 5.7 miles north of the Rte. 100/Rte. 108 intersection in the village of Stowe, and 3.2 miles south of the traffic light in Morrisville. Call the Ryder Brook Golf Course at 866-888-5810 for permission to park. Use the north parking lot, which has space for 12 cars. Southbound, ski west and uphill across the resort's golf course.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION:

From the back (north side) of the **Edson Hill Touring Center (0.0)** head north through the pine plantation and then go left and downhill to cross the dam of a small pond. Pick up Manor Trail on the right and ski uphill along the driveway toward the Manor. Just before the Manor, cross the driveway and head toward a small wooden barn on the right. Beyond the barn head into the woods on the Pennschuss Trail. After a hundred yards, turn left on Spring Trail. Head uphill to a trail intersection and take Puck's Cut to Worcester Loop and continue up hill (north) to Penn Station, which is a major trail junction in a large clearing. Continue straight through the Penn Station clearing, cross **Wade Pasture Rd. (0.8)**, and continue past some large homes. Please stay

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on the Trail and respect homeowners' privacy. Re-entering the woods, the CT curves to the west and passes an old deer camp. At the next junction, bear right to reach the junction with **Old Billings Rd. (1.3)**. This is usually the end of the groomed trail.

Turn right and head north and then east on Old Billings Rd., skiing gradually uphill along a side hill. Just past the height of land, the CT turns left (north) off Old Billings Rd., paralleling the contour of the hill through Stowe's Sterling Forest. This section twists and turns with numerous brook crossings. Please pause to appreciate the bridges constructed in 2007 by the VT Youth Conservation Corps, the Stowe Mountain Bike Club, CTA, and the Town of Stowe. At the intersection with the **Marston Trail (3.2)** turn right, and ski downhill for a short distance before reaching a busy snowmobile corridor. Cross the snowmobile trail after listening for oncoming traffic. Continue to a junction (often wet) and turn left. Ski through a large meadow to the **upper Sterling Gorge parking area (3.8)**, where you will find a trail register box. Please sign in to help CTA gauge the level of Trail use in this area.

At the CT trail register box, the Trail climbs the snow bank, goes along the edge of the meadow, and turns right into the woods. Soon it crosses the access road to the Lower Sterling Gorge parking lot. (Turn right here to reach this parking area.) The Trail continues through the woods, crosses a snowmobile trail twice, goes downhill, and soon enters a swampy area within the Mt. Mansfield State Forest. Watch for CT blazes to lead you thru the maze of swamp and old log roads. At a fork with the former CT (leads to Burling Camp), turn right (northeast) and descend steeply. Make a sharp right (east) onto a short bypass of the snowmobile trail. After reaching the east-west running **VAST Corridor #15-100C (5.4)**, turn right (continuing east) and follow this busy snowmobile corridor downhill and out into a large meadow. Stay on the snowmobile trail to a chute that takes you to a lower meadow and a main snowmobile trail junction. Continue east on the snowmobile trail through the fields until it crosses **Mud City Loop Rd. (6.8)**. To reach an intermediate bail out point (enough room to park two or three cars) ski to your left (northwest) for a couple of hundred yards before crossing Mud City Loop Rd.

After crossing Mud City Loop Rd. follow the snowmobile trail east through a power line cut and behind a house. After entering the next field, the CT immediately turns left off the snowmobile trail, and crosses a steep gully and brook to the next field. (If the gully is too steep or the stream is open, follow the snowmobile trail out to Mud City Rd., cross the gully on the road bridge, and enter the next field to pick up the CT again.) Beyond the gully, the Trail traverses the middle of a pasture. Look for CT markers on wooden posts and use care when crossing the wire fences. Near an old barn, the Trail turns right and then left and returns to the snowmobile trail to enter the Lepine farm pasture. (The Lepine sisters were among the first farmers to conserve their property through the Vermont Land Trust. They also granted CTA its first permanent trail easement.) As the farmhouse comes into view, the snowmobile trail turns right and crosses Mud City Loop Rd. Bear left on the CT, leaving the snowmobile trail, and head to a large maple tree in the meadow below the farmhouse.

