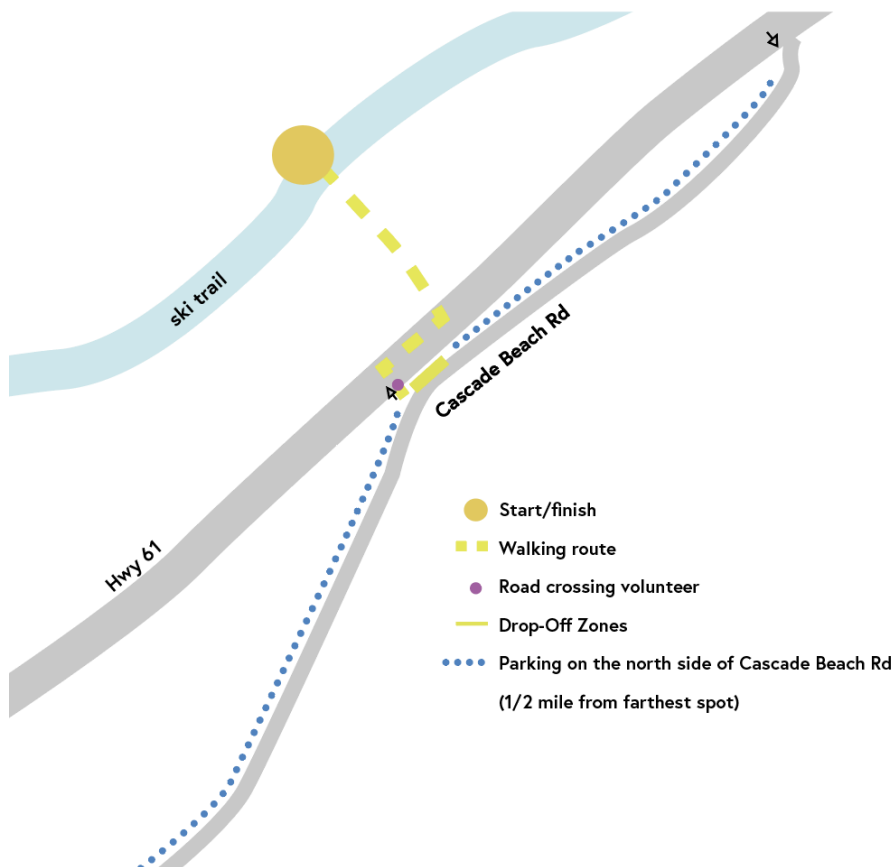


# SKI NORTH ULTRAMARATHON

Ski North Ultra Participation Guide updated 1/5/26

**Welcome!** This will serve as the Ski North Ultra's second year participation guide. Thank everyone who has been so supportive and encouraging of this race. Last year was a wild one and I suspect every year will be a little different.

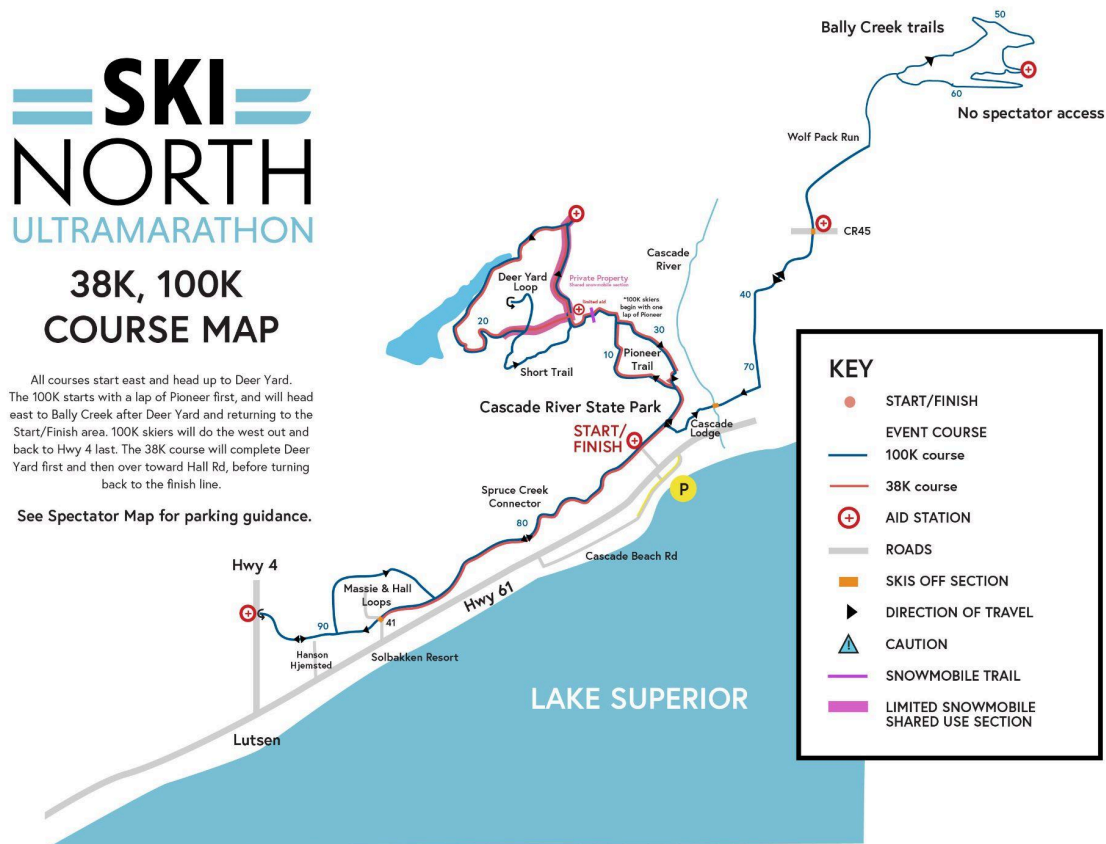
**Sense of Adventure:** The hope for this event is to give you a North Woods experience, support a long-distance ski, and give some exposure to these incredible trails. There will be some unconventional parts - road crossings/river crossings where you need to take off your skis, singletrack trails, maybe some animal tracks. I've been at Bally Creek with more chickadees than I've ever seen in one spot. I've also seen wolf tracks on the Massie/Hall loops, and a beaver tail near the Hansen Hjemsted aid station. Nature will likely happen out there. There are long, extended climbs and descents, 10 km+ long. These are State Park trails that are not necessarily designed for racing around. There will likely be some narrow two-way sections, tight corners, and two-way single-track where you'll need to pay attention. **The trails are also open to the public during this event, so please be considerate of other trail users.**



