

PRESS RELEASE  
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## **AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT THE YELLOWSTONE RENDEZVOUS RACE**

March 5<sup>th</sup> West Yellowstone, Montana

The famous American Birkebeiner will take place this weekend and that means the Yellowstone Rendezvous Race is just around the corner. Whether racing in Hayward or watching the Birkie online, do not forget to register for the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Rendezvous Race by Monday, February 28. Procrastinators can push it until noon MST on Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup> and pay a late fee.

For many, the Yellowstone Rendezvous Race is a tradition not to be missed. The quirks of the race and town are old hat. First timers have a myriad of questions beyond wax recommendations. The Organizing Committee offers the following advice to even the playing field before the cannon goes off.

**How to get here:** Plug in the GPS and enter West Yellowstone, Montana (zip code 59758). It is in the tri-state area consisting of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Take Hwy 20 from Idaho Falls (IDA) or Hwy 191 from Bozeman (BZN). Stop where they intersect. Shuttles can be arranged through Karst Stage in Bozeman and rental cars are available from either location.

**Where to stay:** West Yellowstone is by nature a tourist town with an array of hotels, motels, cabins, condos, and houses for rent. A complete list of available properties can be found at [www.westyellowstonechamber.com](http://www.westyellowstonechamber.com). Race sponsors and supporters of ski events include: the Holiday Inn, Gray Wolf Inn, Brandin' Iron Inn, Comfort Inn, Desert Inn, Moose Creek Inn, and the Alpine Motel. These properties and others located in the town of West Yellowstone are within walking distance to the trailhead and race start area. Parking near the race start area on March 5<sup>th</sup> will be congested and expect to walk anyway.

**Trail conditions:** The Yellowstone Rendezvous Race takes place on the Rendezvous Ski Trails. The trail system is a fee area for the United States Forest Service (\$8/day or \$40/season) and is managed collectively by the USFS, the Chamber of Commerce, and the West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation. Approximately 80% of trail fees collected each season are returned directly to the grooming and trail maintenance program. Grooming is provided by Yellowstone Track Systems, makers of the Ginzugroomer and suppliers/consultants to the Salt Lake City and Vancouver Olympic games.

There is currently over three feet of packed powder on the Rendezvous Ski Trails. The race course will continue to be groomed to ensure quality conditions for the race start. The Rendezvous Ski Trails will

remain open on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Please be courteous to other skiers and do not ski behind the groomer in the late evening/early morning to allow the trails to set up for the race. The trailhead webcam died in late summer 2010. A replacement is in the works but may not be available by the race.

**Snowmobiles:** Due to the remote nature of the outer trails, snowmobiles are necessary to the event and used to assist skiers for medical reasons. Be polite to the volunteers. They are trying to move past as quickly and safely as possible. West Yellowstone has rerouted the South Plateau Trail to no longer cross the ski trails, so the only snowmobiles seen on the course are there to help.

**Pre-Race:** Register early and save money. Race registration closes promptly at noon MST on Thursday, March 3, 2011. No exceptions. Race packet and bib pick-up is open on Friday night from 5-9pm at the Holiday Inn (315 Yellowstone Ave.). Bring a photo ID and expect a fee to change k's on Friday night. Collect the commemorative t-shirt, talk shop with wax gurus, and get a good night's sleep. Skiers arriving on Saturday morning can pick-up race bibs at the Race Start/Timing Headquarters located in the Povah Community Center (10 S. Geysir St.) from 7-8am.

**Race Start:** The race start takes place on the old Union Pacific railroad bed. Don't worry, the train tracks are gone and there is several feet of snow between race skis and the ground. Six start times are needed to accommodate the different waves and distances. It is the racer's responsibility to start in the correct wave. If in doubt, just ask. Skiers will be disqualified by starting in the wrong wave. Porta-potties are located at the start area. There are houses in the vicinity with young children. Do not make their parents explain anatomy and manners on race day-use the provided facilities. All racers are responsible for their own warm-up gear and personal items. When the time is right, jostle to the start line and wait for the cannon. That's right, **cannon**. An authentic black powder cannon is set off by local mountain men to start each wave. Clear the puff of smoke and hit the course.

