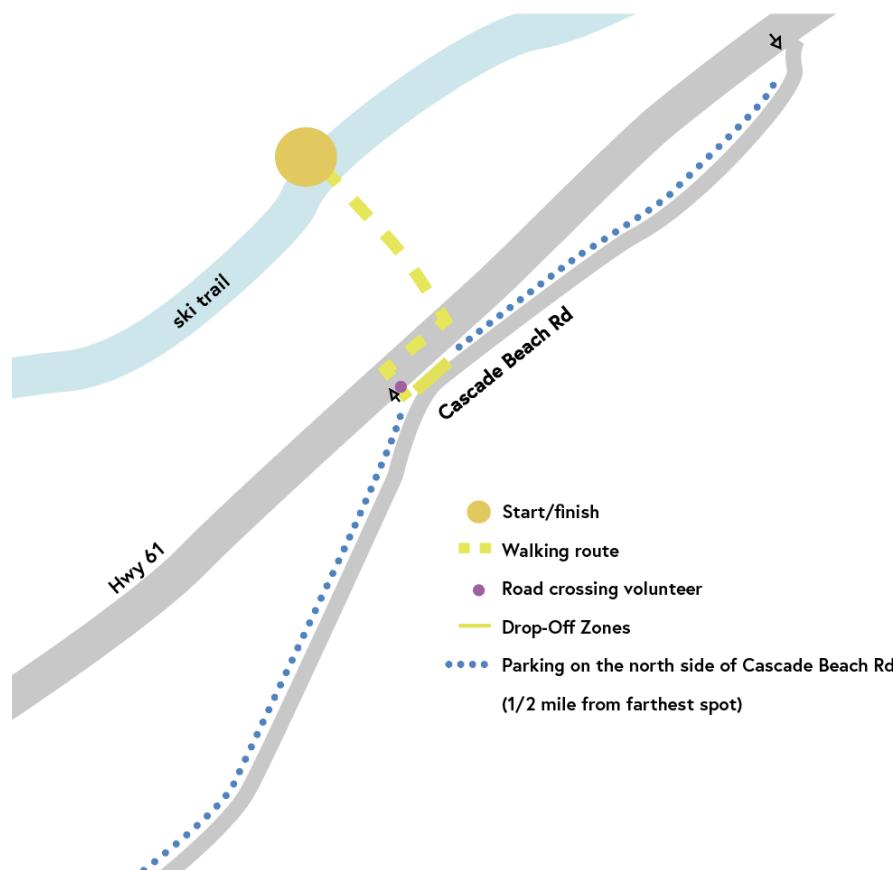


SKI NORTH ULTRAMARATHON

Ski North Ultra Participation Guide updated 2/6/26

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.

