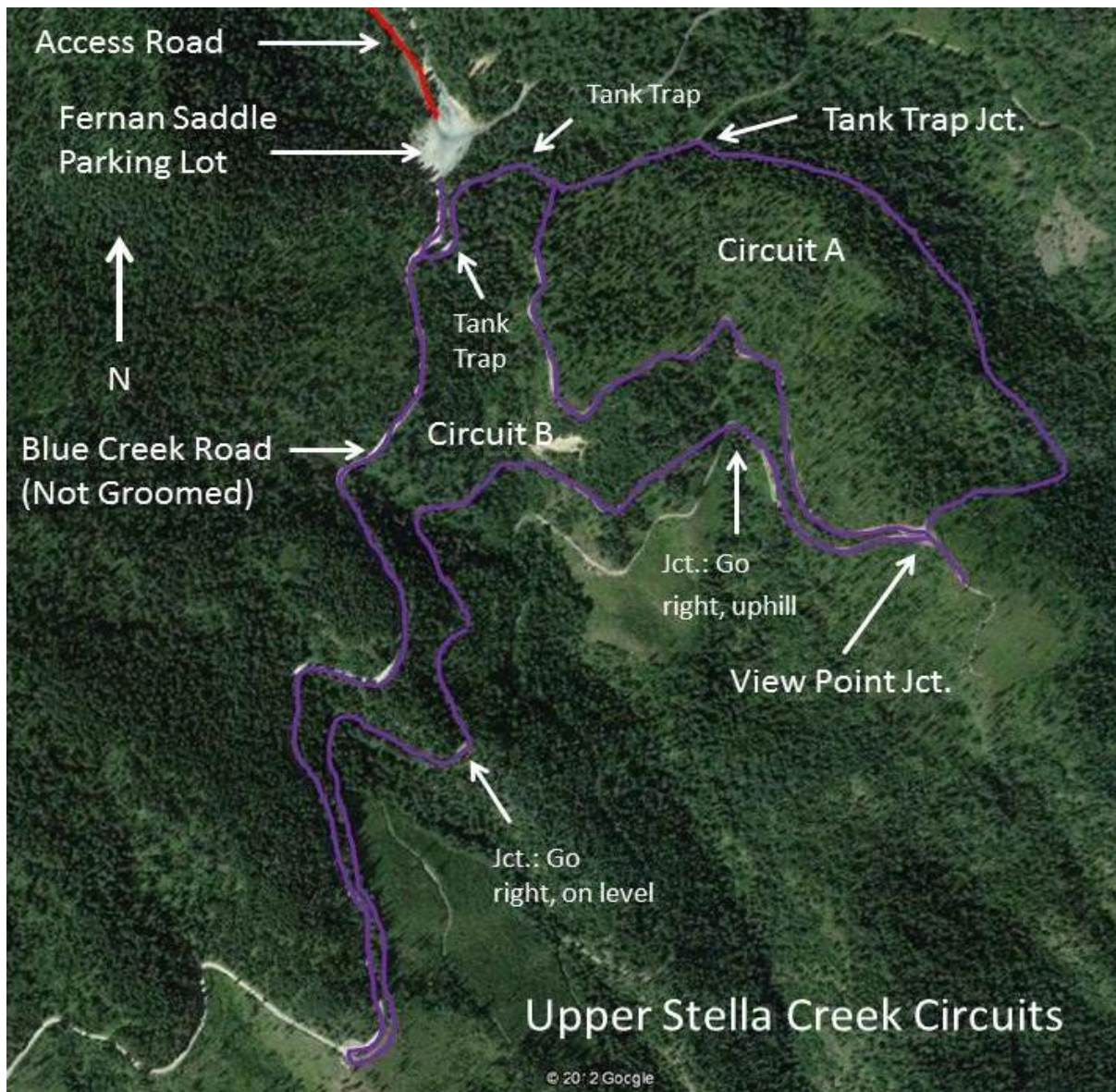


Skiing and Snowshoes on Un-groomed Fernan Saddle Terrain

Three ski or snowshoe routes are available from the Fernan Saddle Parking Lot which either do not cover routes ordinarily groomed for snow machine use, or use such routes only a short way before diverging off into areas not groomed.

Stella Creek Headwaters: The very headwaters of Stella Creek, a tributary to Wolf Lodge Creek, are located immediately to the southeast of the Fernan Saddle Parking Lot. The core area, although small, has relatively gentle terrain making it a great area for snowshoes that will have snow when lower elevations may not. One circuit (A) is a 3.7 kilometers round trip suitable for snowshoes or skis. In the center of the circuit is gentle terrain very suitable for a snowshoe or ski through the woods.



