

Your voice for cross-country skiing in Kosciuszko National Park

Spring 2011 Newsletter

KCros is a special interest group with a primary focus on the issues of service and facilities for cross country skiers in Kosciuszko National Park. Experience has shown that a unified, well-organised representation is more effective than many small scattered voices. KCros has the mandate of various XC organisations and independent skiers to address issues on their behalf with a single strong voice.

KCros exists to ensure that the views and needs of cross country skiers are addressed and met in the operation and future development of Kosciuszko National Park.

KCros is aware of the differing needs of beginners, novices, children, seniors, racers, the physically disadvantaged, ski orienteers and biathletes, day tourers, back country tourers and snow campers.

KCros provides the structure for varied and unrelated cross country skiing groups as well as independent skiers to speak with one voice on issues that affect safe and enjoyable participation in their chosen sport anywhere within Kosciuszko National Park. KCros will identify and investigate relevant issues of concern to cross-country skiers. When necessary, KCros will co-ordinate lobbying activities and establish an effective lobby network wherever and whenever it is needed.

From the President

Well, the snow has certainly been variable this winter: late coming, then some good snow, then a lot of icy, frozen snow, and a quick end. I hope you were able to get out and enjoy some of it.

Over the winter I was lucky enough to go on an 8 day ski trip, heading out and up from Mungah Power Station. We had organised a couple of food drops, and stayed at Horse Camp, Schlink, Mawson's and White's River huts, with a visit to Valentine's. I'm pleased to report that White's has been rebuilt after the fire last winter. Even though the fireplace was not yet in use, we were comfortable – there were 7 of us to warm it up – and the hut feels light and clean. Valentine's is sporting a fresh coat of paint and is in very good nick. Mawson's has new cladding on the inside and a proper ceiling in the second room, instead of the torn, ancient fabric that used to hang there. It looks like lots of work went on over the summer.

My contribution is quite short as various committee members have written detailed reports of our efforts over winter. The Waste Transfer Station at Perisher is being built this summer. KCros is being represented at bi-monthly meetings over summer with NPWS. Bruce Vote attended the first one and his report is below.

On the 6th August we held the KCros Tour and AGM. Both went well, and Warren McCourt has written a report. A summary of the AGM and Andrew Logan's

presentation (Manager, Municipal Services Unit, NPWS) are included.

We also have some interesting articles in the newsletter from Marg Hayes and Bruce Wharrie, and Wayne Pethybridge, and of course the usual committee members' reports.

So get some protective wax on your skis and here's hoping for a good season next year.

Laurinda Allan

From the Secretary – AGM Report

The AGM was held on 6 August 2011 at the Snowy Gums Lodge at Smiggins after the prize giving for the KCros Tour. The President, Laurinda Allan, outlined in detail our submissions on the WTS and how our concerns for XC skiers are being incorporated into the plan. She said a number of positives had resulted and that she and Bruce Vote would attend the planned bi-monthly consultations with NPWS, and that we needed to keep talking about things like the very poor condition of the over-snow access route across the creek between the Fire Station and The Man. Bruce Vote presented the Membership Secretary's report indicating that our membership stood at over 600 and about 170 members had opted for newsletters by email. Treasurer Margot Flynn's report indicated that donations had fallen since some members were no longer receiving a hard copy of the newsletter and donation form. The election of officers was conducted and following discussion included ongoing concerns about our funds, a skier scholarship, skidoo drivers on our trails, trail fees and the news of the cessation of these in Victoria, direction signage to the Nordic Shelter as well as the understanding of the name, 'Nordic Shelter' by the Public (or lack thereof), lack of poles on some XC routes, snow shoeing, grooming and the suggestion of naming the individual trails.

KCros Committee Members 2011-2012

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| President: | Laurinda Allan laurinda_allan@yahoo.com.au |
| Vice President: | Wayne Pethybridge |
| Treasurer: | Margot Flynn margotflynn1@gmail.com |
| Secretary: | Margaret McCawley |
| Membership Secretary: | Bruce Vote bruce_elaine@bigpond.com |
| Newsletter Editor: | Stephen Poole |
| Publicity Officer: | Adrian Blake |
| Web Master: | Ron Perry |
| Race Secretary: | Warren McCourt |

Prior to the AGM, Andrew Logan (Manager of Municipal Services, NPWS), addressed the gathering of racers, KCros members and friends. He distributed three

very informative sheets documenting the plan of the WTS showing how the current cancellation of the Workshop building and back road now benefited XC skiers, and talked about the planned earthworks near the Fire Station, and the possible use of retractable snow fences. He also spoke of the reduction to 20 from the initially planned 90 traffic movements per day to the WTS. He informed those present that there would be a 24-hour complaints line for the public, with a set time frame for a response from NPWS. He was thanked with a good round of applause from the audience.