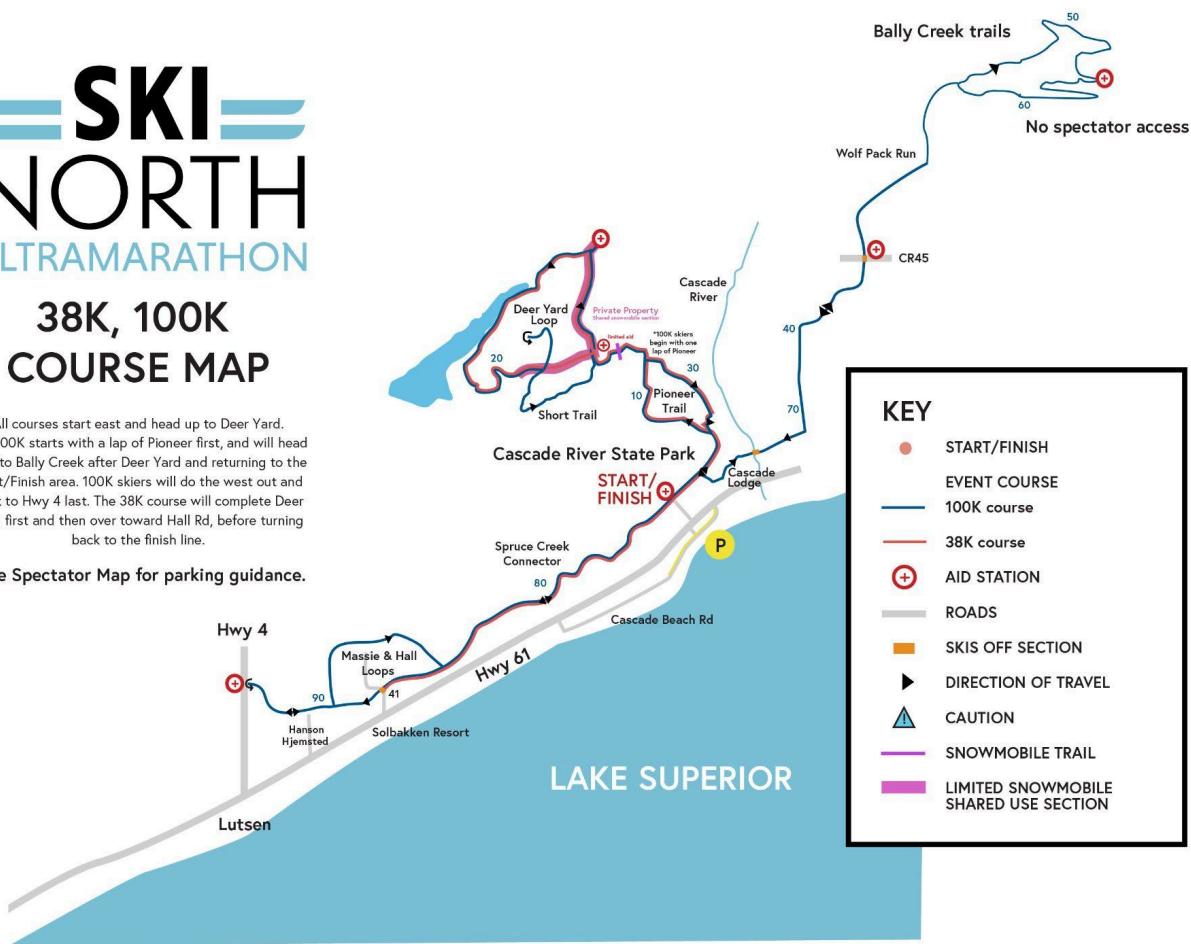
The course:

SKI NORTH ULTRAMARATHON

38K, 100K COURSE MAP

All courses start east and head up to Deer Yard. The 100K starts with a lap of Pioneer first, and will head east to Bally Creek after Deer Yard and returning to the Start/Finish area. 100K skiers will do the west out and back to Hwy 4 last. The 38K course will complete Deer Yard first and then over toward Hall Rd, before turning back to the finish line.

See Spectator Map for parking guidance.



The course order has changed since last year. **Each 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 beginner.

The 100K is going to start with a lap around Pioneer, frankly because we were short a handful of kilometers. There are some quick turns on the downhill section of this loop. Then a hard right back up Pioneer to the 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.

There will be a modest aid station at the intersection of Deer Yard and the connector to Pioneer (calling it "Deer Yard Shelter." There won't be a portapotty and may have limited supplies due to needing to ski in.

Please stay right on the two-way section up and down the FireTower Trail. The 100K leaders may encounter some of the slower 38K skiers, and will need to take a left-hand turn once down at Pioneer. So, do your best not to take anyone out. Generally speaking, skiers going downhill will have the right-of-way, and the 38K skiers will be asked to yield to the 100K skiers on this particular intersection, but, use your best judgement.

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

From here, unlike the 38K 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. We won't use the trail that went down to the Finish last year - that was a little too wild :) 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 pass by the group campground (where we started last year), you'll start a big uphill climb. Keep an eye up - this is all two-way. Stay right. Skiers going downhill get the right of way. If the downhill conditions are too fast, we may require a skis-off section. TBD. It would be a pretty big downhill in the best of conditions. So, there's your "this may be sketchy" warning. We needed to reroute because of a DNR Deer Wintering Area. At the top of the climb, you'll enter single-track territory. After about 5 more km, you'll have a road crossing at CR45. Again, cars do **not** have to stop, so look both ways before crossing. You'll need to take your skis off.

