

Wooden Snowshoes



Snowshoes have been a part of winter life in North America for at least 6,000 years. For generations, Native Americans laced wooden frames of ash or hickory with rawhide lacing, known as babiche. Many different shapes and sizes developed across the continent based on culture, lifestyle and snow conditions. Their quiet

bindings and effectiveness in deep snow make these styles still applicable in our modern world.

When most people think of snowshoes, they picture frames with pointed tails sticking out the back. The tails of Ojibwa and Huron styles (shown above) are designed to act like the rudder of a boat to keep the user tracking in a straight line. Pointed tails do mean reduced maneuverability, especially for beginners.

For those new to snowshoeing or planning on trekking through forested area, the compact bearpaw style is a better fit. Classic bearpaws are like strapping trash can lids on your feet but the modified Green Mountain bearpaw (shown above on right) is narrower and lets you walk with a normal stride.

Want to try a pair of wooden snowshoes? Attend a guided snowshoe hike at CNC by reserving snowshoes online or by phone at 989-631-0830.

Modern Styles

All snowshoes prevent sinking into the snow by spreading weight over a larger surface area. With advances in technology, different materials can be used to make snowshoes.

Aluminum alloy snowshoes are popular choices. The sturdy and lightweight metal frames are affordable and customizable for different uses. For those in hilly or mountainous terrain, metal crampon spikes help dig in on the slopes. Smaller frames are great for winter trail runners.

Whether wooden or aluminum, venture out and enjoy the winter season!



Stop by the Visitor Center Office for program information.

This inSTALLation is available online at www.chippewanaturecenter.org under About Us, Publications.