

Secret Stash at Timberline

There's a place at Timberline I really enjoy skiing. It's a place off the beaten track. In fact, it is slightly out of bounds. See the photo.



Zig-Zag canyon & Mississippi Head

Is that really Timberline?!?! Yes, it is. Not many people know how different the terrain can be up there. Those cliffs are called Mississippi Head, and they tower above Zig Zag canyon. You can admire them from where I am standing, but you'd better not ski down to them, because then it becomes extremely difficult to return to Timberline. You can briefly enter into the beginning of Zig Zag canyon, higher up than where I am standing in the photo, make a few turns, and then you must exit to the left (back toward the lifts) before going down too far!

This is located west of the Palmer chair. To get there, all you have to do is take the earliest opportunity to go under the Palmer lift (after getting off at the top) and proceed to traverse westward - toward Portland, and toward Illumination Rock. If you find yourself right underneath Illumination Rock, you've gone a bit too far. But, traverse far enough for the Palmer lift to disappear below the horizon behind you. Then ski cautiously down, because the terrain changes abruptly.

After only about a dozen turns (or less), the start of the Zig Zag canyon comes up suddenly, and the western half of that bowl is extremely steep, which you wouldn't expect at Timberline. So, don't go there in foggy weather. Even on sunny days, the sudden increase in steepness can be very surprising.

The entry into the canyon is much easier from the eastern side. But, if it still looks too steep, no worries. You don't have to go into the canyon at all. Simply ski

along the very smooth and mellow top (along the left side of the canyon, looking down). The terrain there is actually less steep than the main run under the Palmer chair. So, you can simply go sightseeing, traversing just to the edge of the canyon to take a look and admire the sudden change in scenery, but then take just a dozen turns alongside the canyon before heading diagonally back toward the base of the Palmer lift.

On the way back, you might run into the beginning of a smaller, appropriately called: Little Zig Zag canyon. It's easy to either go around it or ski in and out of it, traversing across it. Don't go too far down!

Everything described here is slightly out of bounds, but there is a trick that makes it perfectly legal to venture there (though at your own risk, of course). The trick is to simply stop at the Timberline day lodge, and register as a climber in the little room at the very entrance to the lodge. Just remember to sign out at the end of the day, or there might be a search party looking for you.

It's perfectly safe if you know what you doing and if you turn back soon enough. Last Sunday, I spent most of the day in that area, taking about 9 or 10 runs there. It's not often that the snow is so good and skiable. So, if you encounter good snow, try it, if you wish.



Top of Zig-Zag canyon

Here's another look at the start of Zig Zag Canyon.

This photo was shot higher than the previous one. This photo was taken right after I just got past the relatively steep entry point. From here, you should take no more than another 2 or 3 turns before exiting to the left. By the way, that's Ski Bowl in the background.

Is Zig Zag Canyon skiable all the way?

Last month, we wrote about skiing into the top of Zig Zag canyon, but also having to ski out of it almost immediately, to get back to the lifts safely. In the photo, I am standing about as far down as one can safely go.



But, look at that canyon below! It beckons. It's huge. The Mississippi Head cliffs in the picture are enormous. If you could ski all the way from the top of the Palmer lift down to the Kiwanis camp (not far from Hwy 26, that would be an awesome 5,400 vertical feet, more than the total vertical available at Whistler.

But, beware! People have gotten lost in the Zig Zag canyon area. It could be dangerous. It could be a lot of work on the lower part of the mountain. Notice that this is NOT a call to action. At least not yet, until we can find out more. Notice that the article title is a question, not a statement.

Does anyone know if this area might be skiable all the way to Hwy 26? The upper part sure looks inviting.

One way to find out is to hike the area, to scout it out in the summer, without all the cumbersome ski gear. If there is a long hike out of the canyon, on flat terrain, this might be easier to explore in hiking boots than in heavy ski boots. Same thing if the forest is too dense for skiing.

