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# The Dope On The Slope Alpine Skiing Comes To Logan

**By MIKE BELEK**  
Alpine skiing is coming to southeastern Ohio with the creation of slopes at Echo Hills, seven miles north of Logan.

Although cross-country skiing has been available at Echo Hills (or anywhere you can push skis), downhill buffs have had to travel almost 100 miles to the nearest Mansfield or Bellefontaine slopes.

Lancaster businessman H.E. "Hap" Kitzmiller and family have put the effort into creating ski-able slopes on a 500-acre wooded area off of Bauer Road. Kitzmiller purchased the hill forest in 1975, according to Ann Kitzmiller, who noted the wooded retreat was formerly Girl Scout Camp until that organization consolidated its camps.

Hap and son Scott have been busily preparing three slopes, lodge, buildings and trails during the summer and autumn in anticipation of opening during the holiday season.

Slopes include beginners' and intermediate hills—both utilizing low ropes. The advanced hill may be one of the more challenging inclines in the state for any skier.

Ann explained Sasasfras, the advanced hill, has a vertical drop of some 280 feet with an angle of 27 degrees—certainly steep and short enough to give the most capable skier an exhilarating ride. The old T-bar lift from the intermediate slope at Clear Park was purchased by Echo Hills, according to Scott.

The T-bar also lifts less daring skiers to a trail departing from atop Sasasfras and eventually winding down an old service road.

Ann anticipated a 50-50 split for skiing on the slopes and cross-country advocates. The cross-country skiers will utilize sections of the old Buckeye Trail.

One of the problems Ohio ski resorts have faced is a lack of natural snow. Exceptional snow falls the past two years have brought a boom to winter recreation and Ann feels the Logan slopes will fit in nicely.

In case of poor snowfall, she explained, Echo Hills has several Hoxos snowmakers which can produce a four-inch depth in 24 hours on the slopes. The snowmakers can operate when temperatures are 28 degrees or below.

Many of Ohio's ski slopes are located in the "snow belt," but Ann claims being located outside the snow-belt "will not make that much difference."

"In most cases, the Mansfield Valley is 2-3 degrees cooler than the rest of the state, but I don't think they get any more snow," she said. "There was quite a snowfall here last year, and our slopes face north, keeping the sun from melting much."

The Kitzmillers have been interested in skiing for years. Ann recalled The family drove "all over the state" when 22-year-old daughter Beth and 21-year-old son Scott were younger. Beth, who "has been skiing since age five," will be one of the instructors and Scott will help manage. Byron Weigler, ski director of the ski school.

A lodge constructed this fall will house rental equipment and contain a lounge area with fireplace.

"There is nothing elaborate this year," Ann stated. "We're asking people to bring their own food and refreshments, at least until we rig up a food operation."

Fees for cross-country is \$8 for ski rental and \$4 in fees with hours from 9 a.m. to dusk.

Lift tickets are \$6 Monday-Friday; \$8 on weekends, holidays and school vacations. Nighttime lift tickets (4-10 p.m.) are \$5 weekdays and \$7 weekends and holidays.

Complete equipment rental is \$1, which includes skies, boots and poles. Lessons are available as are special group rates and family memberships. Rates at Mansfield or Bellefontaine resorts generally run several dollars more. Information on Echo Hills is available at 1-614-385-6700.

Access from Lancaster is from U.S. 33 at Enterprise north of Logan. Head west on Ohio 180, left at Vorn and right at Bauer Road. Most turns are marked with wooden signs.

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