The area is accessed by following the Blue Creek Road south from the parking lot no more than a hundred-fifty yards to the first road junction. A road proceeds off to the left and swings around to the north and descends a bit in elevation below the parking lot. Two tank traps placed to discourage vehicle access can be a challenge to traverse at low snow levels, especially on skis. However, behind these barriers a two circuit road systems are available into which snow machines rarely travel (Circuits A & B). The second barrier is passed as the road turns east. After a short distance, there is road junction. You can proceed straight or turn right. If you go straight a short distance you will find another fork in the road. Take the road to the right which unfortunately requires you to skirt yet another tank trap obstacle. If you go straight, you will descend rapidly down into Stella Creek. However, the right fork will take you around towards the south and east downhill but not as sharply. You will hit the bottom of the grade going south and looking into Stella Creek below. The road then climbs to the south and turns to the southwest. You will come to a large open junction and to its south a high point with a great view of the area. If you go right at the view point junction, the road will lead you back around the circle to the first junction you passed going straight completing Circuit A.

Circuit B is an 8 kilometer round trip that depending on the number of downed trees can be more difficult. As you can discern from this description, there are numerous roads and junctions in this area, but you really should not get too lost if you can backtrack yourself. If you take the left branch at the viewpoint junction, Circuit B is entered. You will descend to a road junction. Take the right or uphill road at the junction. The road will take you south and then west and cross two places where culverts were removed by the Forest Service. If you bear right at the final junction, you will cross yet another culvert removal where the road turns south and rises up to the Blue Creek Road about a mile south of the parking area. If you travel Blue Creek Road back to the parking area Circuit B is completed.

Treasure and Kelly Mountain Skis: The Fernan Saddle Parking Lot is framed by two mountains; Huckleberry Mountain to the north and Treasure Mountain to the southeast. Although Treasure Mountain's top is not far from the parking lot as the crow flies, it is a more challenging ski or snowshoe there and back. Proceed south on the un-groomed Blue Creek Road. On occasion, snow machines run the road creating an easily skiable track. Unfortunately, so do four-wheel drive enthusiasts sometimes creating a rutted mess, but it is a wide road with plenty of room to ski or snowshoe. After proceeding south a mile around Treasure Mountain, the road turns west on a south facing slope for over a mile to Treasure Saddle, where the junction of the Treasure Mountain Road is located. The route is especially pleasant on a sunny spring day, but too much sun erodes the snow fast.

