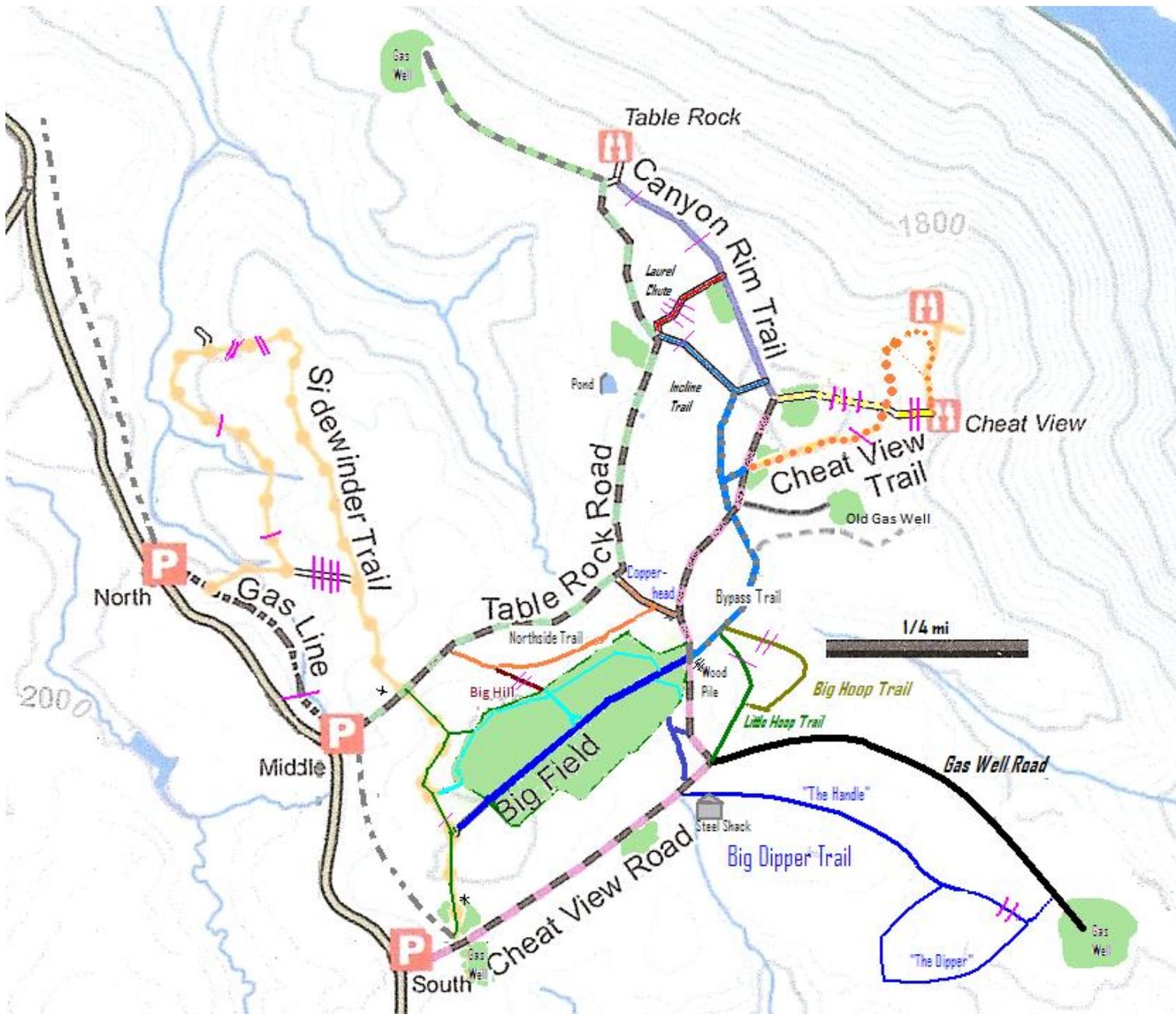


Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area Ski Map

“/” indicates a hill (hazardous). “//” indicates an even steeper hill. You ski at your own risk.



