

By Derek Wills

With Carte Réseau ski centres either closed or offering only a fraction of their trail networks skiable, it was thought that at least one of them could offer some exploratory adventure, namely, the Viking Ski Club.....yes, it is one of the 20 listed on the Carte Réseau. Ten o'clock saw a busy clubhouse with a gender balanced turnout of 19 Vikings, plus one guest.

As trip pics attest, we enjoyed bright sunny weather, virtually windless with temperatures around - 12 deg.C, and light fluffy snow conditions. Novelty is much sought after on Thursday tours, so a suitable candidate was to ski the much neglected Crown East trail. During recent trail clearing activities, this particular traditional trail had been "re-discovered" amid a maze of old logging trails, marked, and partially cleared, but there obstinately remained property owner problems at the area around the East end of Lac Edouard where this trail begins. Notwithstanding this, and that to get onto this trail entails going along and crossing a short section of Jackson Road beyond the so called Ruins, it is a most delightful trail and great asset to "our" touring network.

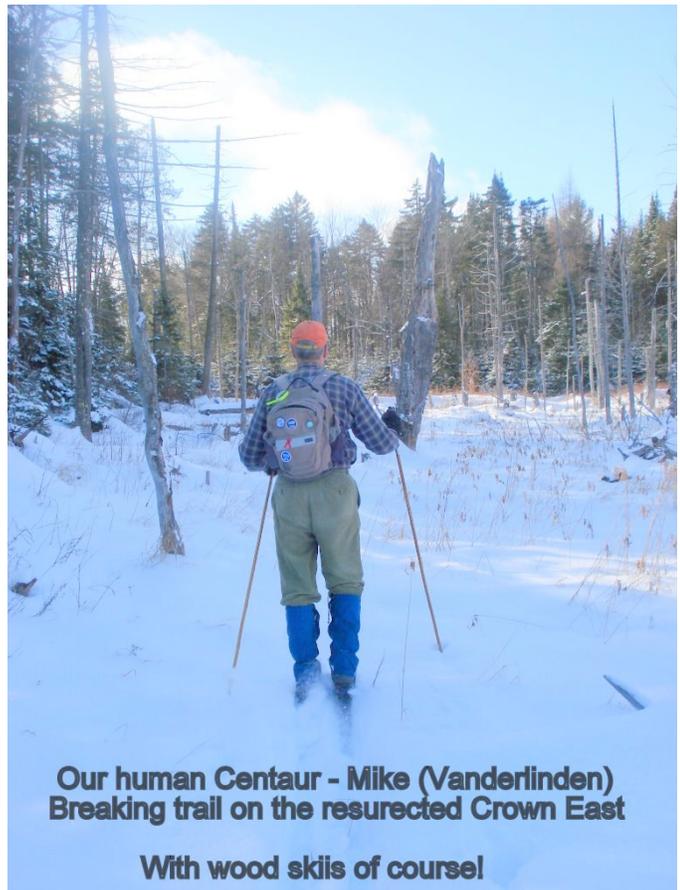
Admittedly, snow coverage was on the lean side...around 6 inches or so.....evolutionary ideal conditions for rockadile breeding! About half of its 2 km length is on Crown Land and concludes midway down Lac Dey at trail junction G4. Not to be too ambitious on our first Laurentian outing, we opt to generally head back on the Crown West trail, rather than take on the circuitous Crown South: we enjoy a stand-up lunch at the sunny end of Lac Hills.

Return is via the Red/Green trails and we end up at that not so encouraging section of the Viking map that says "Walk or ski on road", bemoaning the fact that a string new housing construction over the years has forced us onto the road!

En route Tim (Baker) has the misfortune to break a pole, but thanks to Gordon and his skills with stringy granny knots (duct tape not being immediately at hand), a robust splint arrangement is contrived which suffices long enough for the return ski! We conclude with breaking trail on the revised routing of the "roller coaster" Green trail.....once again, re-routing was forced upon us by a determined developer who demonstrated with physical barriers, that they did not want the trail passing by his new construction. Fortuitously, the re-routed Green trail is primarily on land owned by a Viking member!

