

Epinette Hike, March 4

Brian, Kari, Denis, Di, Andree', Lynsey, Bonnie, and Cathy and, of course Spirit, accompanied Bert and Judy on a hike on the Epinette trail. It was a crisp but sunny morning as we set out, carefully avoiding the ski tracks. We branched off the main trail onto the new "alternate Spruce" trail, which more closely follows the creek, to the second cabin where we posed for the obligatory group hike photo.



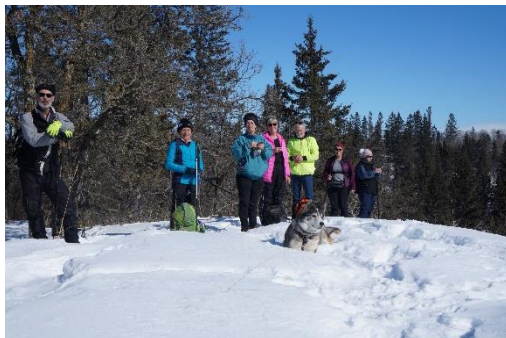
From here, we followed the Juniper trail. Shortly before it branches off to Tamarack, the Cedar Trail veers South. When Di and I did a reconnoiter a few days before, this trail was little more than an animal trail, and at times we didn't know which of the multitude of trails was actually ours. Our walk on Thursday (especially with Di's snowshoes) made the path a bit clearer for now. A couple of members

stopped to don snowshoes here and, and with the rest of us on foot, we followed the trail as it wound its way, cutting a rough circle on the inside curve of Epinette Creek.

There are lots of ups and downs, and for the most part the Cedar Trail hugs the rim of the gorge high above the creek. Early in the trail a few members took "alternate paths" that went down to provide closer views of the creek, while the rest of us stayed on the higher path. More than any other trail I've hiked in winter, this one showed evidence of the animal life of the park. When Di and I



us



hiked it earlier in the week, we saw at least 10 deer. We didn't see any deer on Saturday, but there were many, many indentations in the snow where deer had fed or slept. Lots of rabbit droppings littered the trail, and the tiny feet of squirrels had made their own delicate trails.

We hadn't designated a lunch spot, so people stopped at various places to snack on packed lunches and cookies. For next time, I'll remember a high look-out point with a bench

for a good lunch spot.

Eventually, the trail breaks away from the creek to complete the circle back to the Juniper. We took the short leg of Spruce back to the parking lot.

The Cedar Trail is definitely a highlight of the Épinette system, and I am greatly looking forward to seeing it in summer. Thanks to all who participated!

