

# Cross-Country Skiing

## Great Scenery and Great Exercise

By Brenda Visser



"An early snowfall this season has stirred up an early interest in winter sports, especially cross-country skiing," says Alfred Stakenvicius, Executive Director of the Triangle Cross Country Ski Club located on County Road 5 between Mallorytown and Athens. This trail system, as well as the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, near Tincap, offer wonderful opportunities to get out and enjoy the big outdoors.

Early snow brought out eager skiers, even while maintenance work was still being done. While trail conditions change with weather conditions, the Triangle Club is anticipating a strong year. At the time of this writing, brush and fallen timber has largely been cleared from trails and most trails are open.

Leeds-Grenville offers a number of options for this low-impact, cardio-vascular activity. Operating during daylight hours, there are many trails to choose from, for the beginner to the experienced. Traversing both Crown lands and land generously shared by private landowners. The beautiful scenery and tranquility on the trails is hard to beat.

The Triangle Cross Country Ski Club maintains the Mac Mills trail network. The Club operates

on a "BYOS" basis. (bring your own skis) There is a "portable" to warm up in and to change footwear. Trails are groomed and have restricted access for snowmobiles and other motorized vehicles. Separate snow shoeing trails are open as well. A privy is also available for when nature calls.

Those with technological savvy might want to add a little more adventure to their ski outing. Look up the geocaching treasures on the trails. (See [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) and search for "Triangulate This", for example).



The day-use fee is by donation, and membership is also encouraged. For more details on how to become a member, please refer to the website: [www.triangleskiclub.org](http://www.triangleskiclub.org). This is a comprehensive website loaded with helpful information. Current updates can be found on their facebook page: Triangle Cross Country Ski Club of Brockville.

If you want to stay closer to the city, the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area also offers a wonderful opportunity to get out and enjoy the fresh air. Open from 7:30am to sunset, this trail system is all level and smooth. It offers distances of 1 km through 11km and has looped trails. It is an excellent place for beginners, seniors, or those with little experience. Part of the trail runs on an old train track bed. See their webpage for more information: [www.catararegion.on.ca/lands/macj.htm](http://www.catararegion.on.ca/lands/macj.htm)

Ample parking, a heated shelter and a fire-pit are some of the benefits of skiing here. The shelter is open on Saturdays in January and February and can be rented out for your special event or larger group as well. Events such as the Senior Winter Games have been held at Mac Johnson. For up-to-date trail conditions, call 613-345-1990.

The "Friends of Mac Johnson", the volunteer group committed to promoting and maintaining the Wildlife Area, also sells memberships. This would be a great way to support the worthy work of another group of dedicated volunteers.

Trail maps for both locations are available on site, or on their respective websites.

With winter upon us, one of the greatest ways to appreciate the season is to be involved in winter sports. Cross-country skiing in our area is an attractive, economical choice for many levels of ability. Enjoy the snow! LH