



*Idaho Falls Nordic Ski Patrol*

# **NATIONAL OUTSTANDING NORDIC PATROL**

Idaho Falls

Division: Intermountain

Year Activated: 1976

Total Patrollers: 45

The Idaho Falls Patrol is a wide-ranging patrol, as its members patrol at over a dozen designated cross-country trails totaling over 200 miles within a 100-mile radius of the patrol's main population center. The patrol's primary operating center is in a state park with over 27 miles of groomed trails, while a secondary area is at an alpine ski resort with 10 miles of cross-country trails. Some of the patrol's members are dual Nordic/alpine patrollers at that resort. Some members of the patrol also post at off-trail and backcountry areas.

In the 2020-21 season, the state park where the patrol is centered entertained 27,000 guests. The patrollers worked 266 days to cover the needs of the public. Recently, the state park approved a bike patrol comprised of members of the patrol. It had its first season last summer. Additionally, patrollers have logged "unofficial" patrol hours by horseback and hiking.

Three members of the patrol are nurses and one of the nurses holds a helicopter certification for helicopter transport. Further, 20 members of the patrol hold a

secondary alpine patroller registration with other patrols, offering crossover experience for toboggan running and scene management.

Education is a strong part of what this patrol does. The patrol has eight OEC instructors, two Instructor Development Instructors, two Avalanche Instructors, two OET instructors, one Mountain Travel and Rescue instructor, and four CPR instructors. An Avalanche Safety event held by the patrol attracted 400 participants in 2021. The patrol has also participated in search and rescue training events with other SAR organizations. At the local ski club's annual two-day sale, the patrol offers advice on equipment, Nordic ski trail locations, and winter safety. The patrol also offers "learn to ski" beginner lessons at the state park annual free ski day, and they host a "Ski with the Patrol" day.

Other patrol-hosted events include three moonlight ski tours and ski education field trips for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders from local elementary schools.

"Being awarded the NSP Gold Unit Patrol of the Year Award is recognition for all the members both past and present representing the hard work that has taken place to make this a great patrol," says Idaho Falls Patrol Representative Jerry Jensen. "Idaho Falls Nordic Ski Patrol is what all ski patrols should be. It is a family of individual volunteers who come together for a common purpose. When there is a need to be filled, many members jump in to make it happen. We work together to get it done – from our ongoing readiness training, monthly meetings, and patrol duties to workday, fundraising, and grant donations to build and groom trail trails and train the regional youth. When there is a vision for improvement, individuals speak up and make the patrol better. The Idaho Falls Nordic Patrol is thrilled and

immensely grateful for the prestigious Gold Unit Outstanding Patrol Award from the National Ski Patrol and Intermountain Division.”

The patrol has also created a very successful fundraising program, which is highlighted by a three-night screening of the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival World Tour, an event that draws nearly 2,000 people. In addition to being able to pay for all operating expenses, the patrol donates to programs that enrich the outdoor experience. The patrol also created a grant program that promotes Nordic skiing.

To generate the next generation of Nordic skiers, the patrol introduces cross-country skiing to elementary schoolkids. In 2019, the patrol donated money to the county school district to purchase boots and ski gear to add to the school cross-country program, which is enjoyed by 480 students. Since 2019, the patrol has donated over \$10,000 to various nonprofit organizations that promote Nordic skiing. The patrol also created a UPC barcode program that allows the user to view a centralized website detailing Nordic trail maps, grooming status, parking, and more.

Outside of patrolling, the Idaho Falls Nordic Ski Patrol serves its community by offering first aid training to Scouts, community CPR training, patrolling mountain bike races, teaching CPR in local high schools, and offering first aid support at music festivals, trail run events, local marathons, and horseback trips.