

WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The great thing about the Loppet community is that we seem to have a shared vision for where we want to go.

We at the Loppet are trying to make that vision a reality. In order to ensure that our community (the North Minneapolis community) is part

of the outdoor-active lifestyle, we have set out to work with more kids in more schools.

We continue to strive toward a better partnership with the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board (Park Board) to create more, better and more reliable trail opportunities, including ski trails with snowmaking and lights and event trails for mountain biking, cyclocross, trail running and hiking. We are working with the Park Board to create a home base for outdoor activity in Wirth Park. And we are trying to help solve the obesity epidemic and nature deficit disorder by creating an on-ramp for children to engage in outdoor adventure from a young age.

We are working on all of these things simultaneously. The Adventures Team has been growing our presence in North Minneapolis schools. We are working toward better trail opportunities and an Adventure Center; we are nearing the end of the first phase of our capital campaign for the Adventure Center, the Park Board has approved a conceptual design that we are all really excited about, and we are working toward a sweeping agreement with the Park Board that will result in the

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ADVENTURE CENTER UPDATE: Approaching the Finish Line!

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, LINDSAY HENNING

I joined the Loppet Foundation's staff as Director of Advancement in August and what an exciting time to join the team! There had already been great progress made on the campaign to build an Adventure Center in Theodore Wirth Park. This project is going to be a game-changer and will change the landscape of outdoor activity in the Twin Cities area. The Adventure Center project has everything that the community has envisioned: learning and staging areas for skiing and biking, ski trails, bike trails, hiking, tubing, snowboarding, golf and disc golf, and a building that will act as the jumping off point for these year-round outdoor activities. The building itself will be 14,000 sq. ft. and will have a central gathering space, a bike and ski shop, a cafe, and locker room facilities. Our hope is to create a hub for outdoor activities for the entire Minneapolis area helping to create happy, healthy outdoor people from throughout



Mission Statement

We create a shared passion for year-round outdoor adventure in the Minneapolis area, focusing on underserved youth and families.

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Notes from the Executive Director Continued from page 1

Park Board delivering better and more reliable trail opportunities and programming through the Loppet-Park Board partnership. And we are building the Fast Kids brand for young athletes with the idea that year-round outdoor-adventure-based activities will eventually be on par with soccer, football or hockey so that there is no question but that parents sign their eight year olds up to learn outdoor literacy and lifetime skills.

At the same time we continue to run events that build community and are, increasingly, part of the fabric and the brand of the city. We have continued to build Loppet Nordic Racing (LNR). We have helped student athletes achieve national and international success. We have helped adults learn to ski and mountain bike with confidence. We have worked with the broader ski community so that LNR is part of a larger system. And we have tried to build a community that crosses ethnic and economic lines bringing people together around their shared passion for outdoor activity.

Accomplishing all of these things at the same time has put considerable strain on the organization. We don't have physical space for all of our employees or, really, for our programming. Our budget has been challenged by the continuous growth, the addition of a development department, and considerable investment in the organization itself. And our staff has been stretched as we continue to build toward a real home base.

I cannot express how appreciative we are of the Loppet community for staying with us as we build. Our supporters have become members, come to events, organized and hosted house parties, invited their friends and relatives and neighbors, donated to the cause, volunteered at events, helped with our youth programming, and participated in community events and training groups and clubs. The hope is that the faith our supporters have put in us bears fruit in the years to come with a home base that allows the whole community to enjoy the outdoors.

As always, looking forward to seeing you on the trails.
John



ANNUAL FUND UPDATE AND PROGRESS

The Loppet Foundation's membership program has been around for many years but our Annual Fund is still fairly young. The purpose of the Annual Fund is to advance the work of the Loppet Foundation, particularly our youth programs. Annual Fund support helps us fill in gaps in grant funding so we can continue to run our youth programs like Junior Loppet middle school teams and provide scholarships to Loppet Adventure Camp. It also helps out when curveballs are thrown our way like a bad snow year that brings decreased race registration, or additional equipment needs. The Annual Fund supports our general operations and helps build a reserve.



HOW DO WE RAISE SUPPORT FOR THE ANNUAL FUND?