## Parking:

Primary parking will be on the frontage road next to Hwy 61 this year, on Cascade Beach Rd. People do have homes along this road. Please come in on the north end of the road, park on the right side of the road. There will be a drop-off zone indicated close to the road crossing. There will be a volunteer to help facilitate crossing Hwy 61, along with signage, but cars are NOT requested to stop, so please wait until you cannot see cars in either direction before crossing. Carpooling is encouraged! There is a bit of a walk up a driveway to the Start/Finish area. Cars may be using it - this is a snowmobile parking lot. We will also use this area as an aid station and drop-zone for extra skis, clothes, supplies.

The course:



The course order has changed since last year. Every race will start at a snowmobile parking lot on the west side of the State Park, instead of in the main State Park area. All races start heading northeast toward the Pioneer Trail.

The 38K will loop up around Deer Yard Loop and back down Pioneer, through the start/finish area, down to Hall Rd and back. There is a variety of terrain, mostly intermediate to easy.

The 100K is going to start with a lap around Pioneer, frankly because we were short a handful of kilometers and this way spectators can catch you one more time if they're up for a short ski up the trail. Then up to Deer Yard Loop - this is nearly all climbing up to that first aid station. Heading around Deer Yard Loop, we're adding on an out-and-back on the FireTower Trail and then an addition of the Short Loop (advanced section) before coming back down Pioneer Trail. A note for these sections - there are private homeowners along these trails, so please be respectful and stay on trail. You may see them snowmobiling in and out and this is all allowed - it's their only way in and out. They're aware of the event

and skiers in general and will be cautious. Please stay right on the two-way section up and down the FireTower Trail. We added a modified aid station at the intersection of Deer Yard Trail and the connector back down to Pioneer. There won't be a portapotty and may have limited supplies due to needing to ski in.

It should be a pretty fun ski downhill back to the Start/Finish area. We will have a big aid area here, with a drop area for skis/clothes for you to bring, an aid station and wax support.

From here, unlike the 50K course, you are going to turn around, and work your way toward the Cascade River crossing. After about a kilometer down the trail, you'll head right toward Cascade Lodge and take a lower trail that crosses a creek and gets you over to Cascade River without going down the finish area we used last year. That was a little too wild :) Okay, you do need to take your skis off for the River Crossing - there will be signage. Mostly because there are stairs. But this can also be a notoriously slippery spot because of all the foot traffic. Take a hot second (or more) to enjoy the waterfall) and then you'll start the long 13+km climb up to Bally Creek. Once you enter the singletrack section, keep an eye up - this is all two-way. Skiers going downhill get the right of way. You'll have a road crossing about halfway through at CR45. Again, cars do **not** have to stop, so look both ways before crossing. And you'll likely want to take your skis off.

You'll do a loop around beautiful Bally Creek (aid station up there) before coming back. This could be pretty fast under certain conditions, so please use caution. There are a couple of larger downhill sections. We placed this in the middle of the race to hopefully optimize the likelihood of good conditions.