Margaret McCawley

From the Treasurer

We currently have approximately \$2,300 in our account, most of which is income from donations and membership subscriptions. We have an outstanding bill of approximately \$145 which still leaves us with around \$2155. We received approximately \$800 in entry fees on the day of our inaugural KCros Tour, but most of that went straight back into expenses for the event, including the wonderful presentation and lunch at Snowy Gums in Smiggins.

As has been noted earlier, the need is still there for funds to support worthy causes in the XC community, including debt repayment and the ongoing administration and maintenance costs of the Nordic Shelter. While fund raising is certainly not the primary purpose of KCros, it is interesting to observe in the letters and notes that come through with the donations that a significant number of people value highly the work done by KCros and other volunteers in the XC community, and are extremely supportive of the Nordic Shelter and the role it plays.

In return, KCros acknowledges and values the financial support given by its members this year, including:

G & D Jones, Mr & Mrs A & C Bereny, J & SM Terry, MJ Brady, AM Morrissey, Peter Ward & Leslie Ludwig, S Hilton & GT Stevens, RG Britten & Mrs ML Britten, JA Griffiths, PJ & AE Amos, KM Clacher, R & BA McLeod, RB Horder, MP & KL Garland, DW & JR Dyce, Victor Brendon Hyde, W Pethybridge, JA & SE Brown, NA Whitely, Graeme and Cherrie Power, RM Gibson, Lyndall P Hatch, DB & MJ Biggs, DC & N Parish, AM Melville, Colin Chares & Dianne Stoner, JH Sim, VM Blumenfeld, Ross Scott, Alison Chivers & Ian Mackay Miles, PF & JR Millgate, AW Adams, Alan Hislop, Pauli Viljakainen, Rob Pillans, Joanne Momsen, K&P McHugh, P Trickett, AE Dixon, C & J Wall, NE Loder, Phil and Ann Amos, G Peters, MJ Brady, Kuringai Alpine Lodge

Because all donations are greatly appreciated and we recognise that people give according to their means, we do not generally make mention of the amounts donated. However a particularly generous donation of \$500, given without fanfare or seeking any recognition, appeared in the mail from Kuringai Alpine Lodge. For this we are very grateful and extend particular thanks.

The other point worthy of mention is that a small, but hopefully growing number of people have used the

option of direct deposit into our bank account as an alternative to cheque or money order. This is great for us – really streamlines things and helps in the record keeping as well! We strongly encourage you to make use of this facility in the future, just making sure that you give your name in the description/reference section so that we can duly acknowledge you. The bank account details for future reference are:

Bank: Westpac
Account Name: Kosciuszko Cross Country Skiers
BSB: 032 728
Account No: 119369

Margot Flynn

From the Membership Secretary

We are continuing our efforts to contact members and distribute our newsletter by email. If this is not practical for some members that's fine, but I have received some requests for both hard copy and email due to poor housekeeping. Sure, we can do this, but each copy costs in excess of \$1.50 from our scarce donated funds for printing and postage. If you practice good computer housekeeping, saving and filing attachments before deleting your emails, you will retain a copy. The current membership consists of 170 members with email addresses, as well as 450 with postal addresses only, and printing plus mailing to the latter costs KCros nearly \$700 per newsletter. KCros has a privacy policy which doesn't permit disclosure of membership details to outside bodies or other members via email distribution, so there is no chance of email addresses being passed on, or of spam being generated as a result of informing KCros of said addresses. We would appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

We lost contact with a number of members again this year due to changes in postal addresses, but email seems to have more relevance today as well as saving costs.

So that we can maintain and expand our membership, could club members please encourage their clubs and the members thereof to join. Also, please forward to us the current details of any members you know who have changed addresses.