Last fiscal year, we raised more than \$77,000 towards our Annual Fund and stewardship/trail improvements. That was a 37% increase from the previous year! We have budgeted to raise more than \$100,000 this year. How will we get there? In addition to asking for donations through all LNR, Ski Club, and event registrations, we make extra pushes for Give to the Max Day, and will roll out special projects, like Earn-a-Bike (see page 4).

Thank you to those of you who gave a little extra last year and who plan to do the same this year. Whether you added \$10 to your Luminary Loppet registration, or made a \$1,000 gift on Give to the Max Day, your contributions really make a difference. You allow us to continue to bring new outdoor adventures to the community. You help us to do so much more. Snowmaking infrastructure. More trails for Masters World Cup and the State Meet. Youth scholarships. Community outreach. More family activities. All of these endeavors take resources, so thank you for lending a hand.

Pictured left: Anwatin Junior Loppet team on a pole hike at Afton this November.

LOPPET ADVENTURES



Left: Sherman Powell (right) cruising by at a FAST KIDS Mountain Bike Series race.

Right: Henri Nguyen (middle) and Timothy Vang (right) pause to take a photo with their new bikes after taking them for a spin on the Glenwood Spur trail.

A NEW WAY TO GIVE BACK: EARN-A-BIKE-PROGRAM

HIGH SCHOOL LIAISON, ANDY HARRIS

This fall, we have rolled out a new area for you to offer your support: our Earn-a-Bike program:

It's no secret that Minneapolis loves bikes. What you may not realize is that Minneapolis youth love their bikes just as much. For every suit-jacketed businessman you see barrelling down the Cedar Lake Trail to and from work, there is a kid biking to middle school, or hitting the singletrack with their friends after the last bell, or taking their bike to the local shop to figure out how to grease a chain. This is an experience unique to our city, and, at the Loppet Foundation, we work to spread this experience to as many kids as we can.

Each year, the Loppet Foundation rewards 21 exceptional middle school athletes through the Earn-a-Bike program. The bikes are rewarded after reviewing a points-based metric of attendance and effort given over the course of the year-long season. Any athlete is eligible, but only those who understand the value of sweat and hard work can earn themselves a bike. Most of our athletes come from North Minneapolis, from households where a bike

is no small investment, and when you ask them.

"For me, my bike means that I can practice mountain biking at home. I'm getting pretty good, I can do a wheelie." Henri Nguyen, 8th grade

"Everyday, I bike after school and go fishing with my friends. We go to Wirth, to the creek. It's our creek." Timothy Vang, 7th grade

"When I got the bike, I was so happy. I had a hand-me-down bike from my brother but it was broken and it always made us mad. And when I got this really nice bike, I could go wherever I wanted." Henry Munnich, 8th grade

We believe it is important to nurture a life of adventure in our youth, because they will inherit the trails, paved and otherwise, that we leave behind.

Support this program with a gift online at www.loppet.org/earnabike.



Raequan Wilson shows a young skier how it's done.

