

## **SECTION 22: BOLTON VALLEY NORDIC CENTER TO TRAPP FAMILY LODGE**

### **SNAPSHOT:**

This popular section is a rugged, back-country tour climbing 1300 feet and descending 2300 feet. It features a narrow trail in the spruce forest above 2700 feet, a long descent through open forest, and marvelous views in many directions - the Little River and Cotton Brook Valleys and Worcester Range to the east, Camel's Hump to the south and Mt. Mansfield to the north. The region between Bolton Valley and the start of the descent is a reliable area to find good early and late season snow, but the descent becomes very difficult if the snow is icy or crusty, or if there is insufficient snow cover.

**LENGTH:** 9.4miles

### **DIFFICULTY:**

The portion between Bolton Valley and Nebraska Valley Rd. is suitable for advanced, properly equipped skiers only. It is long, isolated, and very steep. A group of three or more skiers is recommended for safety purposes. The portion between Nebraska Valley Rd. and Trapp Family Lodge is suitable for intermediate skiers because of the easier terrain. The last bit is on Trapp's groomed trails.

### **DIRECTIONS TO TRAIL**

#### **ACCESS/EXIT POINTS (south to north):**

##### **1. Bolton Valley Nordic Center - Bolton**

From Rte. 2 in the village of Bolton go north on the Bolton Access Rd. approximately 4.5 miles to the Bolton Valley Resort. Trail passes can be purchased online or in person at the Nordic and Backcountry Center (in the Village Circle next to Big Rock Retail) or in the main base lodge area of the resort at the Guest Services.

##### **2. Nebraska Valley Rd. - Stowe**

From I-89 exit 10 in Waterbury go north on Rte. 100 for 7.5 miles. Turn left (west) onto Moscow Rd. and go approximately 1.9 miles. After crossing a bridge, bear right on Nebraska Valley Rd. and continue west 3.5 miles to a roadside parking area on the left (large enough for about five cars). If this area is full, go 100 yards farther and turn right on Old County Rd. There is a large parking area 0.1 mile up this road on the left.

##### **3. Trapp Family Lodge - Stowe**

From I-89 exit 10 in Waterbury go north on Rte. 100 for 7.5 miles. Turn left (west) onto Moscow Rd. Go 1.4 miles and turn right (north) onto Barrows Rd. Go to a stop sign and turn left on Luce Hill Rd. Follow this steep, winding road, bearing left onto Trapp Hill Rd. The ski center is the last building on the right just past the main lodge and just before a large parking lot.

Alternatively, from the intersection of Rtes. 108 (Mountain Rd.) and 100 in Stowe, head west on Rte. 108 for about 2.75 miles and turn left on Luce Hill Rd. Continue past Barrows Rd. (on left) and then follow the directions above.

### **ROUTE DESCRIPTION:**

From the Bolton Nordic Center (0.0) the Trail initially follows several of the marked and groomed Bolton Valley trails. Start on Broadway and turn immediately right (north and uphill) off Broadway onto the World Cup Trail and then onto Bryant Trail to Bryant Camp (1.1). Above the camp the Trail enters Mt. Mansfield State Forest. The CT continues up a short hill to the intersection with Gardiner's Lane and Birch Loop. Turn left (north) onto Birch Loop. The CT

now traverses relatively flat terrain on Birch Loop, rising gently to 2800'. Upon reaching a trail fork, Birch Loop bears left and the CT goes to the right heading northeast. After about 100 yards the Cotton Brook Trail (1.4) turns off to the right (east), and the CT continues straight ahead (northeast). The Trail now rises steeply uphill and makes a series of switchbacks. Follow the CT markers carefully, as "glade skier" tracks may intersect the trail. After straightening out, the CT heads basically north-northwest, coming to an intersection with the Raven's Wind Trail (2.1) at about 3300'. Raven's Wind goes left (west) as the CT heads up and right (northeast).

