

BANNER RIDGE WINTER YURT GUIDE

The Banner Ridge yurt is ideally located for Nordic skiers and snowshoers. Over 20 miles of groomed and 50 miles of marked ski trails are 200 yards from the front door. The yurt is located just off a high ridge in a protected north-facing bowl. Looking north and down over 3000 feet in elevation you can see the South Fork of the Payette River, Bear Valley, and Scott Mountain. At 6500 feet the view of the Sawtooth Mountains is spectacular. The snow is usually powder and very deep. This yurt is a telemarker and snowboarder heaven with its long, open slopes. Thousands of feet of untracked powder are available 100 feet away. Snow is usually available from early December to mid April.

PLEASE READ THE WINTER YURT MANUAL FOR MORE DETAILS

The yurt door lock has been removed during the winter season. You will find the door closed but not locked and no key code is necessary

Difficulty:

Intermediate. The difficulty of touring trails can increase in poor snow conditions and weather. The route to Banner Ridge yurt includes a long steep section at the beginning. Snowshoeing is the easiest method to access this yurt. If you ski in, climbing skins are recommended for those with heavy packs. Individuals should thoroughly prepare for the yurt trip and travel with someone who has been to the yurt and can readily find it. The Elkhorn Loop trail is generally groomed Thursday or Friday from December 1 to March 15. You should not count on the trail being groomed, but a freshly groomed trail will substantially reduce the amount of energy necessary to get to the yurt.

How to Get to the Yurt:

The trails are marked with blue or yellow diamond shapes, called blazes, attached to trees. The recommended approach is to take the Elkhorn Loop trail clockwise to the yurt turn-off. Go past the first intersection of the Elkhorn Loop trail, just .2 miles from the parking lot; continue straight up the Elkhorn Loop trail. You will pass the Banner trail intersection and continue up onto the scenic Banner Ridge. After traversing the ridge and where the trail turns south, look for a two-foot yellow diamond sign, then follow yellow blazes on this trail through the saddle and down to the yurt. **You cannot see the yurt from the Elkhorn trail.**

Where to Park:

The Banner Ridge Park N' Ski parking lot is about 23.5 miles north of Idaho City on Highway 21, just past mile marker 61. An Idaho Park N' Ski permit is required to park here Nov 15th to Apr 30th. Please park vehicles close together on the high end of the parking lot next to the highway. The Department of Transportation snowplow operators become frustrated when they cannot plow a lot because cars are parked in the middle. You should also **bring a shovel** because you might have to dig your car out or in case of heavy snow. Do not park on Highway 21. You can be fined for parking on the highway or for not displaying a Park N' Ski Pass.

Elevation Change and Distance:

About 750 feet climbing over 2 miles (one-way) via the Elkhorn Loop trail directly to the top of Banner Ridge. This is the shortest route with one long steep section to climb.

Dogs:

From Dec 1st through April 15th dogs are not allowed at the Banner Ridge Yurt or on the groomed trails at the Banner Ridge Area Park N' Ski.

Solar Power:

This yurt has a solar panel with four LED lights. Should it be necessary, a brush is provided to remove snow from the panel. Please do not change the panel location. Use the lights when needed, turn them off when not in use and at the end of your stay.

Wood Pile:

Wood for the stove is located under the deck.

Water:

If you melt snow for drinking water, we recommend boiling it before using it. There may be water available other than melting snow over the wood stove. The route to the water source is marked with blazes placed on wood 4"x 4" posts. From the yurt, travel down the drainage about 10 yards and down 50 feet in elevation until you come to a roadbed. Turn right on this road and travel 200 yards. At this point, look downhill about 30 feet to see a 4x4 wooden post sticking out of the snow. Five feet downhill from the base of this pole is a spring that comes out of a white plastic pipe. This spring may or may not be frozen.

Special Equipment Needed:

Several members of the party should carry portable snow shovels. **Bring two (2) one-pound propane bottles per each night of your stay; a roll of paper towels, and keep a snow shovel in each vehicle.** For a list of recommended items for a yurt trip, please read the winter yurt manual.

Avalanche and Whiteout Hazard:

Chances of an avalanche are low as long as Elkhorn Loop trail is used. Avalanches can occur on nearby slopes. The final one-mile to the yurt is on the Banner Ridge and is a high treeless, exposed ridge. We do not recommend travel to the yurt in high wind and heavy snow conditions, or at night. Whiteouts are common along this section of trail.

Maps Needed:

Idaho City Area Park N' Ski Location Map, Banner Ridge Winter Trail Route to Banner Ridge Yurt. (on website)

Global Positioning System Locations

UTM (in NAD 83): Note UTM's are rounded to nearest 10 meters

Banner Ridge Parking Lot: 11T0611730E 4875470N

Banner Ridge Yurt: 11T 0613220E 4877070N

Elevations:

Banner Ridge Parking Lot: **5,764 feet**

Banner Ridge Yurt: **6,425 feet**

WARNING:

Winter travel and the use of a yurt can be dangerous. Do not undertake yurt trips without careful preparation and a serious discussion of the dangers with ALL members of your group.

Safety: The nearest land line is in Lowman. For emergencies call Boise County Sheriff: **1-208-392-4411** or in a medical emergency: **911**. There is cell phone coverage for Verizon Wireless at the high point on the Elkhorn trail once you're on top of the Banner Ridge and Stargaze trail.

REPORT YURT DAMAGE OR MISSING ITEMS TO 208-514-2418 or 208-514-2419

PLEASE, DO NOT FEED ANY WILD ANIMALS. IT CAN LEAD TO THE ANIMALS CHEWING OR TEARING THE YURT SKIN.