The most likely approach seems to be from the Kiwanis' Camp road, which forks to the left from Hwy. 26 (when driving eastward), at the place half way between Rhododendron and Government Camp, where the road widens to make room for chaining up in the winter. It's the place just before the highway starts a steeper climb and hits two large S curves, one of which is the so-called

Map turn (where the map of the United States is visible, carved from the forest on hill). It is before reaching those curves that the paved Kiwanis' Camp road takes off diagonally to the left. It seems to end at the Kiwanis Camp. There is a trail from there that eventually connects with trails around Timberline lodge.

The main question seems to be: How skiable is the lower part of the mountain, where you have to find your way through the trees? Also, do you simply follow the canyon and the Zig Zag river all the way? Or do you need to get onto one of the ridges on either side?

Is anyone interested in an exploratory hike? There are two ways of doing it. With one car, it might be best to park it at the end of the Kiwanis' road and hike up, and then return back down to the same spot.

If we had two cars, it might be less work to leave one car at the end of Kiwanis' Camp Road, take the other car to Timberline Lodge, and then hike downhill from Timberline, looking for ways to reach the Kiwanis' Camp.

The trail from Timberline to Kiwanis' Camp definitely exists, and it passes by Hidden Lake. The big question is how skiable is the terrain around there.

Anyone interested in this adventure, contact Emilio at Emilio2000@earthlink.net, or call 1-503-378-0171.

Let's hike it this summer, and ski it next spring, if possible.

Weather Forecast

For a long-term 15-day forecast, check out the following web site:

<http://>

[www.accuweather.com/
adcbn/public/
local_index.asp?zipcode=97028](http://www.accuweather.com/adcbn/public/local_index.asp?zipcode=97028)

This will give you the weather for Government Camp.

Exploring new terrain - by Emilio Trampuz



I love finding places I haven't skied before, even at ski areas I've already skied for years! In the past few years, this has become a real passion.

Surprisingly, I keep finding new hidden corners. Last year, I discovered FRIGHT trees at Mt.

Hood Meadows. This year, I discovered a couple of new (to me) canyons and gullies at Timberline.

Timberline has a wealth of terrain that can look quite different from what you are used to seeing there. The scenery can change dramatically. Granted, most of these "new" places are slightly out of bounds, but you can enjoy them safely and legally as follows:

- a) Register as a climber in the Day Lodge. But, remember to also sign out at the end of the day, so they don't send a search party looking for you.
- b) Do it on a sunny Spring day, when the snow is firm and smooth and the ungroomed snow is easy to ski, especially when it softens up to corn snow.

For the next 3 Saturdays in May - 9th, 16th, and 23rd, I will gladly show you some of these hidden treasures, if you join me. See page 1.

Skibowl's 80 anniversary

Skibowl has marked it's **80th anniversary** with a number of events, one of which was the production of a video on DVD, about the history of skiing in the area. The DVD is titled: "80th Anniversary of Skibowl".



Skibowl has graciously donated DVD copies of the history video to the **Mt. Hood Museum**, in Government Camp, where the DVD disks will be for sale at the museum bookstore.

NOTE: Skiing will be **free** at Skibowl on Sunday, May 10th.

Pond skimming at Mt. Hood Meadows

On April 25th, 120 people braved the cold and stood in line for a long time in very windy conditions, just for a chance to prove their skill at pond skimming. The theme was Hawaiian. There were very creative costumes, with people dressing up as a volcano, or a canoe. Our very own **Jim Trindle** got soaked. But **Bruce Kuper** managed to not only cross the pond twice, but also win 3rd place overall, dressed as King Kamehameha II.



