



Winter snows at Scottish Lakes High Camp. This rustic collection of cabins on a ridge north of Stevens Pass is a fantastic base for outdoor adventures, whether skiing, snowshoeing or hiking.

Photo courtesy of Scottish Lakes High Camp.

Joys of High Camp

Scottish Lakes High Camp is a skier's and hiker's paradise

Sublime. Idyllic. Pristine. Cowabunga!

Superlatives such as these understate a stay at Scottish Lakes High Camp. On my first visit, we spent a glorious day soaking up sunshine, reveling in turquoise skies while touring McCue Ridge. Picking a scenic spot atop the ridge, we spread out a picnic lunch, enjoying expansive views of the Chiwaukum Mountains. What a relief from months of soggy grey skies! Perfect spring corn snow lured us into a descent of legendary Wild Bill Hill with gleeful abandon. Our long telemark skis carved graceful slow turns all the way back to our cozy cabin.

Flip the calendar ahead twenty-plus years. My skis are much shorter, with a shaped side-cut and seem to turn on their own. Wild Bill Hill has become a fun slalom course of small trees. On this trip, the snow falls nonstop each night. Tiny, cold flakes dance out of the sky, creating fabulous skiing conditions. As if on schedule, the snow stops each day after breakfast and sun sparkling through the trees invites us out into a remote winter playground. Skis slice easily through the light, fresh powder and grins appear on each face in our group. That

evening, we soak tired but happy muscles in the wood-fired hot tub under billions of stars.

Located at an elevation of 5,000 feet, Scottish Lakes High Camp is just far enough east of the Cascade crest to offer blue skies, sunshine and dry, powdery snow—a treat for us Puget Sound basin dwellers. With 35 miles of well-marked trails, and an incredible variety of terrain, much fun can be had by beginning, intermediate or advanced skiers, snowshoers or snowboarders. Explore marked trails close to the lodge, head for the open slopes of Telemark Basin or make a short 10-minute trip to Shangra La to get in some turns. Strap on snowshoes and make the half-day trek to Lake Julius nestled in an alpine amphitheater below McCue Ridge. An all-day tour takes advanced skiers to the High Meadows at 7,370 feet.

At the end of the day, return to a cozy cabin stocked with mattress, pillows, a wood stove, propane/kerosene lamps, propane cook-plate, kitchen utensils and firewood. Nine charming cabins of different sizes offer some privacy, with nearby access to the day lodge, and wood-fired sauna and hot tub. Join other guests at

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the lodge après-ski for shared appetizers and swapping tall tales. Cozy up to the fire with a complimentary hot beverage and browse High Camp's library or collection of board games.

Scottish Lakes High Camp was purchased from the original owners, Peg and Bill Stark, by Don and Chris Hanson and another couple in 1994. They have lovingly added improvements each season. This winter, in celebration of High Camp's thirtieth year, many new features are aimed at significantly improving the visitors' experience. A new map prepared by a professional cartographer (as a volunteer) is color coded for slope and overlaid on a topographical map with



Above and right: Telemark skiers descend the ridges near High Camp. Scottish Lakes High Camp celebrates its thirtieth year of operation this year.

Photo by Valerie Rosen

Below: Hikers ascending the trail to Larch Lake in autumn.



contour lines. Ya gotta love that!!

Last year, the Hansons worked on trails below the High Road and this fall, thinned Telemark Basin. There is additional great skiing on northeast slopes and in the lees of the ridge. With names like Fun Forest, Rollercoaster, Glacier View, Powderpuff and Cowabunga, there's something for everyone. For those of us avid skiers who don't really understand why anyone would want to walk downhill in snowshoes, they have pairs of those for rent at High Camp, too.

Part of the adventure of High Camp is getting there. Access is via an 8-mile private road that

can be snowshoed or skied. Those wanting to save energy for the high country can be transported in rustic style by the fleet of six snowmobiles. The Hansons have recently added two 4-stroke snowmobiles—greener machines that use less fuel and run quieter.

Alas, any good trip has to come to an end and my favorite way to end the trip has always been skiing down to the car. We let the machines carry our gear, while we enjoy the gentle grade of the road and the chance to get in a few more turns. We've always hoped to get snowed in, but the cheerful and reliable staff always gets us back to our cars.

Cowabunga indeed! We look forward to our next visit to High Camp. ♦



Photo by Valerie Rosen

More Info

Location: Two hours east of Seattle off U.S. Hwy 2, 17 miles east of Stevens Pass

Winter season: Ski, snowboard and snowshoe late November through April

Fall season: Late August through mid-October, find prime hiking, fishing, and golden larch-viewing

Reservations: For cabin availability, weekend and family specials, and more information on Scottish Lakes High Camp, visit: www.scottishlakes.com.

Or call (509) 763-3044 for the High Camp office or 1-888-9HICAMP or (425) 844-2000 to hear a recorded message.