

WHISPERING PINES YURT WINTER YURT GUIDE²⁰¹²

The Whispering Pines yurt is located off the groomed Gold Fork Loop trail. This is a popular loop used by Nordic skiers and snowshoers. The yurt provides easy access to over 27 miles of groomed and 50 miles of marked ski trails. The yurt is located in a high shaded glen. The view from the yurt is one of pine tree covered ridges. The outhouse has a great view of Pilot Peak. Snow is usually available early December to mid April.

PLEASE READ THE WINTER YURT MANUAL FOR MORE DETAILS AND HOW TO GET THE YURT CODE

How to get the code:

By email: judy.ditto@idpr.idaho.gov and the Yurt Coordinator will email the code back to you.

Difficulty:

Advanced-beginner to intermediate. The difficulty of touring trails can increase in poor snow conditions and weather. Skiers can expect a steady climb on the north side of the Gold Fork Loop. Climbing skins are recommended for those with heavy packs. Individuals should be thoroughly prepared and travel with someone who has been to the yurt and can readily find it. The Gold Fork Loop is generally groomed on 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.

Where to Park:

The Gold Fork Park N' Ski parking lot is about 20 miles north of Idaho City on Highway 21. Just past highway mile marker 59. An Idaho Park N' Ski permit is required to park here Nov 15th to Apr 30th. Please park your vehicles close together and parallel to the side of the lot, south of the toilet. The Department of Transportation snowplow operators become frustrated when they cannot completely plow the parking lot. You should also bring a shovel because you might have to dig your car out or in, in case of heavy snow. Do not park on Highway 21. You can be fined for parking on the highway or not displaying a Park N' Ski Pass.

How to Get to the Yurt: The trails are marked with blue or yellow diamond shapes, called blazes, attached to trees and posts. These blazes mark the trails.

If skiing:

The recommended skiing approach to the yurt is to take the Gold Fork Loop counter-clockwise from the north end of the parking lot. Follow the blue blazes for about 2.4 miles. At the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection you will see a large 2-foot yellow diamond shape sign. You will go beyond that sign and follow the 5" yellow blazes on trees about 400 yards until you see the yurt.

You cannot see the yurt from the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection.

If snowshoeing:

An alternate way to the Whispering Pines yurt is to take the single-track Moose trail. This trail starts just south of the parking lot toilet on the Gold Fork Loop trail. Follow the blue blazes for about 1.4 miles until you reach the Moose/Lodgepole/Gold Fork intersection. At the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection, you will see a large 2-foot yellow diamond shape sign. You will go beyond that sign and follow the 5" yellow blazes on trees about 400 yards until you see the yurt.

You cannot see the yurt from the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection or the yellow 2-foot sign

Elevation Change and Distance:

About 350 feet elevation gain either way to the yurt from the Gold fork parking lot.

Dogs:

Dogs are allowed at this yurt year around.

Solar Power:

This yurt has a solar unit with four lights. 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:

Use the large pot provided to melt snow on the wood stove. We recommend boiling the water for 10 minutes before using.

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 packet of lantern mantles; 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.

Maps Needed:

Idaho City Area Park N' Ski Location Map, Gold Fork Winter Trail Route to Whispering Pines Yurt. (on website)

Other Maps that may be valuable to you.

USFS Forest Road, and USGS 7.5 minute topographic, "Lowman and Big Owl Creek."

Global Positioning System Locations**UTM (in NAD):**

Gold Fork Parking Lot: 11T 0611770 4871910

Whispering Pines Yurt: 11T 0611096 4872626

Elevation:

Gold Fork Parking Lot: **5,240 feet**

Whispering Pines Yurt: **5,563 feet**

Safety: The nearest land line is in Lowman. For emergencies call Boise County Sheriff: **1-800-479-0911** or in a medical emergency: **1-800-632-8000**. There is cell phone coverage for most cell phone systems at the high point on the Elkhorn trail once you're on top of the Banner Ridge. There is also coverage from Beaver Creek Summit on Highway 21.

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.

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 SKI