2009 Mt. High Photos

Photos from the past winter season have been posted on our [Recent Photos](#) page on the web site, and a few short videos added to our [Videos](#) page. The photos are from:

1. Dancing at Bushwackers
2. Golf
3. Rat Attack party
4. Heavenly / Tahoe trip
5. Hope on the Slopes, Skibowl
6. Crystal Mt. bus trip
7. Chocolate Party
8. Schweitzer + 49° North trip
9. Bowling for Terry
10. Whistler Cabin trip
11. Mt. High Ski Training Day
12. Vancouver ski areas
13. Canada Ski Safari
14. Mt. High Wine Tour
15. Ski Fair at the Monarch

Mt. Hood: Zig Zag & White River canyons

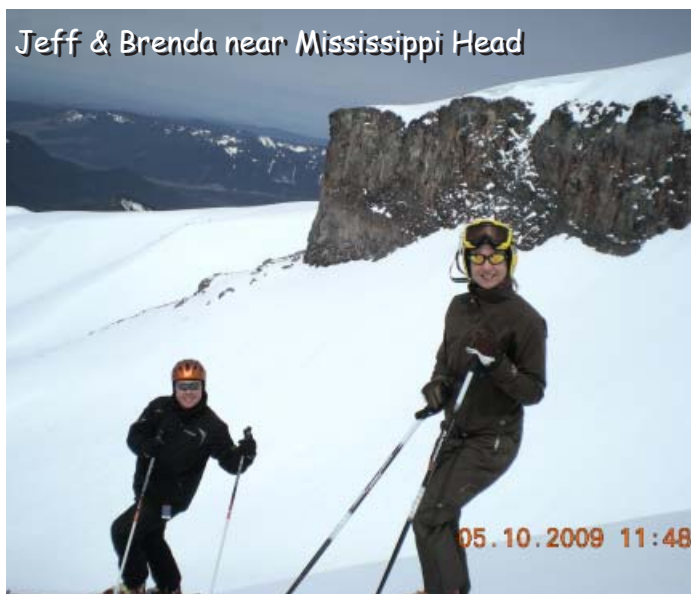
Last month, we suggested the first three Saturdays in May for a visit to the “side-country”, which is skiing the backcountry next to established ski areas, using the lifts for uphill travel, but then proceeding to ski out of bounds. At Timberline, this can be safely done if you simply register as a climber in the climbers’ room at the Day Lodge.

On May 9th, it seemed at first that only **Kay Kinyon**, **Kurt Wilke**, and **Will** (a new snowboarder guy) showed up to ski with **Emilio**.

On the other weekends, several others showed up too, including **Sandra Kaufman**, **Randy Lew**, **Colin Brandt**, and toward the end of the month, a whole bunch of **Mt. Hood Ski Kats** members too!



Kay, Will and Kurt above Zig Zag Canyon, with Illumination Rock on the left.



Jeff & Brenda near Mississippi Head

Later, we found out that a couple of other groups of Mountain High members ventured out of bounds too, independently of each other, and at slightly different times and places.

On May 10, **Jeff** and **Brenda Ackerson**, and **Bob Lawrence** went into Zig Zag canyon. Jeff said (in reference to the image/map on the next page, showing Zig Zag canyon and the route taken):

“This is what we skied last weekend only it was covered in snow. Think of it as a whole new Heather Canyon Area for the month of May or spring skiing. Heather Canyon is a nice winter backcountry area at Mt. Hood Meadows but this ranks right up there too. I think we will be getting the \$99 spring pass (March, April & May 2010).”

Meanwhile on the same day as the first group, May 9th, **Bruce McGavin**, **Mike Ferrell** and **Violet Anderson** climbed Mt. Hood from the Meadows parking lot (with a foot of fresh snow on it) up the ridge above the Cascade Express chairlift to 9,300 feet at the top of the White River Canyon.

From there, they skied into the White River canyon, for 4,000 vertical feet all the way down to Hwy 35.



Violet, Mike and Bruce.



Violet Anderson in White River canyon.