THE NORTHSIDE COMBINED

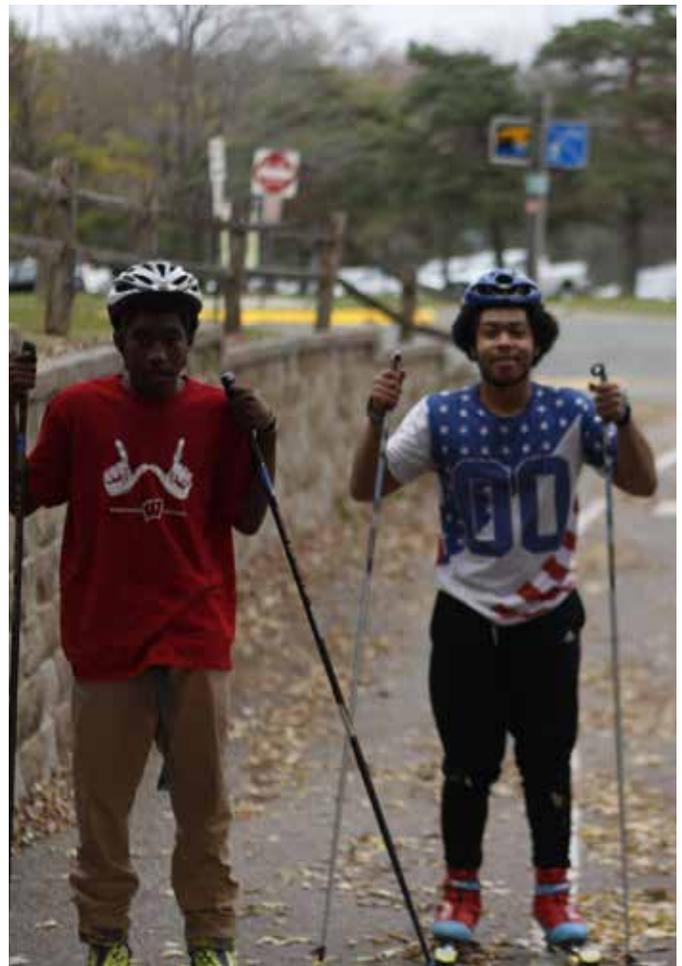
HIGH SCHOOL LIAISON, ANDY HARRIS

The Loppet Foundation is partnering up with Minneapolis Public Schools to bring Nordic skiing to Northside high schools. The Northside Combined Nordic Ski Team draws athletes from Patrick Henry, Edison, and North high schools to practice and compete at a varsity level. You can find us after school at Theodore Wirth Park. Thanks to the George Family Foundation for supporting our efforts to support high school students.

Follow the Northside Combined team at www.northsidecombined.com.



An athlete flashes a thumbs-up about halfway into his run with Coach Brandon Hersch.



Skiers at the front end of their workout. Don't worry, they were still smiling when they got back.



NORTHEAST MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM

HEAD COACH, DAVE MOTT

The Northeast Middle School Junior Loppet Team is celebrating its third year and this fall had the largest number of returning athletes and the largest number total. There is new leadership this season; veteran Loppet member Dave Mott is taking over as head coach and has support from Loppet volunteers Chris Morley, and third year volunteer, Mark Radersdorf.

The Northeast Middle School Ski Team has been working hard and having fun this year. Over twenty youth registered for the program this fall, but thirteen athletes make up the core of the team dominated by eight returning eighth graders: Alex, Alondra, Brian, Delanie, Jorgen, Logan, Parker and Zecelia. We are expecting leadership and strong skiing performances from these veterans. The entire team has shown great effort and energy and anticipate a great season.

The fall training season has consisted of biking, trail running, pole bounding, and roller skiing. They've been to Boom Island and across the Stone Arch Bridge, and many parks including Silver Lake, Columbia, Gross, and the hills of the Bog and Eloise Butler. The team also participated in the Adventure Running series on a very challenging Wirth course, and participated in a fun Halloween treasure hunt.

While they are having fun on dry land, the team is really hoping for snow soon and a chance to practice the skills they learned last year. The team is looking forward to the Farview Sprints, the Loppet Festival and of course, the Midwest Junior Championships.

We thank UCare for their generous support of the Northeast Team.



Julian and Rogelio Cruz, Brian Espinoza and Oscar Morales skiing Farview Park at sunset.

FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM

HEAD COACH, JON MILLER

This fall the Nellie Stone Johnson Middle School Ski and Bike team moved to Franklin Middle School. We made this move because the Minneapolis Public Schools realigned the middle schools on the North Side so that Nellie Stone Johnson became a K-5 building and the students who had previously attended Nellie Stone Johnson Middle School were mostly moved to the newly re-opened Franklin Middle School.

I did not expect this transition to be as jarring as it turned out to be. Some days it felt almost like we were starting from scratch. But, as we approached Christmas Break, the team started to come together. Some returning veterans like Melvin Russell, Nayeli Hernandez, Abril Sosa and Jennifer Vizcarra have helped create some stability that allows us to build excitement for the sports among our new recruits. And, while the weather has not helped us yet this winter, we have been finding fun ways to be active in the outdoors: especially playing a team favorite – capture the flag.