Membership enrolment forms will be in the Nordic Shelter next winter

Bruce Vote

bruce_elaine@bigpond.com

KCros Tour 2011

The inaugural KCros Tour was held on the Perisher Valley Trails this year on August 6th. Following a week of very warm temperatures and rain, skiing on a course around the Smiggins Holes trails was not possible and the race thus had to be moved to Perisher Valley. Even on the morning of the race, snowfall quickly turned to rain, which required some Herculean efforts from chief of course Wayne Pethybridge and the ever available volunteer Peter Cunningham, out on snow and in the rain. They managed to shift and shovel enough snow around to conjure up a different course from the usual trip around the Perisher trails.

Twenty-nine hardy participants set off at the 10am start on a 13km course, with a 6km junior event held in conjunction. 2006 Winter Olympian Cameron Morton quickly took the lead and was never headed, winning in 52.12 from fellow NSW coach Nick Almoukov in 53.20. Special mention must go to Cameron's son Damon who made up a lot of ground on the second lap to take third in 54.27. Damon earned the tag during the season of the most improved skier in NSW, and is one to look out for on the international circuit in the future.

The women's race was won by former Cooma girl, but now Sydney resident, Sarah Slattery in 1hr 02.14, with Perisher instructor Marg Hayes second in 1hr 10.02, and Jindabyne resident Tina Jones third in 1hr 32.59. A number of male juniors competed in the 6km event, with Matt Bull winning in 40.57 from Tim Wall and Matt Wright. However, they were all upstaged by girls winner Sabrina Howell who completed the course in 39.11. She beat Louisa Wall and Jill Coleburn into 2nd and 3rd places, respectively. Special mention must go to 5 year old Heli Laajoki who skied a 2km course with her mother Leanne in atrocious conditions and completed it in 29.04, the first finisher home. Well done Heli!

Despite having a ski patrol member there ready to treat any potential hypothermia cases, all participants returned with smiles on their faces, saying they enjoyed the course and didn't find conditions too bad. The smiles got broader afterwards as nearly all participants (with a few extras as well) made it across to the Snowy Gums Lodge at Smiggins for the presentation and refreshments. There were also lucky door prizes for participants and volunteers. This was a great conclusion, with what started out difficult day turning out to be a great event.

The Tour is a great way for KCros to promote itself in the XC community, and helps support an active racing program in NSW. My special thanks to the committee, and to the other KCros members who helped out, both leading up to the event and on the day itself. See you again next year, hopefully on the Smiggins trails!

Warren McCourt

Summer, Not Winter, Grooming

Previous newsletters have spoken in detail about the reasons why we groom the snow, and the effect weather has on winter grooming efforts here in Australia. Given that spring has sprung, it is fitting that this time around we talk a little about summer grooming.

With the long term concern about snow reliability foremost in our minds, summer grooming plays just as an important a role as our winter grooming efforts. Last year, significant improvements were made on the Perisher trails with new easier trails being made, and with some trail re-alignment being carried out so that wet, boggy areas were avoided. Significant rock breaking, snow pole re-locating and new snow fencing works were also carried out, so all in all it was a very busy summer grooming season. These tasks were achieved with some great work done by the various volunteers, along with great materials and manpower support from NPWS.

The Perisher trail system presents its own set of challenges when compared to resorts where trails can be set mainly on roads, or where there is the option of slashing back vegetation to a low level. The natural terrain, whilst great for skiing, has more than its fair share of shrubs, wet areas and rocks to contend with, requiring a greater amount of snow before it is all covered to a skiable depth. The rocks are probably our greatest concern and, hopefully, in the forthcoming summer grooming season NPWS can have a great run at removing many of the rocks down to ground level. Besides trashing your skis, rocks cause two other problems: 1) greater snow depth is required before winter grooming can begin and skiing can commence, and 2) rocks cause a lot of wear and tear on the snow grooming equipment when hit. The removal of rocks will also allow greater use of the Ginzoo snow conditioning machine, which is cheaper to operate than the larger snow grooming machine, and is thus very useful.

Unique to Perisher is the snow fence network. As snow often falls with moderate to high winds, snow fences facilitate significantly greater cover where it is required – on the trails. After the trail direction and location is decided, determination of snow fence locations and their installation, along with rock removal, are equally important parts of our summer grooming efforts.

Hopefully, we will see some of you lending a hand over the summer period at either the Nordic Shelter or ski trails working bees. Working bee dates are as follows:

February 4-5

March 3-4

March 31-April 1

May 5-6

Thanks are due to the Canberra Alpine Club for providing accommodation for "Work Partiers." Please RSVP (closer to the dates) to Peter Ward (0409 338 978) or Peter Cunningham (0411 129 363) for further information, or if you require accommodation.