***NOTE: When the CT leaves the Bolton Nordic Center network you are on a back-country ski trail. It is not groomed and is not patrolled. There is a lot of climbing that can be challenging in deep snow, especially if there have been no skiers ahead of you breaking trail. We recommend heavier back-country gear and climbing skins for this section. The descent into the Moscow valley is thrilling, but can be tricky to negotiate in icy conditions. The Trail is narrow, passing through spruce trees and then open hardwoods on the descent. Due to the large amount of snow this area receives, CT trail blazes can often be obscured or completely covered by snow. Ski with at least two companions and stay together.***

After passing the Raven's Wind trail intersection, the CT stays at a fairly constant elevation, with first gentle and then abrupt ups and downs. It skirts the east shoulder of Bolton Mountain and can be difficult to follow. East of the summit of Bolton Mountain the route turns sharply right (east) to follow the ridge running east from the peak. (It is easy to miss this turn if not paying attention.) The route then winds along the ridge, with many tight turns and short, quick ups and downs. There are a couple of good viewpoints overlooking the Cotton Brook basin and south to Camel's Hump. One open area, called "Windy Ridge," is a good spot for a lunch break. It marks the beginning of the constant downhill.

***NOTE: There are unmarked "renegade" ski routes dropping off either side of the CT from the ridge area. If you start downhill, be sure there are CT blazes on your route.***

The Trail leaves the ridge and begins dropping to the north in a series of long switchbacks. Caution is needed at the end of one of the switchbacks, as a trail, locally known as the JK Trail, heads right and toward Cotton Brook while the CT swings sharply left in a switchback. (Signage for the JK Trail seems to come and go.) The CT continues through switchbacks and over some small stream crossings. After a short rise, there is a sharp descent ending abruptly in a steep stream crossing at 2300' (4.4), which often has open water. From the 2300' elevation line, the Trail drops steeply then switches back through open woods. It then returns to parallel the stream, drops steeply into a side stream crossing and bridge, then descends steadily past an old camp (5.4). Just above the camp, during a moderate descent, there is a stream crossing bridged by a fairly narrow culvert- be careful! A long, gentle slope follows, then a steeper drop beside a stream gorge, eventually ending at the parking area on Nebraska Valley Rd. (6.5). This is a good bail out point for those desiring a shorter tour.

To continue north on the CT turn left (west) for a road-walk of 100 yards. Turn northeast (right) onto Old County Rd. Shortly after turning up Old County Rd, the CT turns right into the woods just after a speed limit sign. After approximately 0.5 miles the Trail rejoins Old County Rd. and there is another short road walk to the end of plowing. The Trail then continues up the unplowed road past some seasonal homes and then onto an abandoned section of the old road to join the groomed trail network of Trapp Family Lodge (7.9). Turn right on Russell Knoll Track and follow the Trapp trail signs to Sugar Road and the Trapp Family X-C center (9.4). Please be sure to pay the appropriate trail fee.

## **DISTANCE TO LANDMARKS:**

<b>Mileage Northbound</b>	<b>Landmark</b>	<b>Mileage Southbound</b>
0.0	Bolton Nordic Center	9.4
1.1	Bryant Camp	8.3
1.4	Cotton Brook Trail	8.0
2.1	Raven's Wind Trail	7.3
4.4	Stream crossing at 2300'	5.0
5.4	Old Sugarhouse	4.0
6.5	Nebraska Valley Rd.	2.9
7.9	Russell Knoll	1.5
9.4	Trapp Family X-C Center	0.0

## **SIDE TRAILS AND LOOPS:**

Bolton Valley offers an extensive network of cross-country ski trails both groomed and ungroomed. It is one of the best locations in the eastern U.S. for back-country skiing because of its high elevation and reliable snowfall. Be sure to stop in at the Nordic center to pay the trail fee and pick up a trail map. Occasionally trail users without maps have gotten lost in the backcountry resulting in expensive search and rescue efforts.

Within Mt. Mansfield State Forest, the CT intersects the Cotton Brook Trail, the "JK" Trail heading east into the Cotton Brook Basin, and many unmarked renegade routes. Attempt these trails only if you have appropriate back-country gear and have a guide who is familiar with these routes.

The Trapp Family Lodge maintains many miles of impeccably groomed X-C trails that appeal to skiers of many different skill levels. Stop in at the X-C center to pick up a trail map and to pay the appropriate fee.

Map Adventures' "Northern Vermont Nordic Skiing and Snowshoe Trail" map covers the Bolton-Stowe-Underhill region, depicting the CT and many other trails. The latest edition of this map can be purchased in the store portion of the CTA website.