We have taken advantage of whatever snow has come our way, and for one particularly memorable practice, we headed back to a familiar place – Farview Park across the street from Nellie Stone Johnson. The veteran team members remember this park as having the best downhills in the city, and a place where we would practice when the Loppet Vans were all in use. On Thursday, Dec. 3, we were back at Farview on very crusty snow, which made it difficult to cut turns on the downhills. But the team had a great time trying, and learning how to fall gracefully before we played a sunset game of ski ball at the top of the hill looking out towards downtown. Even though we are always growing and adapting, it is nice to be able to sometimes keep a foot in our past.

We thank the Huelsmann Foundation for their generous support of the Franklin Team.

ANWATIN MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM

HEAD COACH, ALLIE RYKKEN

What have we been up to? What haven't we been up to?! Since the summer, we have embarked on mountain biking excursions, rollerski training, canoe trips across Minneapolis lakes and back, Loppet Adventure Camps, road bike rides for ice cream, FAST KIDS mountain bike series races, the UCare TriLoppet, the Ringer Roll, and a trip to Hayward, Wisconsin for some mountain biking, trail running and canoeing. A few brave Anwatin team members even joined LNR Juniors training.



Our very own Nooshilon Vang and Marcos Castro Santos 'living like superstars' and pushing through the pump track for a Mountain Bike Series race.



The last Adventure Running Series race. We made them all jump over hay bales and run over creeks and they are STILL coming back!



The gang at a Hoigaard's Canoe Derby race this summer. MCA and paddling community members partnered up with our athletes to show them a real canoe race!



Simon and Marcos Castro Santos, helping out at the Surly Trail Loppet after their race in the Salomon 13.1K. They still had energy to roll out some lefse!



Bike trip around Minneapolis. Stops included Minnehaha Falls and the Pumphouse Creamery, both overflowing with delightfulness.

LOPPET EVENTS



EVENTS OVERVIEW

RACE DIRECTOR, MIKE ERICKSON

Our spring, summer and fall events broke records this year. The Salomon CITYTRAIL Loppet saw an increase of 200 participants. The UCare Tri-Loppet had its biggest turnout ever and the new prize purse and format were a hit. The Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet continued its tradition of filling up quickly.

This is all thanks to you, our members, participants and especially our amazing and dedicated volunteers, (many of whom are all three; members, participants AND volunteers).

So, what does 2016 have in store? We are planning the full course for the Loppet Festival from Wirth Park to Lake Calhoun as we did in 2014. We are adding some cool events like Speedskating Marathons and Telemark skiing, adding a half (Puoli) distance to the popular Fat Bike Loppet, and looking forward to another wonderful Luminary experience.

I'm not even going to ask you to pray for snow, because if you are reading this, you already are. We'll see you on the trails!

MINNE-LOPPET 2016

In 2016, we anticipate the largest participation in the Loppet Foundation's signature Loppet Festival event, the Minne-Loppet.

We currently run the program in seven North Minneapolis elementary schools and one school in Brooklyn Park. While we are not growing the number of schools where we offer the Minne-Loppet program, we are increasing the number of children that we serve at each school by training teachers and support staff to ski with kids. All of the school's staff, and parents, are offered opportunities to learn to ski and each school receives a Winter Family Fun Day, where all of the Wirth Winter activities are free of charge for Minne-Loppet participants and their families.

The Minne-Loppet is a 10-week program through our Adventures wing where the Loppet Foundation provides coaching, equipment, and even a groomed trail at the school. This allows elementary school youth to gain the skills of Nordic skiing, and to put these new skills to into practice at the Loppet Festival.

We anticipate that over 450 students from Minneapolis Public Schools will participate in this year's City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival.



Chris Davis (right) at the Surly Trail Loppet.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CHRIS DAVIS

RACE DIRECTOR, MIKE ERICKSON

If you come across Chris Davis in the woods at Wirth Park say "hi". Chances are he's training for his next 14,000 foot summit, (I believe he's attempting to summit all of North America's 14,000 foot peaks). Or he's training for his next mountain bike, running or adventure race.

If you come across Chris near the date of a Loppet event, chances are he's marking the course, competing in the race, or cleaning the course up after the race. He usually does all three!