Exploring new terrain - Zig Zag canyon



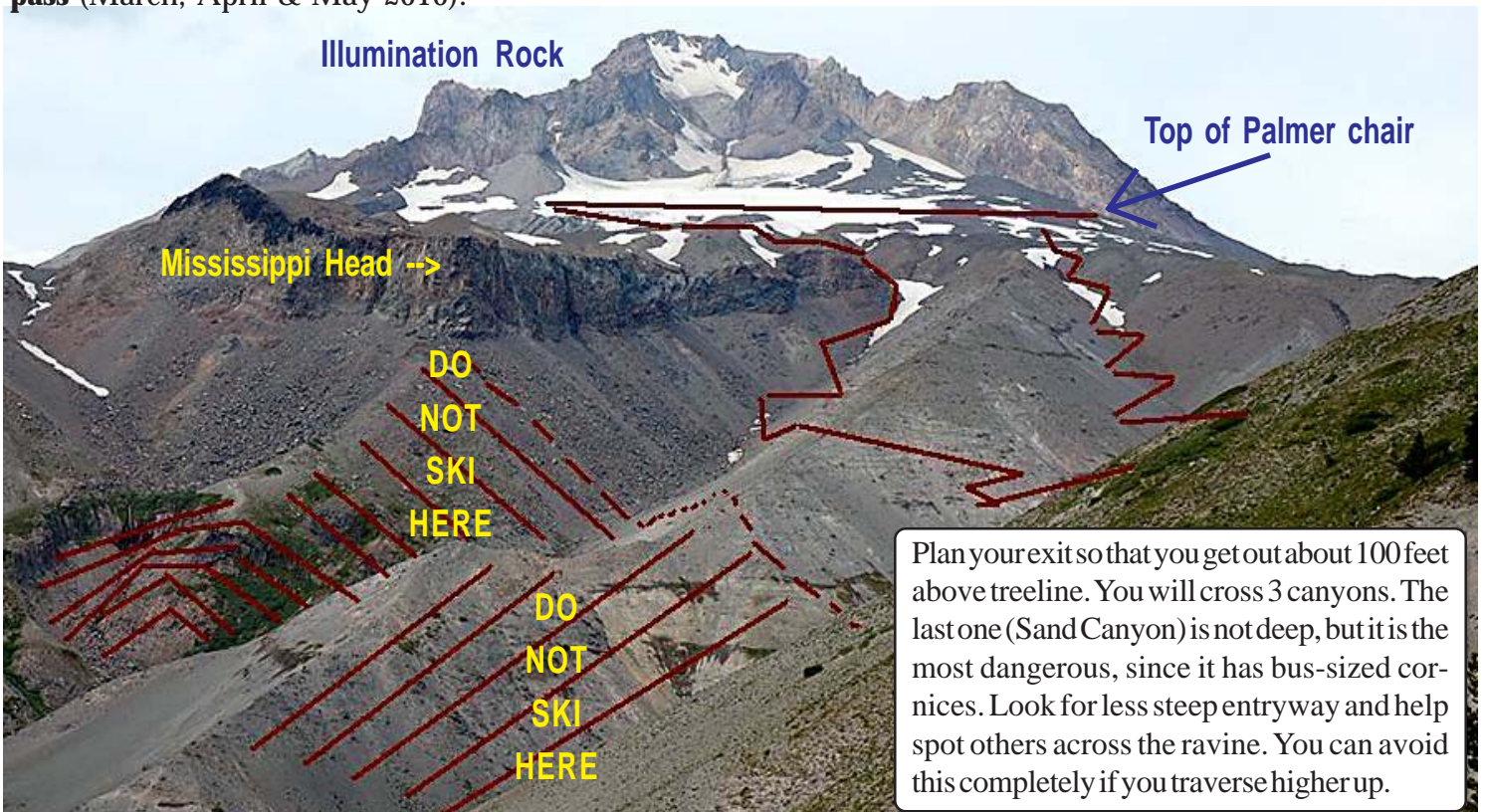
George Laird on telemark skis

May 16, 2009. Jill, Sandra Kaufman, Randy Lew and Colin Brandt joined Emilio Trampuz to ski the top part of Zig Zag canyon, near Mississipi Head (the cliff).