Have a great summer.

Wayne Pethybridge

Ski the world! Ski the Worldloppet circuit

Last summer, Bruce Wharrie and Marg Hayes from Jindabyne skipped the heat, and headed to the Northern hemisphere to ski 14 Worldloppet ski races in one season. The Worldloppet races are a series of 15 long distance races ranging in distance from 42km to 90km. Each country is only permitted one event as part of the Worldloppet series, though some events offer both a classic race and a freestyle (skating) race.

Marg and Bruce's rigorous schedule involved 10 snow-covered countries on 3 different continents, 20 plane flights (redeeming Frequent Flyer points on 12 flights), flying round the world twice, dozens of train and bus connections, a sprinkling of taxi fares and some friendly local car rides interspersed with lots of walking and skiing.

So why did these crazy KCros members attempt this

awesome feat? “We have cross country skied together for over 20 years and wanted to attempt our fourth Gold Worldloppet Master while our finances and bodies could still handle the challenges,” said Bruce, Town Planner for Snowy River Shire Council, who also suffers from Multiple Sclerosis. “And to meet more like-minded exciting people from around the globe,” added Marg, a teacher at a small rural school in Dalgety.

The trip involved many additional challenges, including many immigration and customs requirements, early race entries, organising accommodation, checking current transport connections, and ensuring Bruce’s daily injection medication was adequately cold-stored. However, even with the best-laid plans there are also the unpredicted challenges, which Marg & Bruce discovered nearly brought their trip to an immediate halt. Read on to find out what happened.

Marg & Bruce have done one of these mammoth adventures before, as two years ago they successfully completed 14 European Worldloppet races, including the classic-style 90km VasaLoppet. But during this latest trip they were keen to achieve *Global Worldloppet Skier* status, requiring completion of the Japanese Sapporo Int. Ski Marathon, as well as skiing 3 races in North America before returning to Europe.

Marg and Bruce left their Jindy home on Xmas Eve last year, flying out of Sydney in 35 degree celsius temperatures, to Prague in the Czech Republic with temperatures of -14 degrees celsius. Their first Worldloppet race was the Czech Republic’s 50km *Jizerská Padesátka*, then the first double weekend with the 42km classical *Dolomitenlauf* and the shortened 42km freestyle event in Austria, followed by the iconic 70km Italian *Marcialonga*, and another weekend double - Germany’s 50km König Ludwig Lauf skate then classic event before flying to Japan for the challenging 50km *Sapporo Int. Ski Marathon*. Another rigorous flight schedule to Ottawa, Canada for the *Gatineau Loppet* weekend double of 51km classic and 53km freestyle races, and then the *American Birkebeiner* in freezing conditions of minus 22 degrees celsius.

However, the unthinkable happened and only 8km into the classical 54km *Birkie*, two skiers crashed in front of Bruce, then as he was manoeuvring around the fallen skiers, one of them, oblivious to Bruce, lifted his ski and instantly tripped Bruce over, thereby breaking Bruce’s left leg.

Most people expected Bruce and Marg to immediately fly home to Australia, but Bruce had other ideas. On waking the next morning, despite an extremely swollen and blackened leg, Bruce was adamant that the original goal of completing 14 Worldloppet be altered to that of Marg completing 14 Worldloppet races with Bruce providing moral support. So, at 4am just 2 days after Bruce broke his ankle, an American friend drove Marg and Bruce to Minneapolis Airport for them to continue their Worldloppet journey. Marg and Bruce then began to realise the challenges for disabled people to travel, as everything takes so much longer, including finding disabled toilets, finding lifts, wheel-chairing through crowded airport areas...wheel-chairing through security... carrying luggage and pushing a wheelchair.

Flying Minneapolis to New York’s La Guardia, then taxi to New York’s JFK, then flying to London Heathrow and on to Prague in one day is exhausting for a perfectly healthy person, but somehow Bruce managed to stay positive and enthusiastic despite the challenging journey and circumstances, especially when our dynamic duo were bumped off one of their USA flights. Aussie friends met Marg & Bruce at Prague airport and greatly assisted with luggage transportation into Poland. And even more challenges – getting on and off a fast moving escalator in Prague was a fearful experience, then catching the subway and then bus to Poland all while on crutches and with a leg cast for Bruce, and with Marg struggling with the extra luggage. All in a day’s travel!

