

B.C.'S NEWEST SKI AREA—IT'S FREE

Brian Hall (Bulkley Backcountry)

That's right. Free powder for everyone. Five alpine bowls, ten cut ski runs and a great cabin sitting in the sub-alpine. The newest ski area in British Columbia is un-usual in many ways. No lifts, no line-ups, no costs, no condos, no greasy fries. It's all about human-powered outdoor fun. Backcountry skiers and snowshoers have been enjoying the area for two years now and the resurrection of that —old mountain culture is growing stronger year by year.

Half way up the province and sitting on the East slope of the Coast Range near Smithers BC, the Hankin Evelyn Recreation Area is accessed on a recently re-activated and maintained logging road. Offering terrain for all abilities, this new concept is fostering a resurgence of the old human powered mountain culture. This new (old) concept is about exercise, fresh air and friendships. An inexpensive option in today's fast paced world.

The vision for this project originated with local backcountry skiers, Jay Gilden and Brian Hall. With support from Kevin Eskelin (FLNR), Northern BC's Provincial Government Recreation manager, and a bit of luck in getting some grant/tax money back into the Northern economy, Hankin-Evelyn was born. With goals of supporting the growth of the old mountain culture and working towards a healthy community, the Hankin-Evelyn project has been a success.

Located 35 minutes NW of Smithers BC, this area encompasses 3770 hectares and is managed jointly by the Provincial Government (Trails and Recreation B.C.) and the Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society. Much of the maintenance for the area is provided by volunteers through an adopt-a-trail system. Local support has been overwhelming, and last winter season saw 2000 visits from locals and travellers. Families, young and old all came out to enjoy this new facility.

Area maps, photos, access information and events schedules can be found on the BBSS website. We hope this winter will find you checking out backcountry skiing at Hankin-Evelyn.

AREA BONUS: heaps of dry snow, 2500 vertical feet, cut ski runs for bad weather days all minutes away from a real mountain town loaded with amenities. While you are up here, check out Ski Smithers and Shames Mountains. Ski the lifts when it's pinking and head to the backcountry after the storm.

Remember: It's all about skinning, snowshoeing and earning your turns. ■