Map adapted from Coopers Rock Foundation (2009), “Coopers Rock State Forest & Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area Map & Guide.” www.coopersrock.org

Support the Coopers Rock Foundation. Public Lands Managed For the People.

Ski Trails added 2010 by Trail Fairy Enterprises, Inc. Trails were added by hand and from memory, so they are not exactly to scale, but they are pretty accurate. **Coopers Rock Foundation did not give permission for the reproduction of this map and is not responsible for it.**

Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area is accessible from Snake Hill Road (on the left side of the map) approximately 10 miles east of Morgantown, WV and 1200' higher in elevation. It is the ridge visible across the canyon from Coopers Rock State Forest overlook. It gets fairly heavy use by Morgantown cross-country skiers, since there is often skiable snow on Snake Hill when there is no snow in Morgantown, and conditions are often good when Morgantown has only patchy snow.

Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area (SHWMA)

SHWMA is managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Section. (The area was purchased by the State of West Virginia in 1996 using 60% hunting license fees and 40% general funds. The state does not own all of the mineral rights.) The managers' objective is to conserve and maintain wildlife habitat, especially game species habitat.

SHWMA is not managed as a park; it is managed for hunting.

SHWMA management is tolerant of hikers and skiers and climbers, but does not do anything to accommodate them. There is no trash removal service, potable water, or toilet facilities.

There is also no point in reporting poor trail maintenance to the management, because the management does not maintain the trails. If you want to fix a trail maintenance problem yourself it's unlikely anyone will stop you. Please do take the time to remove deadfall from the trails, but don't cut a live tree, and don't even trim anything back except maybe thorny stuff like greenbriar.

Skiers should be aware of hunting seasons (see listings at <http://www.wvdnr.gov/>). It's a good idea to wear some bright colors when skiing in SHWMA or Coopers Rock State Forest, and some blaze orange should be worn during deer and bear seasons. You probably want to just stay out of the woods during rifle buck season, which starts around Thanksgiving and goes for a couple of weeks. Be respectful and friendly to hunters, and they will mostly return the favor.

This is your public land, and you have a right to be there and to enjoy it. A few people think only hunters are allowed on WMAs, but this is not true. So, come on up and enjoy it!

Tips for Skiing Snake Hill WMA when the snow is thin or damp:

- In general, blue and purple trails require less snow to be skiable, as they are better drained and higher up.
- Often the Big Field is skiable when nothing else is. Just a couple of inches of snow is usually sufficient. To get there, park at the South parking lot, walk in through gate 50 yards, and turn left at the gas well up a gentle slope into the woods. Continue another 150 yards, and take a right at the top of a short hill.
- In less than ideal conditions it's common to ski from the South Parking Lot to the Big Field, across the Big Field to the Bypass Trail (which starts just to the left of the big woodpile), then follow the Bypass to the Canyon Rim trail and on to the top of the hill above Table Rock. This is all pretty flat.
- There's large (3") gravel on the Cheat View Road between the Big Field and the top of the hill above Cheat View. Avoid this by using the Bypass Trail instead. It starts by the waste wood pile at the northeast end of the Big Field.
- The Handle of the Big Dipper trail is also fairly flat, well-drained, and retains snow well. You can join the Big Dipper from Cheat View Road, or start at the eastern edge of the Big Field, catching a trail (shown in purple on the map) that runs through the woods down to the steel hut. This first little hill is fun and needs almost no snow to be skiable.
- Under better conditions (4+ inches), the first hills to become skiable (and the last to remain skiable) are the Little Hoop Trail and the hill just above Table Rock on the Canyon Rim Trail.

Trail Descriptions (South to North):

Cheat View Road:

This is a gravel road. Between the South Parking Lot and the Big Field, the gravel is reasonably well consolidated, and can be skied with about 4" of snow. Between the Big Field and the Canyon Rim trail, there is some larger gravel that can rip your skis unless there's a lot of snow. Better take the Bypass Trail – that's what it's for.

