YOSEMITE WINTER CLUB CROSS COUNTRY SECTION

2026 Season

The Yosemite Winter Club (YWC) is a non-profit organization bringing winter sporting opportunities to outdoor enthusiast since 1928. The Yosemite Winter Club Cross Country Section (YWCXC) is a subsection within the YWC. Everyone who is a member of YWC is welcome to join the XC Section. The YWCXC has been arranging hut supported overnight ski trips into the backcountry of Yosemite National Park since 1975.

Trip planning and logistics necessary to support the trips are performed by volunteers. Over the summer and fall, XC Section volunteers retrieve caches, coordinate trip planning, and gather to shop for and pack the caches. Before the roads close for the winter, the caches are delivered to the cabins where skiers will be staying.

All trips are unguided; trip leaders are volunteers chosen to aid in group decision making. All skiers share cooking and cleaning tasks at the cabins.

Fitness Message

Our goal is for everyone to have an enjoyable time on the Winter Club overnight trips. We all want to make sure everyone gets to our destinations safely. We travel as a group so while it is expected that there might be some waiting you for others, you need to be able to travel at a reasonable pace so others don't have to wait too long. This means you must have the skiing skills and physical fitness to be able to ascend and descend with confidence on untracked snow while carrying a pack.

YOSEMITE WINTER CLUB MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED

Yosemite Winter Club
Information for joining the parent Yosemite Winter Club will be available at https://yosemitewinterclub.com. The website goes quiet in the off season and is generally activated in the early fall.

TRIPS AND EVENTS 2026 SEASON

The Ostrander Ski Hut, Tuolumne Meadows Turnaround and the Trans Sierra trips are backcountry ski tours and not for beginners. Trip applicants must have the necessary experience and fitness to do these strenuous trips.

In the event of a government shutdown, it's possible that the Badger Pass Road will not be open to provide access to the Badger Pass trailhead for the Ostrander Trip and other government facilities would not be available for the Tuolumne Turnaround and TransSierra trips. We are proceeding with planning and will keep participants updated.

FIRST SKI: This event takes place the January 23 - 25, Friday evening through Sunday morning. Thank you to Vonnie Coombs for once again hosting the event at the Yosemite Peregrine Lodge, located at 7509 Henness Circle in Yosemite West inside Yosemite National Park.

The annual XC Section business meeting will be held on Saturday evening after dinner. We usually have 20-30 people show up for First Ski (bring the kids!) and most spend the night, so be prepared to sleep on the floor with your own bags, pillows and pads. There are lots of opportunities for downhill skiing at Badger Pass* and cross-country skiing on marked trails in the surrounding area.

If you would like more private accommodations and/or are not up for floor sleeping (if you don't win the bed lottery) you may be able to reserve condos on Henness Ridge Drive in Yosemite West near the Peregrine Lodge.

Appetizers and Dinners Friday and Saturday nights are potluck. Breakfast Saturday and Sunday mornings will be supplied by the Club. Beverages are BYOD for drinks and refreshments.

2026 SEASON OVERNIGHT TRIPS

For all trips, you will need to carry a pack with storm gear, emergency essentials, extra clothes, and sleeping bag. Breakfasts and dinners are cached at the cabins for the Trans Sierra and Tuolumne Turnaround trips; you will need to bring your own lunches, daytime trail snacks, and water.

OSTRANDER SKI HUT: 3 nights. February 20 – 23.
This trip is for up to 12 skiers.

From the Badger Pass parking lot we will ski along the Glacier Point Road for about 5 miles, then turn off and follow a marked cross-country trail for 5 miles and about 1,500 feet of elevation gain to the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut.

Many consider the Ostrander trip to be the most rewarding and fun of the year. Confident downhill skills (while carrying a pack) are a must. Conditions are variable and this trip can involve miles of breaking trail through deep snow, skiing in stormy weather, and

skiing on crust, as well as bluebird powder days.

An early start in the morning is needed so the group generally spends the night before the trip at Peregrine Lodge in Yosemite West or other nearby lodging.

The Ostrander Hut is maintained and staffed by the Yosemite Conservancy. Please consider donating to the Conservancy to support their programs and projects that benefit visitors to the Park.

In the event the Glacier Point Road is not open to the Badger Pass Ski area trailhead, this trip will depart from the Chinquapin trailhead. This starting point is at 6,000 feet elevation on Wawona Road (Highway 41) and adds nearly 3 miles and 1,300 feet of climbing to the trip. This makes the total journey to the hut close to 13 miles long with over 3,500 feet of elevation gain. There will be no refunds for those who do not wish to make the longer trip that starts at Chinquapin.

TRANS SIERRA: 4-nights March 13 – 17. Back up date in case of postponement due to avalanche or weather conditions: April 9 – 13. This trip is for up to eight skiers.

This trip starts with a flight from Pine Mountain Airport to Lee Vining Airport. From Lee Vining the group gets a lift from the Mono Lake Committee staff to the gate on Tioga Pass Road where the trek to the snow line begins.

Expect to hike part of the first and last days. Starting at the gate on Tioga Pass Road, trip members hike and ski over Tioga Pass and into Tuolumne Meadows, continue to Snow Flat near Mt. Hoffman, then down 126 switchbacks on the Snow Creek Trail into Yosemite Valley. Accommodations include the entrance station on Tioga Pass (1 night), a cabin in Tuolumne Meadows (2 nights) and the snow survey cabin (1 night) at Snow Flat. Conditions are variable and can include powder, crust, and corn on the same trip. Be prepared to ski in stormy weather (although we will not fly to Lee Vining if the weather is bad). The trip may be postponed or cancelled in the event of weather conditions that prevent flying or if avalanche conditions preclude travel on Tioga Pass Road.

The group generally spends the night before the trip at the Peregrine Lodge in Yosemite West or at other nearby lodging; a couple of cars are left at the backpackers' parking lot in Yosemite Valley where the trip ends and then the party is shuttled to the Pine Mountain Airport.

TUOLUMNE MEADOWS TURNAROUND TRIP: 4-nights March 20 – 24. Back up date in case of postponement due to avalanche or weather conditions: April 16 – 20. This trip is for up to for eight skiers.

The Turnaround is a hike/ski starting at the gate on Tioga Pass Road, over Tioga Pass and into Tuolumne Meadows, and then a ski back out the same way. This will be a four night trip with overnight stays at the Tioga Pass entrance station cabin on the way in and out, and two nights at the cabin in Tuolumne Meadows. Conditions are variable and can include powder, crust, and corn on the same trip. Be prepared to ski in stormy weather. The trip may be postponed or cancelled in the event of hazardous weather conditions or avalanche conditions that preclude travel on Tioga Pass Road. This trip is good for those who want to see the grandeur of the Meadows in winter, but without the Trans-Sierra's

knee ache of 126 switchbacks down the Snow Creek Trail into Yosemite Valley.

The group generally spends the night before the trip in Lee Vining at the Lake View Lodge.

TRIP APPLICATION PROCESS

The YWCXC Trip Application is emailed to current and prospective members. The deadline for return of the mailed (yes snail mail) application with a check for trip fees is December 31. If there are more applicants than spaces on a given trip, the selection process takes into consideration volunteer activities that members have participated in over the past year.

CONTACT

If you have questions or are interested in participating in any of the YWCXC activities contact:

Terry and Melinda Rivasplata
melrivas@earthlink.net
4900 Alta Drive
Sacramento, CA 95822
916 454 5937