Marking our trail running courses takes a tremendous amount of time, lugging arrows, flour and flagging over a given section of course is a workout in and of itself (Chris' preferred method is the use of a wheelbarrow). At the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet, Chris usually spends 5-6 hours on his feet the day before the Trail Loppet, then runs his section of the course just before the event to make sure the markings are perfect, then runs the half marathon, and then pulls all the course markings down afterwards. Chris gets more miles in a couple of days than a lot of athletes get all week. Spending 5-6 hours lugging a wheelbarrow full of stuff around most likely doesn't help with his overall race time either, but Chris does it all with a smile, and does it very well.

We couldn't pull off the events we do with such success without people like Chris making it happen. He and our other super volunteers are The Loppet.

Thank you Chris, and here's to your next 14,000 foot ascent, (and decline).

Please consider joining volunteers like Chris. Sign up online at www.loppet.org/volunteer.



Above: Minne-Loppet participants having a blast at the 2015 City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival.

LOPPET STEWARDSHIP



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, MIKE ERICKSON

2015 has been the year of the plan. Centered around the new Adventure Center, lots of planning has been going on this year around the building itself, and the event trails around it.

A small team of staff and volunteers have been working with both the Minneapolis Park Board and HGA Architects to design a new Adventure and Welcome Center for Theodore Wirth Park.

Many iterations have worked their way to the current, 14,000 square foot design. This new building will become the center of silent sports and recreation for the area, as well as a destination for a quiet glass of wine or cup of coffee.

Event trails are being designed to accommodate trail running, mountain bike race events, cyclocross, and enhanced winter nordic skiing, tubing, snowboarding and snow bike riding.

Planning is also happening around enhanced and expanded snowmaking in the park, and an expanded trail system in response to the 2018 World Masters Championships.

2016 will be a very busy year in and around the new Adventure Center area.

Approaching the Finish Line Continued from page 1

the region. Visit www.loppet.org/adventurecenter to read more details about the project.

We are nearing the end of the "Quiet Phase" of this fundraising campaign. What does that mean? It doesn't mean that we can't talk about the project. It doesn't mean that it's a secret. It means that we have been working to raise the majority of the support needed to ensure the project will happen. And we are well on our way! By the time this newsletter is printed, we will have raised more than \$6 Million. Once we reach this milestone, we hope to move into the "Public Phase" of the campaign, when we will be asking the larger community (race participants, neighbors, members and more) to get involved to help us finish out the \$8 million capital project.

Personally, I am most excited about the Adventure Center because, together, we will be leaving a legacy in Theodore Wirth Park. We will see diverse groups of skiers and bikers enjoying the new trails, parents waiting inside for a race to start, couples going on dates to the cafe, young athletes being inspired by talented older athletes, participants celebrating the finish of a race, and the list goes on... And we will be proud that we accomplished this together.

THE WIRTH PARK ADVENTURE CENTER



Design schematics from summer 2015.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE:

August 2015: Schematic design (done by HGA Architects) approved by the Park Board

Spring 2016: Construction to begin

Late Fall/Early Winter 2016: Celebrate the opening of the new Adventure Center!

PROJECT INFO:

(at time of publication)

Overall Goals: \$8 million for capital, \$2 million for ongoing programmatic support

Contributors: 320

Amount Raised from Individuals and Foundations: \$3,269,958

Amount from State Bonding Authority: \$1.5 Million

Commitments from Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board: \$1.2 Million

SUPPORTING THE ADVENTURE CENTER IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

LOPPET FOUNDATION SUPPORTER, BARB OWENS

Jim Owens was a life-long endurance athlete: swimmer, runner, skier, and cyclist. He was an enthusiastic grassroots supporter of the City of Lakes Loppet from the beginning, whole-heartedly supporting the possibility of an urban ski marathon, inspired that we live in a city so conducive to year-round activities for athletes of all ages.

Jim's excitement for athletic endeavors was contagious. He instilled a passion for skiing in our son, Max, at an early age. We made our annual trek to the City of Lakes Loppet, joined by a group of enthusiastic aunts and uncles, to cheer on Max at the Minne-Loppet finish line. It was a family affair.

