

**Recommended Nordic ski trip to Little Lyford Pond and West Branch Camps from Kay Storch:**

Eight of us spent 6 days (and nights) at the end of February skiing between Maine sporting camps near Greenville. Ski distances are 7 to 10 miles between camps; we were leisurely, taking 3-4 hours and stopping for snacks and lunch each trip. The weather was clear – cold and windy on Friday, cold nights and warming up during the day.

We met in Greenville Friday morning and drove about 10 miles to a parking area where we loaded gear onto snowmobile sleds for Little Lyford Ponds Camps (AMC). After donning day packs and skis, we headed for camp in cold and windy conditions. There is a road which goes directly to the camps, but for part of our ski we followed a single width trail through the woods to avoid some wind. Hills and deep snow provided some challenges. We took about 3 hours, including a lunch stop to reach Little Lyford where we found warm cabins waiting. The next day two of us relaxed while the others skied to the head of Gulf Hugas along and on the West Branch of the Pleasant River.

After 2 nights at Little Lyford, on Sunday we headed for West Branch Pond Camps (private). Much of this trail is along the West Branch Pleasant River; we paused frequently to identify tracks in the snow and again ate lunch on the trail. Clear skies and a full moon led to an evening ski on the pond. On Monday, we again skied on the pond and took photos of spectacular snow formations and coyote tracks. The ladies returned to camp for lunch on the porch while their spouses explored.

On Tuesday we moved on to the Medawisla Wilderness Camps (AMC) on Second Roach Pond. This is a more open ski, with spectacular views, along snowmobile trails and through some Plum Creek cuttings (how do you define clear-cutting). One highlight was a set of lynx tracks. Wednesday was another day for skiing on the pond and on adjacent trails.

The AMC package is for 3 nights, but we stayed 2 nights at each camp. The pleasant staff or owner at each camp provided local trail information and all the other services. More trails are being developed at each camp and there are plans to open Chairback Mountain Camps next season. Each cabin has a wood stove; meals are served in the main lodge (excellent food). Central hot showers and sauna are at Little Lyford; central hot showers are at Medawisla. Little Lyford is ski-in; you can drive to the others. We each carried day packs; other gear was moved for us from camp to camp. Car shuttle was also provided.



Photo (Sue Owen):

Bucky and Sue Owen, Jon Lund and Joan Sturmthal, Dick and Kay Storch, Jean and Frank Woodard on lodge deck, Little Lyford Pond Camps and the end of February, 2007