After about 5 more km, you'll do a ~10km loop around the beautiful Bally Creek (aid station up there) before coming back. On the way back down, 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. Again, watch for two-way traffic.

Back through the east side of the State Park (reminder, caution downhill! Keep it in control) 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! Relatively :)

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 its 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 that keeps going, but you should 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). 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. For reference, the Birkie Skate race is roughly 4600 ft of elevation gain for 50km, so this is higher but spread out twice as far.

SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY, MARCH 7:

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

Recommended! Come ask your questions.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8:

Bib pick-up: 6-7:30 am at the Start Area

7 AM - 100K start

7:30 AM - 38K start*

2:00 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!

**updated time to improve some two-way traffic flow*

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, 38K follows red.. 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 7 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. So, if you are hitting the cut-off times but just barely, note that you may need to quicken your pace later on (fortunately, the terrain gets easier that last third of the race).

AID STATION TIME TABLE

100K course	min/km pace	START	Deer Yard	Deer Yard shelter	Start/finish	CR45 (1)	Bally Creek	CR45 (2)	Start/finish	Caribou	Finish
distance into 100k course		0	15	27	33	41	55	65	76	87	100
distance betw. aid stations			15	12	13	8	14	10	11	11	13
	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
	7:00	7:00 AM	8:45 AM	10:09 AM	10:51 AM	11:47 AM	1:25 PM	2:35 PM	3:52 PM	5:09 PM	6:40 PM
last call pace	7:12	7:00 AM	8:48 AM	10:14 AM	10:57 AM	11:55 AM	1:36 PM	2:48 PM	4:07 PM	5:26 PM	7:00 PM
cut-offs			9:20 AM	11:00 AM	11:35	12:15	1:50	3:00	4:15	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 into 38k course		0	9	19	23					30	38
distance betw. aid stations	min/km pace			9	10	4				7	8
	2:45	7:30 AM	7:54 AM	8:22 AM	8:33 AM					8:52 AM	9:14 AM
	4:00	7:30 AM	8:06 AM	8:46 AM	9:02 AM					9:30 AM	10:02 AM
	6:00	7:30 AM	8:24 AM	9:24 AM	9:48 AM					10:30 AM	11:18 AM
	8:00	7:30 AM	8:42 AM	10:02 AM	10:34 AM					11:30 AM	12:34 PM
	10:00	7:30 AM	9:00 AM	10:40 AM	11:20 AM					12:30 PM	1:50 PM
last call pace	10:16	7:30 AM	9:02 AM	10:45 AM	11:26 AM					12:38 PM	2:00 PM
cut-offs	10:15	7:30 AM	9:20 AM	11:00 AM	11:35 AM					12:45 PM	2:00PM
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 (number TBD)

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 aid stations, you can expect (with some range):

- Water and Tailwind (orange)
- A variety of foods: clementines, bananas, cookies, bars, potato chips, cardamom rolls
- The Start/Finish hub will have some quesadillas and bakery items from Grand Marais' Crosby Bakery
- One portapotty per aid station (see the aid station chart, not at Deer Yard shelter, note the Bally Creek aid station has a portapotty at a parking lot 1-2 km down from the 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.** Notice if you have a bottle that tends to freeze. A drink belt might work better. 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.

Big thank you to Cascade Restaurant for providing a post-race meal! There is a survey that will be emailed out re: food requests.

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

75K Club: If you make it to 75K, you get to join the 75k club! We'll have handmade medals for you.

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 38K), 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, if you choose to go into the State Park.** And if anyone feels like skiing on Sunday, Pincushion and Sugarbush are nearby and both really wonderful choices.

A big thank you to our sponsors/supporters!



Northland Apiary

