

Backcountry skiing, off-trail skiing, and mountain biking: the usage rules

Mont Sutton, the Town of Sutton, as well as the Conservation de la nature Canada (CNC), and the Parc d'environnement naturel de Sutton (PENS) have met to review the guidelines for backcountry skiing, wilderness skiing, and mountain biking. These rules are essential for the safety of users, as well as for the preservation of Sutton's precious flora and fauna.

Backcountry skiing, offered by Mont Sutton on some of its trails, has become increasingly popular during the pandemic and this winter has witnessed record traffic. Skiers are observed regularly overflowing along various ascents and descents on the protected grounds of the Réserve naturelle des Montagnes-Vertes (RNMV), belonging to CNC, and on the paths of the PENS, where neither skiing nor snowboarding is permitted.

Sutton is proud to be able to offer a wide range of activities on its territory but wants users to respect the measures put in place for their safety, for the tranquility of its citizens, and for the conservation of fragile ecosystems.

A summary of the rules now in force follows:

- Backcountry skiers should exclusively use the trails and trails provided for this practice at Mont Sutton.
- Backcountry skiers who use the slopes and trails of Mont Sutton must hold a Mont Sutton season ticket or a ticket for this activity.
- The practice of backcountry skiing, off-trail skiing, and mountain biking is strictly prohibited in the RNMV.
- PENS trails are exclusively reserved for hiking, walking, and snowshoeing.
- Only trails indicated on network maps and signage are permitted and adherence to them must be observed.
- All health measures relating to COVID-19 must be respected at all times.

Harmonious coexistence, respect for security and nature

This update is a vital element in the ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of all, while promoting harmony among the various mountain activities. Safety on our territory is of paramount importance and people who venture outside the marked trails add to their risk by unduly increasing the response time of rescue teams in the event of an accident.

The CNC is happy to provide access to some of its properties, for example by granting rights of way for the PENS trail. The RNMV shelters sensitive and unique ecosystems. The status of nature reserve was conferred on this territory by the Ministry of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change in order to preserve its integrity and limit uses not compatible with such protection, such as backcountry skiing, off-trail skiing, and mountain biking. The CNC must enforce the restrictions imposed by such a statute.

With the arrival of spring, mountain biking will become popular. Participants should be aware that this activity is subject to the same guidelines outlined above. Plein Air Sutton offers mountain biking on some of its trails but it is strictly prohibited on the RNMV and the PENS trails.

Sutton is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Let's make sure that the outdoor activities are carried out in the right place so as to play safe while respecting nature.