Back through the east side of the State Park and over the waterfall bridge across the River. You'll make your way back to the Start/Finish hub, and then you're nearly dang there!

The last section brings you out and back to Hwy 4 (Caribou Rd) and back. There is one road crossing at Hall Rd, and last year, there was some gravel that made it's way onto the trail a bit, so perhaps consider taking your skis off earlier than you think you should. We'll have the aid station at Hwy 4 this year so hopefully nobody keeps going this year (there IS a ski trail on that keeps going, but you'll want to turn around!) And then back around the Massie Loop and back to the finish. This is all relatively flatter (Massie has a nice climb).

### **Skis off sections/road crossings:**

Skiers will need to take off their skis for a section over the bridge (there are stairs). There are also a few roads to cross along the way (CR45 twice and Hall Rd twice). While we will have volunteers at CR45 to help you out, skiers are responsible for making their own choices crossing the road. Skiers DO NOT have the right of way. There will be signage for cars, and signage for skiers indicating the intersection coming up. Hall Rd is less busy of a road, but of course please take the time to look for cars.



Elevation profile for the 100km: We got this a little wrong last year. It turns out, per Strava, we're looking at about 5700 feet (1740m) of elevation.

**SCHEDULE:**

FRIDAY, MARCH 7:

Bib pick-up: 4:30-7:00 pm at [North Shore Winery](#) at 202 Ski Hill Rd, Lutsen

*Recommended for longer races*

SATURDAY, MARCH 8:

Bib pick-up: 6-9 am at the Start Area

7 AM - 100K start

8 AM - 38K start

2:30 PM - 38K cut-off

7 PM - 100K cut-off

7:30 PM Post-race celebration at Up Yonder in Grand Marais - come for age group awards, overall prizes and exchanging of stories!

**Drog Bags:**

Before the race, 100K skiers may drop off personal items at the Start/Finish hub. Skiers will come through this area around 35km and 75km. Please label your bags. This might include favorite food/drink, skis, changes in clothes, wax, etc.

Ski exchanges are welcome at other locations but that is between you and your support people.

**Course markings:** Please get a good idea of the course and map ahead of time. You will need to pay attention. Due to the distance, this event is probably more minimally marked than other urban races. Any left or right hand turns will have a colored arrow indicating the direction, sometimes slightly ahead of the turn. 100K follows the blue arrows, 50K follows red, 25K follows green. If the course goes straight, there will be pink pin flags indicating the trail to follow, as well as pink tape in the trees. Follow the flags and tape. We will try to have course marshals at confusing intersections.

Consider downloading the gpx files ahead of the race (will be emailed) for a smartwatch.

There will be signs marking two-way sections (stay right), road/snowmobile trail crossings, and aid stations coming up.

**Sunset: Headlamps required.** For the 100k, the sunset on March 8 is about 6 pm, so with a 7 pm cut-off, you are required to have a headlamp with you.

**Tracking skiers / time cut-offs:**

Aid stations will be tracking participants as you come through, so please have your bibs visible. We are staggering cut-off times to be more lenient in the beginning, and tightening up throughout the race.

