

Viking Thursday Tour Report for 13th February 2020

Centre de plain air: Saint-Adolphe-d'Howard

“And now for something completely different!” was a popular comedic quip by the Monty Python Flying Circus folks, and could aptly be applied to this particular Thursday tour! It was innocently proposed that instead of skiing, as we had done so countless times before on the western set of trails: La Sapinière (No. 2) and La Jaune (No. 3), why don't we explore “new territory” to the east, namely go outbound on the Corbeau (No. 17) and return on the Nord (No. 23). Both are clearly shown on the centre's map, although the centre's host, Jason, did advise that they were not track set, and that trail signage was lacking on some sections. We were later to learn the gravity of this!

In typical Viking spirit, the following 11 innocently signed on for this 11 km loop explorative odyssey:

Judy Rogers, Kathy Walsh, Christine Bush, Sandy Harrington, Chris Neal, Jicheng Huang, Jan Brochocki, Frank Philpott, Gordon Cohen, To Baker & Derek Wills.

We set off from the center on nicely track set trails, the Bertrant (No. 6) and Brossard (No. 5) which leads to our target trail, the Corbeau (No. 17). Humans, not machines had at least broken the trail, which eventually leads us south down to Petit Lac Long. Several feet of light blown snow on this lake made crossing it a bit of a slog! A kilometre on and we find a key trail junction for the Nord (No. 23) trail which indeed is for our northern return. This takes us to a second and much longer slog down the length of Lac Départie, the conclusion at which a road-side lunch time stop is declared. Our informal dining atop a roadside snow bank attracted the attention of a friendly local dog, a black Labrador that ended being our trail companion.....all the way back to the ski centre!

Post lunch, with batteries charged, we proceeded up the Nord trail, but began to be confused as we came upon trail junctions completely devoid of any guiding signage? We resorted to navigational discussions which considered the position of the sun, a compass bearing and cell phone apps utilizing GPS. Gut feeling won out as the trail map made little sense either! Matters worsened as the trail itself seem to fizzle out after talking us up extremely steep inclines frustratingly covered in deep, loose snow. However, luck would have it that we finally observed a lower elevation trail, perhaps an old logging trail, that seemed to be heading in the desired general direction, no signage, but did indeed finally connect us back to the ski centre network of trails.....making for a 3:45 pm arrival back, just before 4 pm centre closure!

Alas, too late to reward ourselves with a post-odyssey hot drink break as we chiselled our ice encrusted vehicles in the car park before our respective homeward bound drives.

Participants were fortunately too physically exhausted to initiate impeachment proceedings against the tour leader!

Oh yes, regarding our adopted canine friend who latched onto us, his collar had a phone number which the ski centre folks called to summon the owners for pick-up!

Derek

Photo Gallery



No complaints about the trail signage here!



Judy & Christine check out trail-side accommodations!

3 examples of trail signage being consumed by the tree!





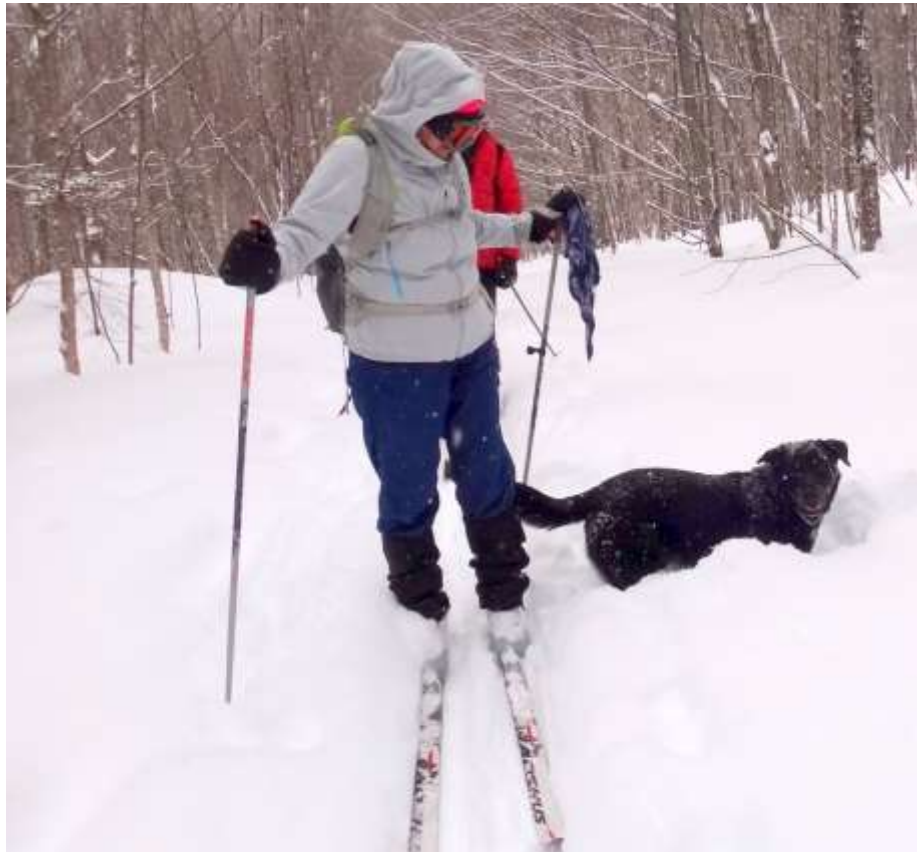
Only after crossing Petit Lac Long do we see the “ice warning!”



The long slog across Lac Departé



Our road-side lunch attracts a devoted canine friend



“Home boy, home!”all to no avail!