

## Stephens & Cascade Pond Ski Tour (2/12/2011)

This trip was by the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. We parked in a wide shoulder area along Rt. 28 adjacent to the Northville Lake Placid Trail sign. This was a little past the Lake Durant Campground entrance. We started on the trail about 9:30 AM.



The snow was beautiful. The trail starts on the campsite roads. Any openings to Lake Durant were very windy. After about a half mile we turned off from campsite road onto the actual NPT. The trail then went steadily up for about a mile. It was never very steep. Somewhere in this area our previously tracked trail

became much less traveled and we had to break trail through about 6 inches of powder.

We then did about another half mile and looked for the “bushwhack” through to Stephens Pond. We found the bushwhack based on a blaze on a tree on the right side of the trail with a blazed arrow pointing left towards the pond. We were originally going to bushwhack to the lake and avoid doing one extra uphill, but the DEC



had just issued warnings about icing problems on lakes because of the heavy snow. This combined with the potential brutal wind expected on the pond, caused us to continue on the NPT to the Stephens Pond.



After approximately a mile with some climbing we reached the trail junction with the Cascade Pond trail. We turned towards Stephens Pond and after another short uphill started our descent to Stephens. The last drop to the Pond seemed like the steepest, but it was straight down with a nice run out if necessary. The lean-to was

nestled back from the lake behind a row of evergreens. We skied onto the lake for some pictures and just to take in the view. We arrived at the lake at 11:30.

After lunch we returned to the intersection with the Cascade Pond trail. The initial uphill from the lean-to was tough with several herringbone sessions. Herringboning was sometimes very tiring because our poles (even with big baskets) would sink far into the snow making getting up the occasional steep sections tough.

The ski to Cascade had a few more climbs and a couple of short downhill. This trail was not broken out at all and was not as well maintained as the NPT section we had been on. There were small bushes and branches occasionally closing in on the trail, but no problems from a skiing standpoint. We skied around the pond on the trail



instead of going out on the pond to the lean-to. By this time it was snowing quite heavily. This lean-to is also hidden from the lake by a row of evergreens. After enjoying the scenery we started our return to the car. Once up to the height of land before the intersection with the NPT, we had basically a downhill run all the way out. We returned to the car at 1:50PM with a total trip distance of 8.6 miles.

It was a delightful ski. Trip leader and journal writer was Roy Keats.