## AID STATION TIME TABLE

100K course	min/km pace	START	Deer Yard	Deer Yard shelter	Start/finish	CR45	Bally Creek	CR45	Start Finish	Caribou	Finish
distance in		0	15	27	33	41	55	65	76	87	100
distance between aid			15	12	13	8	14	10	11	11	13
	2:30	7:00 AM	7:37 AM	8:07 AM	8:22 AM	8:42 AM	9:17 AM	9:42 AM	10:10 AM	10:37 AM	11:10 AM
	3:00	7:00 AM	7:45 AM	8:21 AM	8:39 AM	9:03 AM	9:45 AM	10:15 AM	10:48 AM	11:21 AM	12:00 PM
	3:30	7:00 AM	7:52 AM	8:34 AM	8:55 AM	9:23 AM	10:12 AM	10:47 AM	11:26 AM	12:04 PM	12:50 PM
	4:00	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:48 AM	9:12 AM	9:44 AM	10:40 AM	11:20 AM	12:04 PM	12:48 PM	1:40 PM
	4:30	7:00 AM	8:07 AM	9:01 AM	9:28 AM	10:04 AM	11:07 AM	11:52 AM	12:42 PM	1:31 PM	2:30 PM
	5:00	7:00 AM	8:15 AM	9:15 AM	9:45 AM	10:25 AM	11:35 AM	12:25 PM	1:20 PM	2:15 PM	3:20 PM
	5:30	7:00 AM	8:22 AM	9:28 AM	10:01 AM	10:45 AM	12:02 PM	12:57 PM	1:58 PM	2:58 PM	4:10 PM
	6:00	7:00 AM	8:30 AM	9:42 AM	10:18 AM	11:06 AM	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	2:36 PM	3:42 PM	5:00 PM
	6:30	7:00 AM	8:37 AM	9:55 AM	10:34 AM	11:26 AM	12:57 PM	2:02 PM	3:14 PM	4:25 PM	5:50 PM
cut-offs			9:10 AM	10:30	11:10	12:05	1:45	2:50	4:10	5:30	7:00 PM
Crew access		walk-in	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	walk-in	yes	walk-in
Drop bags		yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Portapotty		yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
38K course		START	Deer Yard	Deer Yard shelter	Start/finish	CR45	Bally Creek	CR45	Start Finish	Hall Rd	Finish
distance in		0	9	19	23					30	38
distance between aid	min/km pace		9	10	4					7	8
	2:30	8:00 AM	8:22 AM	8:47 AM	8:57 AM					9:15:00 AM	9:35:00 AM
	4:00	8:00 AM	8:36 AM	9:16 AM	9:32 AM					10:00:00 AM	10:32:00 AM
	6:00	8:00 AM	8:54 AM	9:54 AM	10:18 AM					11:00:00 AM	11:48:00 AM
	8:00	8:00 AM	9:12 AM	10:32 AM	11:04 AM					12:00:00 PM	1:04:00 PM
cut-offs	10:15	8:00 AM	9:32 AM	11:14 AM	11:55 AM					1:00:00 PM	2:20:00 PM
Crew access		walk-in	yes	no	yes					yes	walk-in
Drop bags		yes	no	no	yes					no	yes
Portapotty		yes	yes	no	yes					yes	yes

**Dropping out/out of time: IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO FINISH THE RACE** - before heading to the nearest hot tub, please report your name, number and location of drop-out to one of the following, so we don't go looking for you:

- a) Let an aid station volunteer know.
- b) Let the sweeper know.
- c) Text 917-318-0615.

Also we plan to reuse the bibs, so please return your bib when you can.

You have a few options from here - you can:

- a) Keep skiing, but remove your bib and understand you are no longer being supported by the race.
- b) You can call for a ride from anyone up there supporting you, provided there's cell service.
- c) If you need a ride from a race volunteer, we can help arrange that - please just let an aid station volunteer know and they'll send for someone. You may need to wait for 15-30 minutes in this case.

**Communication:** For your own knowledge and your spectating team, there is unlikely to be cell coverage anywhere up the hill, away from the lake. Up near Deer Yard and Bally Creek, there is very limited cell service. Aid stations will have radios to communicate. Please plan accordingly.

#### **Aid Stations:**

At each aid station, you can expect:

- Water and an electrolyte drink
- A variety of foods: clementines, bananas, cookies, bars (with and without peanut butter), potato chips, granola bars, cardamom rolls
- The Start/Finish hub will have some hot food (quesadillas?)
- One portapotty per aid station.
- One trash receptacle and compost receptacle following the food table. **Please take the time to dispose of your own waste** - many races ask volunteers to pick up your discarded item, but I feel like we can do this. Let's keep the land clean and be kind to our volunteers.

**Low impact** - this aims to be a low-waste event, so we are trying to choose low-packaging foods to provide, and won't have cups. **Please bring a bottle or other way to carry water.** We won't have gels. You're welcome to bring your own but please make sure they end up in the trash.

**Parking** is limited at aid stations. Support people are welcome along the course, but please be considerate of our neighbors and public trail users. For that reason, support people **may not park** at Bally Creek. Please consider carpooling and generally picking one spot to visit (vs all of them) to spectate. Please see Spectator Guide for parking guidelines.

#### **After your race!**

Hang out, cheer racers in. We will have your drop bags and changing tents at the Start/Finish area, an on-site tent sauna provided by North Shore Sauna, and some post-race snacks.

Big thank you to Cascade Restaurant for providing a post-race meal! You filled out preferences upon registration.

We are seeking **volunteers** so if you have friends or family coming up, please encourage them to check out our [volunteer opportunities](#)!

**Prizes:** We will present prizes to the top three finishers for each race. Please join the post-race celebration at Up Yonder to be presented with these.

**Age Categories:** We'll have awards for the top person per gender of each age category as follows: 0-18 (for the 22K), 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79. We'll have these available at Up Yonder from 7:30-9:00 pm after the races.

**Up Yonder:** Racers and volunteers and organizers - come hang out after your race!

**The Great MN Ski Pass** - Please purchase a [trail pass](#) and enjoy other state park ski trails during the winter! A great deal. And **plan to have a Minnesota State Park pass for parking**. And if anyone feels like skiing on Sunday, Pincushion and Sugarbush are nearby and both really wonderful choices.