

Settlers Grove Ski

Settlers Grove Ski: 17.6 kilometers (11 miles):

The ski to Settlers Grove of ancient cedars is a beautiful winter outing along the banks of a clear mountain stream. The trip takes tenacity, but no special ski techniques, because the route follows a mountain road with quite moderate grades. The destination is a remarkable grove of cedar trees of great height and girth. The grove is beautiful in any season, but has a special beauty in the deep snow of late winter or early spring. It is recommended that the ski trip be taken during the late winter or early spring, when the winter snow pack has settled and possibly refrozen after thaws. These conditions provide a solid base over which the skier can move easily on the eleven mile round trip. Snowmobiles rarely use the road to the grove, so skiers enjoy a quiet trip, but forego any snow base preparation provide by a passing snowmobile and must settle for that which nature provides.

The road to Settlers Grove is found by driving east from Coeur d'Alene on Interstate 90. Exit at Kingston and follow the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Road (FSR 208) 23 miles to Prichard. Turn right (east) towards Murray on FSR 9 and travel 3 miles to the Eagle Creek Road. Turn left (north) on the Eagle Creek Road (FSR 152) and travel about a mile and a half, crossing the East Fork Eagle Creek, to where the road forks. Follow the west fork road (left) about 0.8 miles to the last driveway, where the snow clearing ends during the winter months. There is typically room to park cars.

The ski proceeds on up the road to Settlers Grove. The road seldom stays far from the West Fork of Eagle Creek, crossing it four times in route to the grove. After 1.3 kilometers (0.8 miles), you will reach the first bridge over the creek. Another 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) brings you to the second bridge. It is 1.3 kilometers (0.8 miles) to the third bridge. As you cross this bridge, you will see the trailhead markers for the Bobcat Springs Trail to your left. It is a substantial 3.6 kilometers (2.25 mile) ski often right next to the stream to the fourth bridge. As you approach this bridge you will notice larger cedar trees along the road. From the fourth bridge, it is a short 0.3 kilometers (0.2 miles) to the grove entrance. The road crosses Cottonwood Creek just before it reaches the entrance. A substantial log sign and a vault toilet mark the grove entrance.

From this point, a trail into the grove can be followed. The trail turns a corner to the right and descends slightly to a footbridge over the west fork. The bridge is typically full to the handrails with snow in late winter or early spring. Ski across the bridge and into the grove. From the bridge the trail goes straight north to the opposite side of the flat before it turns east over another smaller footbridge. Following the trail is advised, because cedar trees that have fallen effectively bar your way with their up to ten foot girth piled high with snow. The area of the grove is flat and the undergrowth is snowed under, so it is relatively easy to ski around the inner grove and enjoy the trees in this winter setting. Except for your companions, you will likely have the grove to yourself.

Retrace your route to the starting point. You will have the added advantage of a broken trail to follow.