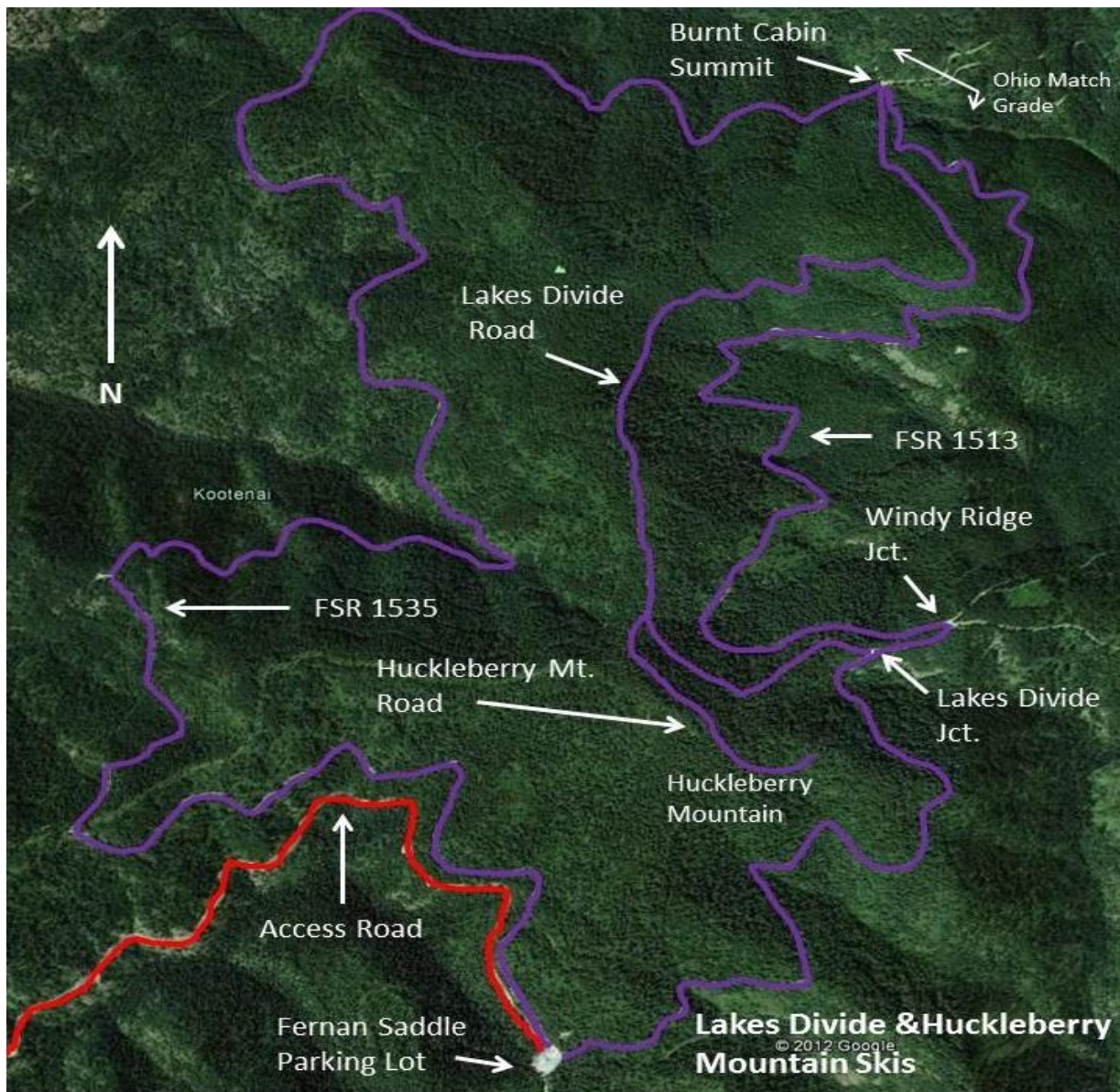


Four roads come together on Treasure Saddle with the Blue Creek Road being the sharp left. The Treasure Mountain Road is the one to the furthest right going uphill to the north. The road is narrow and wraps back and forth across the west face of the mountain before dashing to the east side near the top. Enjoy the climb and do not expect an expansive view from the top. The mountain is heavily forested near its top. The ski down can be a challenge in some locations

requiring most of the braking tricks developed by skiers over the years. The ski is 10.8 kilometers round trip.

If you favor views and a less rigorous ski down, at the Treasure Saddle follow the road second from the left near the middle of the junction as you ski up. The road leads around to Kelly Mountain. Along the way there are beautiful views from cleared openings down to Lake Coeur d'Alene, the city and the resort. The round trip to Kelly Mountain is 12.4 kilometers.

Huckleberry Mountain-Horse Ridge Ski: The ski up Huckleberry Mountain and out Horse Ridge to Burnt Cabin Summit follows a closed section of the Lakes Divide Road. Although occasionally run by snow machines, the route is often untracked. However to reach the ski route it is necessary to ski two and a half miles on groomed snow machine trail.



Follow the prepared snow machine trail east from the parking lot (Windy Ridge Road/FSR 612). The road winds around the south and east flanks of Huckleberry Mountain climbing most of the way. You will reach a broad section of the road at the top of the climb just before the road descends slightly to the junction at the west end of Windy Ridge. At this point go to your left across the open area and keep bearing left at the tree line. You will see the humps guarding the entrance to the narrower Lakes Divide Road. Since the road is a summer ATV trail, space is open at the side of the humps to permit entrance of these machines providing a path to ski or snowshoe. The road climbs to the west and then swings north to a clear junction at the ridge top.

If you follow the road to the left departing the Lakes Divide Road, the road will climb to the top of Huckleberry Mountain. Like the other mountains in this area, the top is forested and offers no prospect of the surrounding country. In fact the mountaintop is so rounded that one finds it difficult to decide when the summit is attained. The ski to Huckleberry Mountain's top and back is about 11.8 kilometers. Snowshoe users often go right up the south flank of the mountain from the parking lot.

If you follow the Lakes Divide Road north, it will run along Horse Ridge for about a half mile with little grade. Beautiful views to the west down onto Hayden Lake can be glimpsed along this section. The ski is worth the effort to this point just for the views to the lake. It is not recommended that snowshoe users go beyond the ridge top unless they are looking for a long day afield. The road will start down looping to the east and north on the flank of Horse Ridge through large timber and recovering clearcuts. The descent is slow initially but picks up as you go north. Typically deep snow is present to brake your descent. The road comes out on Burnt Cabin Summit on the Ohio Match Grade. It is approximately 8.9 kilometers to the summit. From Burnt Cabin Summit you have the choice of retracing your route or skiing one of two groomed routes back. The shorter groomed route is the road (FSR 1513) to the immediate left from where you skied into the junction as you face south. This road follows essentially the same route as you followed out except lower on the mountain and is a bit longer. FSR 1513 will come into the road junction at the west end of Windy Ridge. From there it is a very short ski down the road to your right to come full circle at the place you entered the Lakes Divide Road. The trip is finished with a two and a half mile ski downhill to the Fernan Saddle Parking Lot. The round trip by this route is 18.6 kilometers.

You may also return via the usually groomed road (FSR 1535) to the immediate right of where you skied out. This is a much longer trek out and over Horse Ridge and then south through the Yellowbanks watershed back to the ridge above Fernan Creek. The groomed trail eventually enters the north end of the Fernan Saddle Parking Lot. The round trip by this route is 21.3 kilometers.

Caution, unless you have arranged other transportation or want to lose yourself in the forest do not follow the Ohio Match Grade that eventually descends to the northwest to the north end of Hayden Lake or to the east into the Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene watershed. Going east on the Ohio Match Grade will leave you a long ways from anyplace, even the Cascade Inn. The road going north will take you even further afield along the Lakes Divide Road