**Mid-Race:** Five feed stations are located along the course and staffed by locals. Many of the volunteers have faithfully supported the event year after year. Each station has water, drink mix, fruit, energy bars, snacks, spare ski poles, and space aliens. Vote for your favorite group and they will be handsomely rewarded. Look for photographers from Montana Stars. Individual photos from the race are available through their website, [www.montanastars.com](http://www.montanastars.com). Local grocery stores have provided \$100 each for the first 50k male and female to ski under the Rendezvous Trail Arch on their second lap. The 50k cut-off time is 12:00pm for the beginning of the second lap, 12:30pm at the first feed station. The race course will close at 3:00pm SHARP.

**Post-race:** Congratulations! After crossing the finish line, head directly to the Ambulance/Fire Station for the final feed. West Yellowstone Boy Scouts are on-hand to serve warm soup, drinks, and other snacks as skiers recover from the marathon. More ports-potties are available at the final feed.

**Awards:** The Awards Ceremony takes place at 7pm at the Holiday Inn. A complimentary dessert bar will be served. Medals are awarded to the top three finishers in each age group. In addition to the medals, all racers present at the ceremony are eligible to win a large number of raffle prizes including skis, boots, bindings, clothing and training aids. Bring the ticket found in each race packet. Prize Money will be

awarded to the top three men and women in the 50k, 25k, and 25k classic divisions. Winners must be present to collect prize money.

<b>25k Freestyle &amp; Classic</b>	<b>50k</b>
1. \$200	1. \$400
2. \$150	2. \$300
3. \$100	3. \$200

**More Fun:** Yellowstone National Park is open to over-snow vehicles until March 15. Yellowstone National Park Lodges, operated by Xanterra provides accommodations, dining, and activities inside America's first national park. Go to [www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com](http://www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com) for a late season ski-cation and help say thank you to the Yellowstone Rendezvous Race's corporate sponsor.

West Yellowstone is the home base for winter fun. There is no other place in the world where you can spend one day racing on 25 kilometers of professionally groomed trails and the next day see bison grazing next to hot springs or bald eagles soaring past geysers. The skiing options in and around West Yellowstone are not limited to the Rendezvous Ski Trails. Multiple snowcoach companies offer ski tours around Old Faithful, a skier led track will take you from the western boundary of town to the Madison River just inside the Park, or a short drive will find many trailheads for those interested in a light backcountry tour of Yellowstone National Park or the Gallatin National Forest.

March 6<sup>th</sup>. The West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation hosts ski games on Sunday morning. Watch skiers 13 and younger slip, slide, kick, and glide at the Youth Ski Festival in events such as musical chairs, obstacle course, and relay races. Registration is available from 9-9:45am and the games begin at 10am. It is a great way to wind down a race weekend, burn off energy before a long car ride, and capture once-of-a-kind photo ops.

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-9pm. Free fun at the West Yellowstone Ice Rink (*located across the street from Westmart, 100 S. Faithful Street off Yellowstone Ave*). Warm-up with hot beverages, toast some marshmallows, and make your own S'mores. All the fixings provided. Bring a sled for the Kid's Sledding Hill or try out West Yellowstone's ice skating rink. Skates available. Old-fashioned family fun for every age!

March 19-20. The Equinox Ski Challenge is a springtime celebration, a season finale and an opportunity for skiers to challenge themselves to new levels. The goal is to have a lot of fun and also complete as many laps as possible in the 3 Hour, 6 Hour, 12 Hour or 24 Hour divisions. Skiers can enter as a relay team of up to 8 members or as a soloist. Kids under 12 are welcome to enter the 24 Minute event. The weekend includes a Saturday evening potluck with beverages and an all night bonfire at the start/finish line. How far can you go? [www.equinoxskichallenge.com](http://www.equinoxskichallenge.com)

**More info:** Go to [www.rendezvousrace.com](http://www.rendezvousrace.com)! See you on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Photos courtesy of Montana Stars.