Marg was the only Aussie to ski the Saturday’s 50km classic Polish race, and it was the first Worldloppet race that Marg had ever participated in without Bruce. Thankfully, the Polish officials organised a VIP pass for Bruce for Sunday’s 50km skate race, and so he was able to watch Marg and the six other Aussies skate through the finish area from a glass viewing box above the finish line.

After the Polish race, Aussie friends drove Marg & Bruce back to Prague for air and train transport to the magnificent Engadin Valley for the Swiss Worldloppet race, the 42km *Engadin Skimarathon*. Huge mountain vistas dominate this valley floor course. Bruce made an appearance near the Pontresina refreshment stop to give Marg a kiss and a hug to encourage her to finish the race for both of them. So, Marg gratefully continued and successfully completed the *Engadin* despite the deep, heavy snow towards the finish. By completing this race, Marg also completed her fourth Gold Worldloppet Master. Yeah!

A train ride back to Zurich with spectacular scenery all the way, followed by a flight to Oslo, Norway and another train journey saw Marg and Bruce arrive in Lillehammer to find all the streets still covered in snow and ice. Getting around on crutches is challenging at the best of times, but with icy conditions it was diabolical, especially the 2km walk to change accommodation, so Bruce generally kept a very low profile with limited outside hobbling except to the Worldloppet reception. Yum!

The Norwegian *Birkebeinerrennet* has a reputation of being the hardest Worldloppet race, even though it is only 54km. Marg agrees that this label is well deserved, as even though it is a very hilly course with a 14km uphill at the start, it was the final descents from Sjusjeon which provided the greatest challenge as the sheer numbers of skiers had torn up the tracks, and the descents were thus like fast luge tracks where staying in control was incredibly difficult. Despite the challenges of the race, Marg successfully completed the *Birkebeinerrennet* and thus completed her goal of skiing 14 Worldloppet races in the 2011 northern winter, with Bruce’s moral support.

From Norway, Marg and Bruce flew to Ireland to stay with an Irish Worldloppet veteran, since Australians are only allowed to stay in most European countries for 3 months during a six month period. (Ireland is an exception). On the first day in Ireland, Bruce decided to

walk outside without crutches and have a try on our host's bike. He discovered that riding a bike was easier than walking and so, just 3 ½ weeks after breaking his leg, Marg and Bruce immediately bought bikes and set off slowly to spend the next 10 weeks cycling around the coastline of Ireland which was absolutely brilliant. Whilst probably not the most appropriate recuperation, Bruce reckons it was certainly the most enjoyable rehabilitation for a broken leg!

If anyone is interested in finding out more about Marg and Bruce's adventures, please check our website <http://brucemarg.wordpress.com> in *Categories* "Worldloppet Ski Races 2011" or email marg.hayes@hotmail.com or bwharrie@hotmail.com

So what's next for these crazy skiers? Bruce recently received an MS scholarship to redo the American Birkebeiner where he broke his leg, so in January 2012 Marg and Bruce will fly to Wisconsin to ski the Open Track *American Birkebeiner*, preceded of course by a quick training trip to the Czech 50km loppet race again.

Bruce Wharrie & Marg Hayes

Waste Transfer Station

The WTS proposal was approved with amendments in June 2011. As you will recall, KCros lodged objections to the proposal in 2010 and, although approved, the amendments went some way towards reducing impact on XC skiers.

Changes include removal of the western access road (access between the church and ambulance station is now two way), deletion of the workshop¹, and moving of the WTS about 4m north. Although we have been given verbal assurance of the road deletion by Andrew Logan it remains a future option in his application of August 24 to the EPRG for amendments; this needs to be clarified at the next meeting (Nov. 3).

As an important stakeholder in development of the WTS, KCros is attending regular meetings with NPWS and other stakeholders where progress will be reported on.

Below are notes from the September 15 meeting.

Attendees:

NPWS: Andrew Logan, Arthur Willis, Fran Caldwell, Tim Greville, Rob Naisby
Stakeholders: Bruce Vote, KCros; Peter Ward, NSW Snowsports; Dave Poulson, NSW Fire; Brian Smith, The Man; Michael Fearnside, Perisher; Father Miller, Catholic Church

Status of project:

Tenders closed with figures within budget. A contractor will be appointed mid-October for commencement in November and completion before next winter.