Note: Zig Zag canyon can be a trap. Don't go too low into it. Traverse to your left and back to the lifts,

Bruce Ellison, George Laird (in photo) and Bill Sundermeier climbed up to Crater Rock, had lunch at Hog's Back, and then skied down to the top of Zig Zag canyon looking for Emilio and his party, but somehow never connected. George was on telemark skis.

Jeff Ackerson wrote: "This is what we skied last weekend only it was covered in snow. Think of it as a whole new Heather Canyon Area for the month of May or spring skiing. Heather Canyon is a nice winter backcountry area at Mt. Hood Meadows but this ranks right up there too. I think we will be getting the \$99 Timberline spring pass (March, April & May 2010)."



Illumination Rock

Top of Palmer chair

Mississipi Head -->

DO NOT SKI HERE

DO NOT SKI HERE

Plan your exit so that you get out about 100 feet above treeline. You will cross 3 canyons. The last one (Sand Canyon) is not deep, but it is the most dangerous, since it has bus-sized cornices. Look for less steep entryway and help spot others across the ravine. You can avoid this completely if you traverse higher up.

Let's Ski Mt. Hood! (Maybe a bit out of bounds) - by Emilio Trampuz



Timberline

Just a little bit away from the lifts, the scenery can change dramatically, even more than in this photo, and there's nobody there!

Saturday, May 15. Ski season is still going! There is now more snow than ever this winter. There are two choices for skiing this weekend, depending on the kind of pass you have, or what the weather might be like.

Choice 1: Mt. Hood Meadows. This is the last weekend of operations for Mt. Hood Meadows. If you already have a pass, make the most of it!

Choice 2: Timberline. It will remain open for skiing all summer, but now is the best time to go. If we are lucky, both Palmer and Jeff Flood Express will be open, so we can ski it top to bottom, for a total of about 4,500 vertical feet per run! We could take a couple of runs in Zig Zag canyon, and maybe one into White River

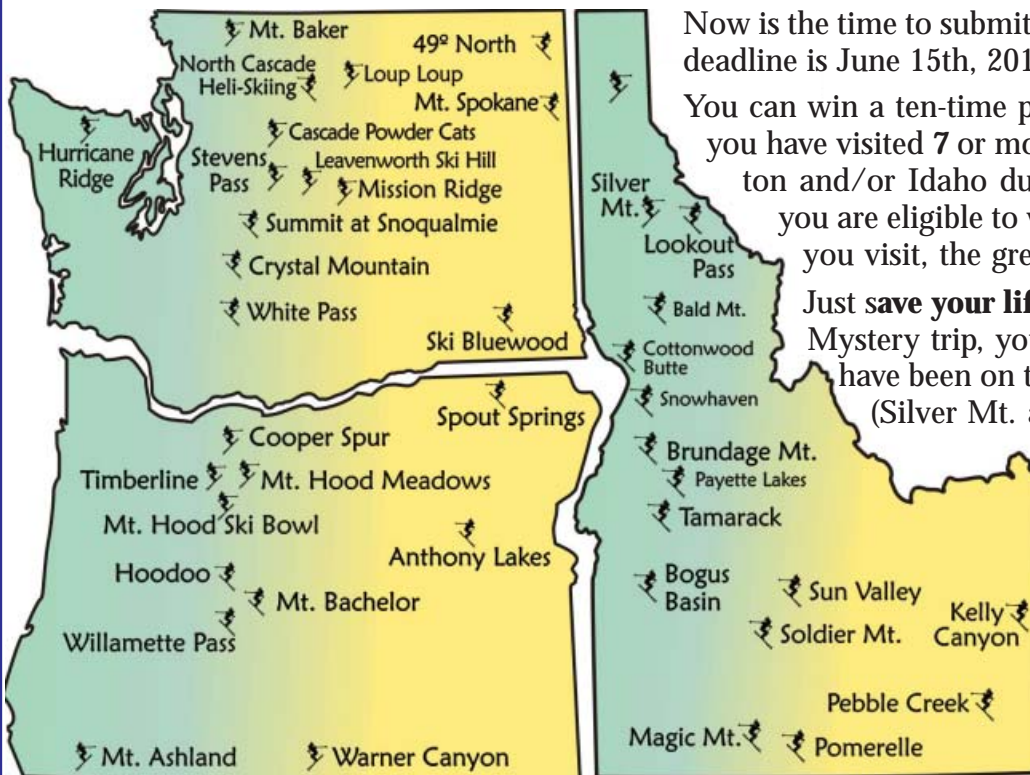
canyon. Spring is the best time to try this. Any intermediate skier can do this when the snow is good.

