



Truckstop Article March 2010

I found your snowpack... After reading that a lot of western Montana snowpack levels were well below yearly averages, Ross Tee and I stumbled upon a spot south of town where I think all of the rest of the state's snow ended up. Right where we were putting out a trap line for the elusive Pine Marten, and boy, was the snow ever deep up there...

And after spending most of my free time in January fighting a too small pair of snowshoes, I thought it best to do some research on proper snowshoeing before we ventured out again. I purchased a new pair of snowshoes that would better support my weight, then I went back to my stack of reading material beside my nightstand and dug out my copy of "*Regurgitations of a Montana Woodsman*" by Craig E. Thomas.

I remembered there being a chapter in the book about Craig's experiences on snowshoes, which I re-read several times so I was sure not to miss any details I might need to make my upcoming shoeing experience more enjoyable.

So we set off for the hills early one Saturday morning, loaded packs on our backs and snowshoes firmly bound to our feet. After about a 100 yards sinking almost to my waist with every step, I was quite perplexed about the whole shoeing experience. Craig elaborated in the book about happily fluttering about atop the snow as he danced merrily from tree to tree, yet I was far from fluttering atop the snow, as I was instead spending most of my time amongst it, not atop it. Not once did I ever flutter...

Craig mentioned in the book what size snowshoes he wore, which is exactly what size I was wearing, and suddenly it became clear to me why I was unable to flutter atop the snow like Craig does: He's just a little Forester type guy, while I am a rather large log truck driver type guy, and I probably outweigh him by a good 80 or 90 pounds... so my snowshoes are simply too small for a guy of advanced weight like myself.

And using the size of Craig's snowshoes as a reference, I used the formula $(N/(Y*W))+90/3.141854-14X/85*H$ +diameter Y) and came up with the proper size snowshoe for myself to be able to flutter atop the snow just like Craig E. Thomas—it would have to be 2 sheets of 4 by 8 plywood strapped firmly to my boots. Not practicable, so perhaps an 18 foot long pair of cross-country skis might be the way to go...

That said, I found the following e-mail amongst the hundreds I get every week from devoted readers of this newsletter that I must share with you:

"Dear Rich Tee, I am on a fairly long haul, hauling from way up the Notellum drainage, and I was driving down the highway the other day when I got a text on my cell phone. I set my beer down on the dash so I could reply to the text, and as I was doing so, the beer tipped over and spilled all over the place. So I was wondering... you have any ideas on how I can get ketchup stains out of my "Friends of the Wild Swan" tee-shirt? Sincerely, Sloppy in Saco."

'Dear Slop, There are several parts of your correspondence that are clearly quite disturbing, the worst being... does your wife know you're wearing your good clothes to work? Whereas you fit the typical government idea of the typical truck driver, rest assured that they are developing rules and regulations that will make you a whole bunch safer to the rest of us. Soon, if you want to continue to operate your truck, you will have to have the physique of a fighter pilot, record keeping abilities that would put Lewis & Clark to shame, and a truck meticulously maintained beyond even NASA standards. The day is coming when something as simple as a loose wrapper could put you out of business. So Slop, good luck to ya, Rich Tee.'

With that, I must close now as I am finding myself longing for my very own "Friends of the Wild Swan" tee shirt and I'm off to find one.

Until next month, That is All. Rich Tee