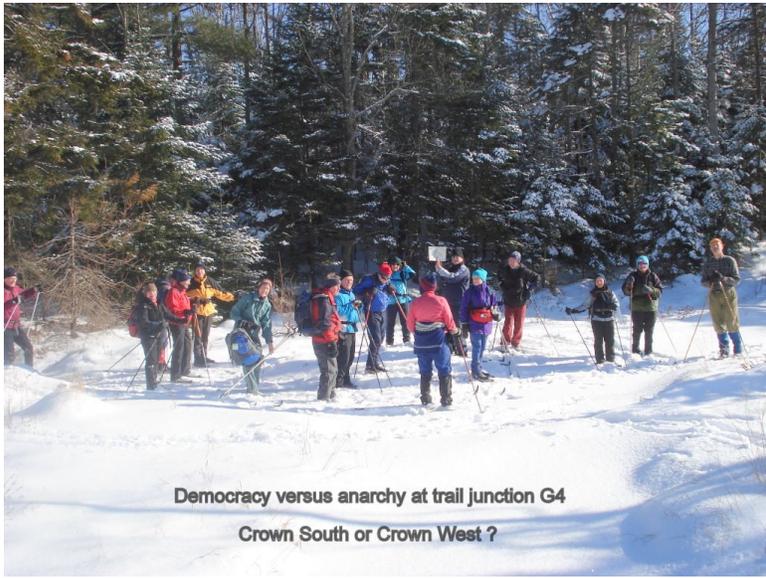


Thursday troops at the start of the Crown East trail

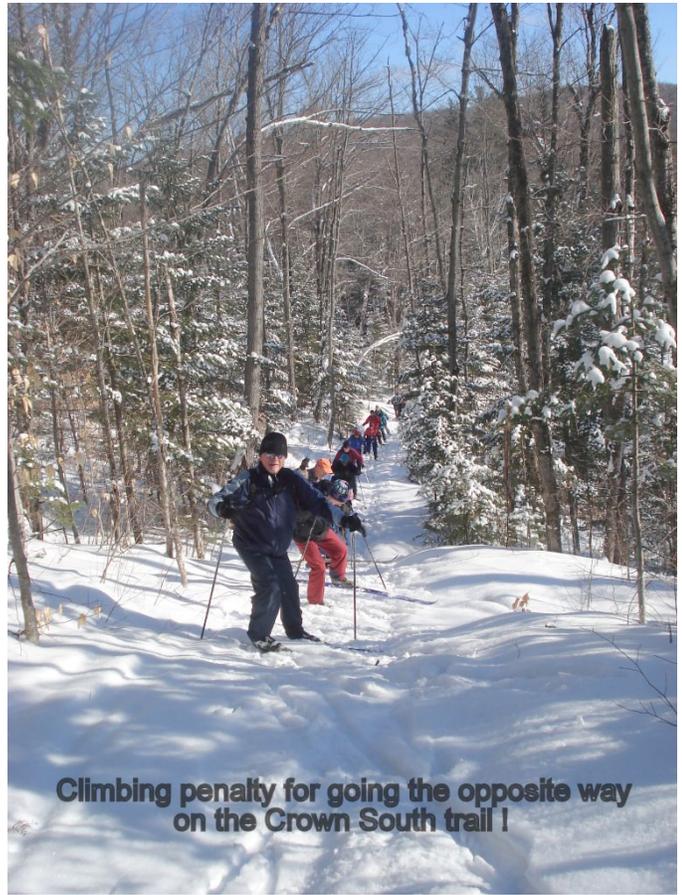


Our human Centaur - Mike (Vanderlinden)
Breaking trail on the resurrected Crown East

With wood skis of course!



**Democracy versus anarchy at trail junction G4
Crown South or Crown West ?**



**Climbing penalty for going the opposite way
on the Crown South trail !**



Sunny end of Lac Hills serves as our lunch stop