Design review:

Western road and workshop deletion forms the

basis of tender documents. A temporary access road will be built west of the fire station as construction of the WTS will be at the same time as the permanent road. This will be re-vegetated before next winter. Doors facing XC bowl have been deleted.

Environmental issues:

Identified endangered species area will be fenced. The temporary access west of the Fire Station will be stabilised and re-vegetated on completion.

Over-snow access:

Over-snow vehicles will not be permitted to access the WTS across the creek when snow levels diminish. BV reported that Emergency Vehicles used creek access after snow had gone in 2010. Garbage is still to be resolved, particularly at skier junction.

Snowfences:

Work will commence on construction of fences Feb/March 2012, exact location and design is not finalised. The fence behind WTS will be removable for snow dumping from the north.

The previously displayed snow fence diagram requires adjustment to respect lease boundaries of The Man including the fence to the east which has to move further east, moving skier access with it. This suggests to me that had the road next to the Fire Station not been removed, our access would be very restricted.

There was considerable discussion about designing snow fences to maximise safety and snow build.

Bruce Vote

Living the dream

Endless skiing, and waking up to magnificent sunrises above a white paradise of snow is the dream that Jindabyne locals and KCros members Marg Hayes and Bruce Wharrie have enjoyed this winter season. Marg and Bruce have taken a year's leave from their regular jobs as Dalgety Public School principal (Marg) and town planner at Snowy River Shire Council (Bruce) and instead spent the Aussie winter as volunteer managers of the Nordic Shelter at Perisher ski resort.

It might sound like all play and fun, but there is also a lot of work behind the scenes including: keeping up with early morning cross country ski and weather reports, digging out deep snow from machinery, breaking up thick ice for visitor safety, daily cleaning of the Nordic shelter, moving those heavy ski racks in atrocious weather, assisting enquiries regarding snow-shoeing routes, the predicted grooming regime and lost and found items. "But the positives and opportunities far outweigh those challenges," said a smiling Bruce after completing three back-to-back XC ski lessons. "And we're living amongst beautiful, multicoloured snow gums with lots of ski trails and ski touring opportunities at our doorstep," added Marg.

1 Ed. note: "Deletion" may be too strong a term here. Word from NPWS at the meeting preceding the KCros AGM was that the workshop had approval in principle from the planning authority, but that it was currently shelved due to NPWS' lack of funds; vigilance in the future will be needed.

Being qualified ski instructors has allowed Marg and Bruce to enjoy assisting newcomers to the healthy sport of XC skiing. Having first met over twenty years ago on a ski touring leadership training camp on the Main Range, they both agree that the Snowy Mountains have enough ski touring opportunities to last a lifetime. Marg and Bruce also assist interschool participants with skill improvement lessons, and lead snowshoe tours revealing some of the natural secrets of the alpine environment to visitors.

Other Shelter duties include arranging trail grooming, utilising Marg and Bruce's expertise from their time as directors of a Nordic ski centre on the Grand Canyon in the USA. Each day Bruce and Marg can be found zipping around the ski trails on narrow skating skis, or touring off track following animal prints or seeking great Snowy Mountain views. What a life experience!

Cross country skiing is a great alternative to downhill skiing and snowboarding. You can either head along the groomed trails at your own leisurely pace, exploring and discovering the snowy environment or pursue an aerobic challenge on the 2.5, 5.0, 7.5 or 10km trails. The trails are well marked and maps are located at intersections, and trail maps are also available at the Nordic Shelter where all the trails commence.

The Nordic Shelter is a fabulous gateway to both groomed ski trails and backcountry areas such as the Porcupine where views straight over the edge into Thredbo Valley and Bullocks Flat can be savoured. Everybody is welcome at the shelter, whether elite athletes training to represent Australia in the next winter Olympics or family groups out for a low-stress ramble amongst snow gums and boulders. Over \$3500 was left in the shelter's donation boxes this season, and much more was donated through the post, a great indication of the giving spirit of the cross country ski fraternity.

Even during the final days of the season, mother nature treated Bruce and Marg with a final farewell, with additional snowfalls to enjoy their last slides for 2011. "But the final shelter clean up must continue, as our touring bikes await our next adventure," said Bruce.