From the maple tree, the CT travels diagonally (east) across the pasture and crosses a few fence lines and then a tree line in the lower corner of the pasture. Look for CT blazes on fence posts and temporary winter posts. Ski across the next field and enter the woods. This section is wet at times. Ski past an old out-building, along the tree line, across a brook, and then across **Cole Hill Rd. (8.8)**. Bear right in some trees and head uphill. After emerging from the trees, turn left (east) to ski on, or parallel to, the snowmobile trail located adjacent to an old road. Past the crest of the

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hill, the combined CT/VAST trail veers right into the woods for a long gradual descent to **Lyle McKee Rd. (10.3)**.

Cross to the south side of Lyle McKee Rd., and immediately turn left (east) off the snowmobile trail. Ski across a driveway (house on the right), and through the woods bearing to the right and into a field below the house. From here, ski to the right (west side) of a farm pond to a telephone pole marked with a blue blaze on the side of **Stagecoach Rd. (10.8)**. Cross the road and ski onto the farm lane to the right of the barn. Follow the farm lane southeast between two pastures. Make a sharp right and head down hill to cross a small brook. Turn left (east) and ski parallel to the brook to a post. Turn right (south) and ski toward a telephone pole marked with a CT blaze on **Golf Course Rd. (11.3)**. Cross the road onto the back corner of the Ryder Brook Golf Course Golf Course. Ski east-southeast through the golf course, staying more or less parallel to the road, until you come to the Ryder Brook Golf Course buildings and parking area on **Rte. 100 (12.0)**.

DISTANCE TO LANDMARKS:

| Mileage Northbound | Landmark | Mileage Southbound |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0.0 | Edson Hill Touring Center | 12.0 |
| 0.8 | Wade Pasture Rd. | 11.2 |
| 1.3 | Old Billings Rd. | 10.7 |
| 3.2 | Marston Trail | 8.8 |
| 3.8 | Upper Sterling Gorge parking | 8.2 |
| 5.4 | VAST Corridor #15-100C | 6.6 |
| 6.8 | Mud City Loop Rd. | 5.2 |
| 8.8 | Cole Hill Rd. | 3.2 |
| 10.3 | Lyle McKee Rd. | 1.7 |
| 10.8 | Stagecoach Rd. | 1.2 |
| 11.3 | Golf Course Rd. | 0.7 |
| 12.0 | Ryder Brook Golf Course (Rte. 100) | 0.0 |

SIDE TRAILS AND LOOPS:

The Edson Hill Ski Touring Center maintains a network of groomed and ungroomed trails that provide opportunities for loops of varying lengths.

An excellent four-mile loop can be accessed from the upper Sterling Gorge parking area. To ski the loop counter-clockwise: from the parking area, head south on the CT, through the meadow, to the intersection with the Marston Trail. Turn right (west) and ski uphill, staying straight on the Marston Trail where the CT turns left (south). The Marston Trail eventually turns south taking you to Sterling Run and back to the Old Billings Rd. to complete the loop either on the northbound CT or Maple Run (a groomed snowmobile corridor).

The 3.5-mile Upper Sterling Gorge Loop can be accessed from either of the Sterling Gorge parking areas. This loop is suitable for skiing and snowshoeing. Use caution crossing the fast-running Sterling Brook early in the season.

The popular, six-mile, Burling Camp Loop starts on the CT/VAST Corridor heading west from Mud City Loop. Instead of turning left (south) on the CT continue west about 0.4 miles on the

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VAST trail. At a large black and orange sign with an arrow pointing left for continuing south on the VAST trail, veer to the right (west), heading uphill on the trail to Burling Camp. Ski west and then northwest to the Beaver Meadow Lodge and Burling Camp. These cabins are available for winter camping on a first-come, first-served basis. To continue the loop from Burling Camp, head east (downhill) and either ski out to the Beaver Meadow Rd. parking area, or turn right on a snowmobile trail and ski southeast on the snowmobile trail to return to Mud City Loop.

These side trails and loops (as well as the CT, itself) are depicted on Map Adventures' "Northern Vermont Nordic Skiing and Snowshoe Trail" Map available in the store section of the CTA website.