

How UNCLE SAM IS POPULARIZING WINTER SPORTS



Crowds lining the ski jump at Tahoe National Forest in California.

ACROSS the mountainous reaches of our far-flung land the thrilling cry of "TRACK!" echoes again as skiers come plummeting downhill amid flurries of feathery snow.

All the way from Bangor to Seattle, weird words such as "binding," "christie," "heel springs," "creepers," "slalom" are back in the national vocabulary. The snow sport lovers are in their element once more.

The popularity of winter sports during the last decade has led to the organization of scores of private clubs devoted to skiing, tobogganing, ice skating and other winter sports. That's all well and good for those who can afford the expense of private lodges, but what about the great American public? Millions upon millions of us love winter sports too. Suppose you want to spend a week-end in the mountains skiing, tobogganing, or just plain enjoying nature. Where would you find accommodations? Good ski trails and toboggan runs just don't happen; they have to be made, in most cases. How are you going to find out if any such trails and runs are available near your home?

Uncle Sam has a definite answer to all these problems. Harkening to the ever-increasing popularity of winter sports, the National Forest Service embarked 10 years ago upon a nationwide program of expansion and development of its mountainous slopes, until today, dotted all over the country, carnival

Right—grins mean anything, the kids are having the time of their life on that toboggan.

Photos by U. S. Forest Service.

scenes are taking place in contrast to the winter solitude a few years back.

At the present writing the Forest Service has developed more than 50 special winter sports areas in its forests. This development requires work in the summer months that the average person never even hears about. For instance: ski trails must be mapped out during warm weather so that when the snow comes the countless visitors to these winter playgrounds may enjoy the maximum of fun with the minimum of danger.

IT is readily seen that boulders and stumps cannot be detected in a trail after several feet of snow has fallen. All these hazardous obstructions must be removed when they can be observed. In planning a winter playground area, the forest rangers have four distinct types of ski courses they must map out: the straight downhill course; the "slalom," or zig-zag trail down a mountainside; the "longlauf," or cross-country run; and the ski-jump.

Each run always presents difficulties. In densely wooded areas, scrub timber, dead trees, rocks, even sizable live

trees, must be removed, or else the novice may find himself wrapped around some obstruction and end his vacation in a hospital.

The straight downhill run is the easiest course to construct. All that is necessary is suitable terrain, and a descending slide, clear of obstructions. In developing the cross-country run, plain markings are most essential. Some of these trails extend for miles and it's no

Waltons can be seen industriously fishing through holes in the ice. Off the beaten ski and dog sled trails, the terrain is dotted with snowshoers, limbering up their back and leg muscles. This last group of winter sports lovers presents the least trouble for the Forest Service. No trails need be marked for them—they can go where they please, as long as they keep off the beaten runs.

NATURALLY enough, the advent of so many thousands of visitors to National Forests during the winter has placed additional responsibility on the 3600 rangers whose job it is to supervise the year-round use of these areas. Especially arduous is the task of keeping highways open.

Perhaps it will be of interest to list several of the National Forests that now offer improved winter sports areas. Your local railroad guide or automobile club can tell you how to get where you want. In the list to follow, all the areas are kept open and are accessible the year round by automobile, train, or both.

In the East, White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire is the best known and most popular with New Englanders. However, Green Mountain Forest in the neighbor state of Vermont draws no small number of winter vacationists.

Allegheny Forest in western Pennsylvania and Monongahela Forest in West Virginia are the drawing points for outdoor enthusiasts of those states as well as Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Southerners get their taste of skiing and tobogganing in Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina.

National Forests in the lake states draw the snow enthusiasts of the Middlewest.

On the Pacific Coast the famous Heather Meadows Recreational area of Mt. Baker National Forest and the Snoqualmie Forest in Washington annually attract thousands of winter visitors.

Oregon outdoor lovers visit Willamette National Forest and the newly created Mt. Hood Timberline Lodge. Of this latter development, one of the most recent of its kind, the Forest Service says: "It is comparable only to the world famous snow sports and health resorts in Hungary, and is the outstanding development of its kind in the entire United States."

Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests in the High Sierras present ski runs and toboggan slides to delight the hearts of athletic Californians.

These are but a few. More detailed information can be obtained by writing the U. S. Forest Service, Washington, D. C.



fun to get lost when the temperature is 10 degrees below zero and you're far from help.

In many of the recreational areas in National Forests, shelters, lodges and camps are available for the use of the public. One of the most recent innovations is the installation of first aid kits at suitable locations throughout an entire area. These kits contain blankets, bandages, antiseptics, and, most important of all, frost-bite ointment. And here's a tip for the novice: what is good for burns is good for frost-bite. So bring along your favorite sunburn ointment next time you go gallivanting among the ice crystals.

Although skiing is by far the most popular of all winter sports, Uncle Sam has not forgotten ice skating, tobogganing, dog sledding and other cold weather recreations. In lake areas, part of the ice is kept clear. Twisting, turning trails wind over mountain sides and down into valleys, and the countryside re-echoes with the joyous howls of sure-footed huskies as the dog teams haul sleds in thrilling cross-country races.

Here and there, enthusiastic Izaak