If anyone doesn't know, the Nordic Shelter is located 250 metres up a gentle slope between Perisher Fire Station and The Man from Snowy River Hotel and provides a heated, sheltered place to have lunch and meet up with family and old friends, or make new friends. All cross country skiers are welcome to the shelter again in 2012. Peter Ward and Leslie Ludwig will return to the Nordic Shelter management for the 2012 season, and we will look forward to seeing you there.

Bruce Wharrie & Marg Hayes

Snow Farm – Waiorau, NZ

This story is for any Aussies who have not yet made it to NZ's Snow Farm. During mid to late August this year I visited Snow Farm for the first time, it being New Zealand's only cross country resort. Once there, it was everything and more compared with what had previously been described to me. The bad weather all happened just prior to my landing in Queenstown, and from then on I had 6 glorious days of good weather, which certainly helped me make the most of the experience.

It appears that during winter the area between Queenstown & Wanaka often has some long periods of good weather, so all you need is a little bit of luck and you can crack it like I did.

The tracks are set on a network of roads, themselves specially made for cross country skiing, and being on a prepared surface means the resort can operate on minimal cover. Being located in New Zealand one would expect some mean hills, but the tracks can best be described as undulating. The roads mainly contour around the valleys and hills, and pretty much stick to the formula of one-third up, one-third down and one-third flat. I found the trail system to be perfect for both skating and classical skiing, and it caters well for skiers of all levels; I estimate there are 50-60 km of groomed trails.

If you enjoy classical skiing, Snow Farm is particularly good for this as both the terrain and the tracks are excellent. Another important aspect is that you can use stick wax for long periods during the winter, and in my time there I used only stick wax – a whole new ball game compared with conditions here in Oz.

I salute the founders of Snow Farm, as it certainly would have been a huge financial risk considering how small the sport of cross country skiing is in New Zealand, evident from the modest number of participants in their premier tour race, the Merino Muster. I can only hope Snow Farm's popularity increases, as the skiing and scenery is quite special. I believe the overall package would supply the best skiing conditions available anywhere in the world during the time of year they are open. Several top female eastern bloc skiers were there, plus the Russian sprint team and several members of both the Canadian & US teams. These top skiers all had smiles on their faces, enjoying perfect training conditions. In coming years more teams will hopefully venture down to NZ; there is plenty of room for all.

While you can stay at Snow Farm, for more flexibility you can hire a car and stay in Wanaka as I did. The commute is ~35-40 minutes, with a typical (by NZ standards) 12 km, wide but windy road to the trail head.

So I don't hog too much newsletter, I will finish by saying that if you enjoy track skiing, Snow Farm should certainly be on your to-do list. The Kiwis are experts at providing a low stress but organised, reliable holiday experience. I look forward to returning when time and finances permit. Info at: <http://www.snowfarmnz.com/>

Wayne Pethybridge

KCros Annual Donation Form

(This form is also available from our website: www.kcros.org.au)

Please return completed form to: KCros PO Box 425 Jindabyne NSW 2627

We are the lobbying and communication group for XC Skiing, and are a non-profit organisation. Donations fund the running of KCros. All committee positions are voluntary.

(PLEASE PRINT ALL CONTACT DETAILS CLEARLY)

1. Family Name.....Continuing Member/New Member

Family Members' Names *(Include ages where under 15 yrs)*

.....

OR

2.

Organisation.....

Mailing Address *(must be completed)*

.....

Your email address:.....

(We need you to write this very clearly)

Future newsletters will be sent to you via email. Please email our Membership Secretary, Bruce Vote, so we have your correct email address and know it is working: bruce_elaine@bigpond.com

If you still require a printed newsletter please tick here.....

How to give a donation to KCros:

1. Direct Transfer

Bank: Westpac Name of Account: Kosciuszko Cross Country Skiers

BSB: 032 728 Account No: 11 9369

(Please include your name in the description/reference section)

2. Cheque/Money Order payable to KCros

(Please do not mail cash, and note that we are unable to accept payments via cards)

(i) Single Membership \$10..... (ii) Family Membership \$20..... (iii) Donation \$.....

(Please tick the relevant box on the line above, and specify the amount of any donation)

3. Cash donations can be placed in the secure box marked 'KCros donations' in the Sverre Kaaten Nordic Shelter

Comments or suggestions for KCros can be written below, overleaf, or a separate sheet attached.

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