

Viking Thursday Tour Report for 18th February 2021

Destination: Parc des Bouleaux, Morin-Heights back-country Trail Network

Summary: Skied a loop of some 10.5 km on a cocktail mix of some 6 different trails taking ~ 3hrs

Weather: Bright and sunny, no wind and temperatures around -8 Deg. C.

Just as NASA's spacecraft Perseverance was preparing to land on Mars, some 8 Vikings landed at the Parc des Bouleaux (Birch Park) in anticipation to persevere the challenges of this back-country gem, tucked away in the northernmost boundaries of the Morin-Heights Municipality. Not renowned for brevity of titles, the obscure administrator of this unique sector is shown on maps as:

Terres publiques sous contrat d'approvisionnement et d'aménagement forestier (CAAF)

And embraces some 450 hectares, curiously devoid of roads and cottages, and being declared strictly back-country, is never perturbed by the noise and smell of track-setting equipment!

Our Thursday tour could not have been better timed inasmuch on Tuesday; Mother Nature deposited another foot of snow on the landscape, followed by a clear Wednesday whereby early birds at Parc des Bouleaux broke most of the trails, effectively relieving us of that burden when we come to ski on the Thursday...i.e. the early bird gets not the worm, but all the work of trail breaking though some 3 feet of snow coverage!

From the car park our eight-some family bubble, starts the long introductory climb up the Lovers Leap (No.16) trail, trusting that this trail name has no connection with the recently celebrated Valentine's Day? With hearts and lungs indeed "leaping" we then proceeded our traditional routing on the Swiss (No. 19), Viking West (No. 15), Rapide Blanc (No. 21) La Chasse Galerie (No.38) and Lac Green (No. 20). Credit to those who came up with these poetic trail names, perhaps not so much to the non-skiing bureaucrats who insisted on the numbering scheme!



This routing covers only a fraction of the whole park, but provides ever changing and diverse scenarios en route from towering icicle clad rock faces, to little lakes, to tunnels of trees (yes, including birches of course!)

Derek