Personally, I plan to go to Timberline, and then venture slightly out of bounds. Let me show you how to do it perfectly legally. Also, see if I can show you a place you have never visited before. It's perfectly safe if you know your way around or go with someone who does. But read George's cautionary tale on page 9.

Let's meet at **McDonald's** in **Sandy**, around **7:15 - 7:30 am**. From there, we can arrange some carpooling on the spot. Or we can decide to take all our cars up, so we can position them at either Government Camp or at White River canyon, if conditions are favorable. Contact **Emilio** at newsletter@mthigh.org

NWSCC

Northwest Ski Challenge - by David Schor



Now is the time to submit your entry for this contest! The deadline is June 15th, 2010.

You can win a ten-time pass to Mt. Hood Meadows. If you have visited 7 or more resorts in Oregon, Washington and/or Idaho during the 2009-2010 ski season, you are eligible to win a prize. The more ski areas you visit, the greater your chance of winning.

Just save your lift tickets! If you've been on the Mystery trip, you already have 2 tickets. If you have been on the Fernie trip, you have 2 more (Silver Mt. and Bluewood). Add the 3 Mt. Hood areas and you have 7.

To qualify for a prize, submit your lift tickets (or receipts) to: NWSCC, PO Box 1915, Portland OR 97207.

Please use the **entry form** posted at the Council's web site: NWskiers.org.

Little Zig Zag Temptation - by George Yun



George Yun

April 30, 2010. I am so happy today ...to be inside and sipping hot coffee. I could be wandering around in Mt. Hood National Forest somewhere far away from any civilization. The lure of the recent snow storm on Hood was just too strong for me to ignore and I found myself at Timberline Lodge early yesterday morning

grinning ear to ear taking a mug shot for the \$99 spring pass.

I am still grinning on my first chair lift up at 9:15; the wind is howling, sky puking snow, it is freaking blizzard condition on April 29th...what's not to like? After a couple of yo-yo runs on Timber-flat, I quickly recall why I don't visit Timberline when Palmer is not operating ...OK, no problem, it's time to go exploring. I get off the Storming-Norman chair lift and veer to skiers right, which I know is out of bound area but I also know, or thought I knew, that I can cut back in-bound little ways down and still catch the Stormin' Norman lift.

I must have had a momentary lapse in my senses to register time and distance as I merrily carve down the winter wonderland. I finally stop to think - Hey, wait a minute, I've been skiing untracked powder for awhile but haven't seen a soul. In retrospect, I should have retraced my tracks and start climbing back up right there and then.

Instead I convince myself that I can still catch the S-N lift, I just need to ski down little farther and keep veering to the left toward the ski resort. It was an easy decision for I am such a lazy/typical downhiller - I only like gravity when it's working for me but just loath boot-packing up hill in knee-deep snow. Beside, skiing untracked powder in nicely spaced trees never gets too old.

Down, down, and away I go. The snow is getting denser/wetter and trees are getting little thicker, and it finally dawns on my thick skull that I am now way below the Timberline lodge. I check my pocket for a cell phone, which I left in the car - brilliant! I also left the backpack that I normally carry water and extra gears in back at home - brilliant! Then I have an aha-moment: Wait a minute, there is a govy-trail that runs from Timberline to government camp and I am bound to hit it if I keep veering to my left. Gosh, I'm so facking smart I constantly wet myself! ...Happy skiing once again!

