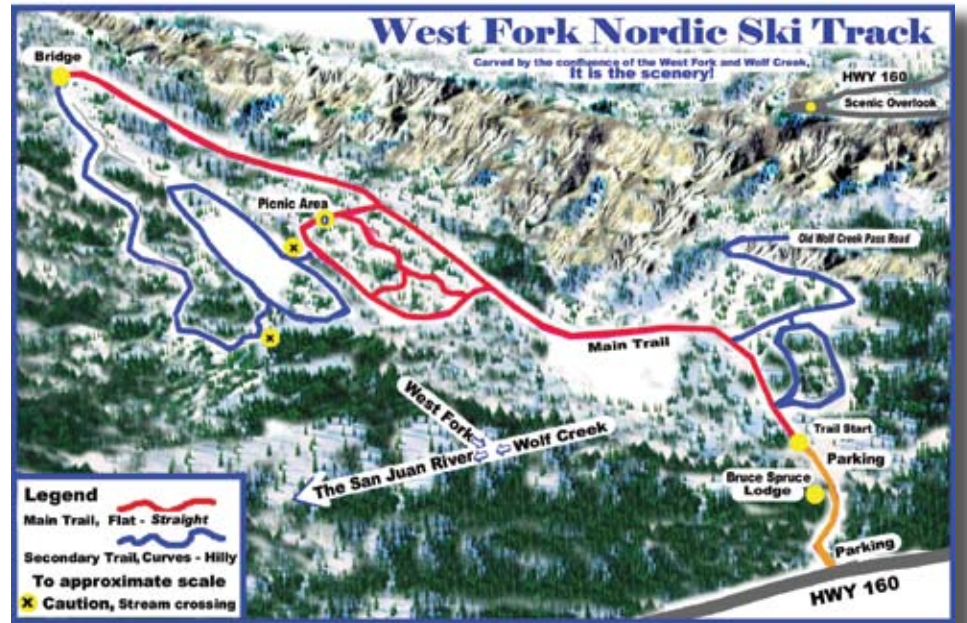


# Snow Sports at the Top of The World!

*Ski, Snomobile, Sled, Snowshoe, and More*



Left: Jim Smith Realty's Deb Hornbacher (in red jacket) and Friends strap on snowshoes and take on the powder!



By Norm Vance

When people stop at the summit of Wolf Creek Pass they often are heard talking about how the Continental Divide divides the country and how the rivers go either east or west to the oceans. That is interesting and true but a little short sighted.

If you think about it, while looking east, the rivers and the earth go downhill to the Atlantic Ocean. The rivers stop there but the earth continues, it goes on down to the bottom of the Atlantic and then climbs back up and does not reach elevations as high as Wolf Creek Pass until you get to the Alps in Europe. Looking west the distance is even greater, crossing the Pacific Ocean and South Asia to the Himalayas. Sure there are other high peaks scattered about but on this side of the planet the divide, from Alaska down through South America, including Wolf Creek Pass is truly the "top of the world."

The area around the pass has always been a favorite place to play during winter. In recent years the Southwest has suffered a prolonged drought and many winters have passed with the only easily accessible and good snow on top of the pass. With most other access roads and areas bare of snow, most snow sports were drawn to the pass. This effect has produced a very busy "playground at the top of the world." Snowmobilers, snowshoers, snowboarders, cross country skiers, sled and tube riders, snowman builders, and sightseers all vying for their own spot to play.

Fortunately there is a lot of space up there and some local citizens and the National Forest Service formed a task force that is overseeing the area and making improvements. New rules and signs to inform the public about current access are in place. PLEASE, TAKE A MOMENT AND READ THE SIGNS.

## LOBO OVERLOOK

This three mile road has a snow trail up to the top of a mountain where an old, now unused, microwave relay facility is located. The trail is open to snowmobilers and all other modes of snow travel. The view from the top is spectacular with snow-capped peaks and views of a hundred miles plus.

Snowmobiles are used mostly to carry or pull snowboarders and telemark skiers to the top. These machines make several round trips during a day's sport. Snowmobilers should realize this is not the place to go fast. There are many blind corners and hills and many other people on the trail. Great care and consideration must be used.

There are some very nice open faces and a cleared power line slope that snow boarders enjoy. Boarders should keep in mind that the power line slope and other trails empty onto the main trail. Go slow and enter the trail with care. One, you might collide with someone and two, if you whiz across the trail, in some spots; it will be a long, long, LONG time before you get out!

Cross country skiers and snowshoers enjoy both the main trail and other single track trails. One of these single track trails exits directly from the parking lot and climbs up the mountain, for the extra

hardy. Look to the west side of the large sign for this trail.

## SLED AND BOARD HILL

Just at the end of the parking lot is a long sledding and boarding hill with several "hits" or jump ramps built on the slope. These are refreshed after each snowfall. Sledding seems to be a safe sport but on this hill, formally a ski slope, high speeds are common. Be careful and watch children at all times. Snowboarders use this same hill and everyone should stay clear of the jump landing areas.

## SNOWMOBILING Wolf Creek Road Trail

On the south side of the summit is a large parking area that looks south into a wide and open meadow. This area is used predominately for motorized access and is a snowmobiler's entrance to a vast web of snow trails including access to the Wolf Creek Access Road Trail. Wolf Creek Road Trail has a separate entrance about 1.5 miles west of the summit and is often groomed by the Wolf Creek Trailblazers Snowmobile Club.

Extreme care should be used in this area. Some snowmobilers leap blindly from jumps at high speed. This not a good practice and there are no warning signs. It is wise to stay in the open areas and refrain from riding at the crest of hills.

## CROSS COUNTRY SKIING Falls Creek Road

The Falls Creek Road Trail does not have a natural connection with the top of the pass or Wolf Creek Road Trail and has primarily become a very nice cross country ski trail. It climbs, via switchbacks, to the top of the ridge south of the highway. Telemark skiers enjoy skiing down the main drainage path that crosses the main trail often.

## WEST FORK SKI AREA

The West Fork Ski Area (see map above) is a nice cross country trail near Treasure Falls on the West Fork of the San Juan River. Three summer camp grounds become ski trails in winter with picnic tables and restrooms along the way. West Fork is a beginner to intermediate trail with few hills.

## BIG MEADOWS

On the east side of the pass is Big Meadows Road Trail. This trail is groomed by the South Fork Snowmobile Club. A nice frozen lake is found a short distance from the trailhead and then the trail climbs for many miles north toward the divide.

The WOLF Creek Snow Playground is a lovely and exciting experience. From great trails to scenic views that have no parallel, something can be found for everyone. The area is more peaceful on weekdays and very exciting on weekends. There are no facilities of any type in this area. Bring lunch or snacks, liquid refreshment and a lot of extra film, memory and video tape.

**TLC BUILDERS, LLC**  
 Tracy Leonard, General Contractor  
 "Every House Should Be Built with TLC"



Custom Homes Turnkey

"Quality • Integrity • Honesty • Excellent Customer Service"

Glen & Kathy Toner

"Reliable • Honest • A Joy To Work With  
 • Excellent Doesn't Even Come Close"

Dr. John & Claudette Brimhall

Join these satisfied customers — give us a call to get started on your home!  
 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147 • (970) 799-1473 • TLCBuildersllc@yahoo.com