



***Historic Tilly Jane Ski Trail  
at Cooper Spur  
\*\*\* Information & Action Alert \*\*\*\****

The Tilly Jane Ski Trail provides direct access to the Cloud Cap/Tilly Jane Historic District. The area is immensely popular with backcountry recreational enthusiasts and as a result the north side of Mt. Hood is known as the backcountry side of the mountain.

Please take a **moment to read the following information** on the trail and then **write a letter to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in its support**. Ask SHPO to recognize the Tilly Jane Ski Trail for the unique historic backcountry recreation treasure that it is!

### **History of the Area**

The **Cloud Cap Inn** was built in the **summer of 1889** for use in the summer. In February 1890, Will and Doug Langille skied to the Inn on homemade skis. This trip was followed by many other successful winter trips and this early exploration enticed others to make the same journey. The area quickly became popular for backcountry enthusiasts who liked the challenge of making it up the mountain under their own resolve.

Summer access was via horse drawn stage up the 1889 wagon road which is mostly used for skiing today. In **1905** automobiles were able to make their way to the Cloud Cap Inn. In **1910 the Snowshoe Club Cabin** was built for year round use. The Snowshoe Club is just across the hill top from the Cloud Cap Inn.

### **American Legion Climbs**

The Amphitheatre and American Legion Cook Shed were constructed in the 1920s. The Tilly Jane Ski Trail was used by American Legion climbing groups in the 20s and it is very possible that it was also used earlier by Native Americans and early settlers in the Hood River Valley. High alpine meadows were often used by valley sheepherders and the Tilly Jane Ski Trail is dotted with open meadows that may have enticed them to make the trek.

The Tilly Jane Guard Station was built in 1934 and initially it received seasonal use for backcountry access and fire protection. The Ski Warming Hut (also know as the Tilly Jane Ski Cabin) was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930s. A local historian, Mr. Lewis McArthur, stated that the local Crag Rats led the 1920 American Legion sponsored climbers and that they favored the Tilly Jane Ski Trail because it provided immediate entry into the backcountry and a more direct approach to the mountain.

## Civilian Conservation Corps Project

In the winter of 1938-1939 Percy Bucklin, Bill Cochran, Harold Wells and Walter Applegren, members of the Crag Rats, marked a wider swath along the existing ski trail. In 1939 the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** cleared out the Tilly Jane Ski Trail and they also built the Ski Warming Hut (which is also known as the Tilly Jane Ski Cabin). The building of the trail fit easily into the CCC program, readily available labor and a moderate budget for equipment. Single and two man falling saws and axes and wedges were used predominantly in the woods for falling trees and for limbing and bucking to clear the route. What earth moving may have been necessary would have been done by hand using pick axes and shovels.

## Tilly Jane Ski Trail Unique Element of the District

The Tilly Jane Ski Trail climbs 1900 vertical feet in 2.7 miles to reach the Recreation Area. The distance by Cloud Cap Road is far greater - about 10 miles. The trail climbs gently, without switchbacks, up a series of unique steps and flats to a broad ridge-top with a number of open parkland settings before it reaches the Cloud Cap/Tilly Jane Recreation Area.

The Tilly Jane Ski Trail provides a **direct link** to the Ski Warming Hut, the Tilly Jane Guard Station, the Snowshoe Club Cabin and the Cloud Cap Inn. Today as in the past, virtually all snow season traffic to the Cloud Cap Tilly Jane Historic Recreation Area, Cooper Spur, Eliot Glacier and parts beyond is via the Tilly Jane Ski Trail. People have the option of descending the Tilly Jane Ski Trail, the 1889 wagon road, the 1924 road or if via more treacherous routes through the backcountry areas along the Tilly Jane creek. However, the Tilly Jane Ski Trail is cut wide for ski descent and is noted by many for its aesthetic lay and pitches developed by the early skiers who crafted it.

## Natural Integrity and Historic Setting Remain Unchanged

The trail's integrity is very high - it remains virtually unchanged since it was brushed out and widened in 1939. The sweeping, open vistas across Mt. Hood and nearby ridges and peaks are virtually the same as they were when past visitors experienced them. The old growth forest and open natural parkland on the ridge crest followed by the trail are intact except for the most visible feature - the **clear cutting** that was performed at the Cooper Spur Ski Area to create the 50-acre ski area. Other than that there are no visible areas along the trail cleared by human intervention. Instead, there is an overwhelming quiet and sense of peace that pervades the area. This sense of peace connects us with the early explorers who heard the same birds and saw the same flora and fauna without any mechanical intrusions or visibly altered landscapes. The Tilly Jane Ski Trail is directly and **closely linked** to the Cloud Cap Tilly Jane Historic Recreation Area which is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The trail **deserves recognition** as an historic important feature of the Cloud Cap Tilly Jane Historic Area on Mt. Hood. the trail should be included in the National Register as a piece of Oregon's past, present and future for all generations to enjoy in its historic state.

### **PLEASE WRITE TO:**

Mr. James Hamrick & Ms. Christine Curran  
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Parks and Recreation Department  
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Salem, OR 97301