Big Dipper Trail:

Begins at the southeast edge of the Big Field and runs downhill to intersect the Cheat View Road at the steel shed, then the "Handle" continues very gradually uphill a few hundred yards past an old cemetery to the top of a fun steep downhill. At the bottom of the hill you can either bear left or right. The branch to the left joins the Gas Well Road, and the branch to the right joins an old logging road that forms the first part of the "dipper" of the Dipper. When the logging road peters out after a quarter mile, bear right (kind of a bushwack, really) through the woods then right again up a gradual hill through a clearing to rejoin the "handle" of the Dipper at the top of its steep hill.

Sidewinder Trail South of Table Rock Road:

Begins at the gas well near South Parking Lot. Connects to Big Field and Table Rock Road, with a couple of connectors to the Gas Line. Has one short fun twisty downhill by the Big Field, another longer more gradual downhill ending at the Table Rock Road.

Big Field:

Good flat-tracking. Skiable when nothing else is. The heart of SHWMA skiing.

Big Hill:

Halfway across the north edge of the Big Field is an obscure trail into the woods. 30 yards in, you reach the top of a steep long straight hill. Caution here, it's a straight shot but it can be a fast and bumpy ride. At the bottom of the hill you are on the Northside Trail.

Northside Trail:

Follows the contour (more or less). It's a better-drained alternative to Table Rock Road. It ends on the Copperhead Trail, near its junction with Cheat View Road.

Bypass Trail:

So named because it was created to bypass the big 3" gravel on the Cheat View Road. Crosses Cheat View Road and continues on to top of the Incline Trail.

Little Hoop Trail:

As you leave the Big Field on the Bypass Trail, the Little Hoop is the first side trail that you come to, only thirty yards or so after the big woodpile. It's a fun little hill that curves gradually to the right. Continue on to the end of the trail at the intersection of the Cheat View Road and the Gas Well Road.

Big Hoop Trail:

Steep downhill with a sharp right turn at the bottom, followed by a flat run through woods to the intersection with Little Hoop.

Cheat View Trail:

Can be accessed by crossing the Cheat View Road on a spur from the Bypass Trail. Moderate downhill through its 90-degree intersection with the Old Cheat View Trail, which is a straight steep downhill to the spectacular Cheat View. As of 2014, you no longer need to ski the steep downhill, as an extension of the gradual trail has been blazed that allows you to continue on a gentler slope down to the level of the overlooks. (This gentle slope is also definitely the best way to come back up, whether or not you ski down the steep way.)

Canyon Rim Trail:

Lovely quarter-mile of flat tracking through woods and a field to a longish steepish twistyish hill that ends abruptly at Table Rock.

Incline Trail:

Gentle hill. Good way to return from Table Rock.

Laurel Chute:

Steep short and spicy drop through the bushes to Table Rock Road. Because of its south face the snow gets thin quickly at the bottom of this hill, so it's best to check the bottom before attempting.

Copperhead Trail:

Useful connector between Table Rock Road and Cheat View Road. A good alternative to the Incline for returning from Table Rock.

Table Rock Road:

Provides a good connection between the Middle Parking Lot and Sidewinder and Northside Trails.

The portion of this road between Northside and Copperhead Trails is poorly drained and was badly abused by Allegheny Wood Products in the 2008 logging operation. Usually, this section is only worth skiing if (1) there has been a long enough cold spell to freeze the ground well, and (2) there's at least 6" of snow. Otherwise, take Northside.

The portion of this road from Copperhead Trail out beyond Table Rock has some drainage issues, but is generally OK if there is sufficient snow to ski down to Table Rock on the Canyon Rim Trail.

Sidewinder Trail North of Table Rock Road

A local ski gem prior to 2008, both the aesthetics and drainage were badly degraded by Allegheny Wood Products' 2008 logging operation. Rocky or obstructed in a couple of places. Unless there's 8" or more of snow, don't bother.