Now trees are getting really thick and terrains have flattened somewhat but there is still enough snow cover on the ground to maneuver around obstacles without taking the skis off ...until the steep drop-off into little canyon with creeks running through at the bottom. No problemo, all I have to do is ski down and cross the creek to the other side where it looks open and I am bound to catch that govy-trail.

I am down in the caynon and cross the fast moving creek. The other side quickly turns into impassable jungle. I am now carrying skis on my shoulder and walking on rough uneven terrain in my ski boots, getting slapped by recoiling tree-branches. The creek runs through steep ravine with thick brushes on both sides and going back up is no longer an option. No problemo, now the other side looks passable and I just need to cross it one more time ...I think I am becoming proficient at creek crossing on snow covered fallen-logs in my ski boots with smooth bottom ...I may have a career in circus after this.



Trudge on ...and on ...and on ... forget govy-trail now, I think Hwy-26 is just around the corner!

I see in distance what appear to be dog-paws/tracks on snow along the creek side and I am hopeful the civilization is nearby. I get closer ... wow; it must be a BIG dog ...or is it ...those are not dog tracks but bear paws, deep and clearly visible and freshly imprinted bear tracks. I can only hope it's not too hungry ...or mad ...fack! Nothing I can do but to trudge on ...and on ...and on!

Hallelujah, I am beside myself with joy. I see ahead what appears to be man-made trail system. I know for sure now that I won't be spending a cold night in Mt. Hood National Forest with hungry bears with twinkle in their eyes. I followed the trail for another 2 miles or so and I come to an empty parking lot. I remove the snow off the information board and see that I am at where "Little Zig Zag Falls Trail" starts. I haven't ran into

any hikers on trail and I doubt I will run into one now. The road leading to parking lot looks remote and completely deserted and rain coming down steadily. As I contemplate the long walk in my ski boots on concrete asphalt, a pickup truck comes around the bend and two guys get off. They work

for forest service to maintain many trail systems on Mt. Hood. I get a ride to the Timberline road where it intersects Hwy 26. I hitch-hike a ride with snowboarders the rest of the way up, and by the time I got to my car, it's almost 4:00 pm. All things considered, it was a great day!

Editor's note: I totally sympathize with George, because I had a long, exhausting trek while scouting out this area last Summer. For the past couple of summers, I've been hiking the area between the end of Kiwanis Camp Rd. and Timberline, looking for a skiable path. I haven't found one yet (except for Alpine and Glade), but here's what I found, from Timberline westward:

Alpine Trail is perfectly skiable. Start at the bottom of Stormin' Norman and end at the Summit ski area.

Glade trail is skiable. Start at the top of Jeff Flood and end in the middle of Government Camp (near Huckleberry Inn), but you'll have to walk the last 200 yards or so, on a paved road in Government Camp.

Sand canyon is skiable down to an orange sign suspended between two trees, telling you to "Leave canyon here for Glade trail." End up in Govie. If you stay in Sand canyon, it will merge with Little Zig Zag

canyon, and you are in for a 5 or 6 hour trek through brush and forest, having to cross the stream more than once. If you get caught here in the afternoon, you might not make it out before dark. George must have skied in the area between Sand canyon and the Glade trail. His approximate route is in orange. Had he been in Sand canyon, he would have seen the large sign.

Little Zig Zag canyon is skiable at the top, above treeline, but you must exit when the first trees appear.

Hidden Lake trail, between Little and Big Zig Zag canyons. Might be skiable if there's lots of snow, but there are some flats and uphill - not easy in deep snow.

Zig Zag canyon. Beautifully skiable at the top, marked as a blue trail on the map, but get out of it long before you reach Mississippi Head cliffs. After that it's a trap. No easy way out. Lower end is worse than the other canyons. Very steep canyon walls and raging water.