In 1998, Jim was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Physical activity, along with his treatment protocol, was a means of staying healthy and overcoming the mental and physical effects of cancer. Sadly, Jim lost his battle with cancer in January 2009 when Max was 9 years old.

Since then, Loppet Foundation programs have continued to provide a variety of channels for Max to develop and pursue his love of skiing. Max has found a great source of camaraderie and world-class coaching through the Loppet Nordic Racing team. His participation in LNR allows him to be with people who knew his dad for a long time and associate Jim with skiing, running, cycling, and the outdoors.

Jim was an athlete who had cancer, but he didn't let cancer define him. If Jim were here today, he would be at every event, skiing with Max, cheering him on, encouraging him to work and train hard.

Together, with members of the Owens family and friends, including many of Jim's classmates from the Blake School, we are making a contribution to the Adventure Center as a tribute to Jim. We are choosing to remember Jim through an organization whose mission and values are aligned with his passion for sport, competition, and being active.

Now Max will get to remember Jim as an active, vital person within a community of athletes.

LOPET NORDIC RACING



LNR WEST YELLOWSTONE TRIP

HEAD COACH, PIOTR BEDNARSKI

Though I have traveled some 20 times to West Yellowstone for the week of Thanksgiving, and have always managed to ski on pretty good snow, its always a nerve-racking countdown to departure. This was the first year I can remember in the last 10 years where there was snow some two weeks before heading out there. Well, as it turned out, the conditions were some of the best I have ever encountered.

LNR packed up 40 junior athletes and 8 coaches on a coach bus and headed to Yellowstone. Another 40 juniors joined us in Yellowstone, staying with their families. Kim Rudd also ran the FAST KIDS program in Yellowstone for an additional 15 athletes, so all in all it was a massive training camp. We take the week to primarily focus on high volume training, with several hours of skiing per day, with a short morning run and stretching sessions daily. Also, with excellent classic grooming and cold dry snow, we skied approximately 70% of our hours in the classic technique.

We were able to continue a few Yellowstone Training Camp traditions. The first is a 60-80 kilometer ski into Yellowstone Park on Thanksgiving morning. We ski on the road, which is closed to vehicular traffic.

The wildlife fortunately did show itself: coyotes, geese, swans, eagles, and buffalo. It's a long day of skiing- most athletes usually ski 5-6 hours this day, and Coach Doug Debold made the round trip to Old Faithful, 105 kilometers, in 8 hours flat.

Also on Thanksgiving Day, Kim Rudd runs a Loppet Games event with Park City Ski Club for the younger athletes. The get-together at the biathlon range area includes relay races, dual slalom, and an afternoon of games. Finally, all the Fast Kids and Juniors congregated on the Friday after Thanksgiving for the 4th annual LNR Downhill Time Trial, a 2 kilometer race from the top of Rendezvous Trail back to the biathlon stadium. This year we had 81 starters, with Coaches Erik Fagerstrom and Mark Johnson taking the top 2 spots.

LNR athletes, coaches and parents left Yellowstone pretty exhausted, but fired up to start the racing season.

Next landmarks for the LNR juniors include: the Junior National Qualifier races in Houghton, MI on December 20-21, and the Senior National Championships, also in Houghton, MI on January 1-8.



LNR Juniors voyage into Yellowstone National Park on Thanksgiving morning for a long over-distance ski.



Xavier Mansfield, racing the 15K SuperTour freestyle race at the end of the week. Jan Ketterson and Brian Gregg also represented LNR in the Yellowstone races.



FAST KIDS skiers join with Park City Nordic Ski Club to play games, including this pull-a-partner relay, on Thanksgiving morning.



LNR Juniors take a water break on the scenic driveway in Yellowstone National Park.

LNR WOMEN UPDATE



2015 Women's LNR Wednesday Dryland Session grew to forty women this fall.



Women have enjoyed the spring and summer "Brick Training" sessions that include trail running, strength and mountain biking.



Many of the LNR women participated in Loppet Events over the summer and fall. Here, two LNR ladies celebrate their finishes of the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet.

FAST KIDS UPDATE



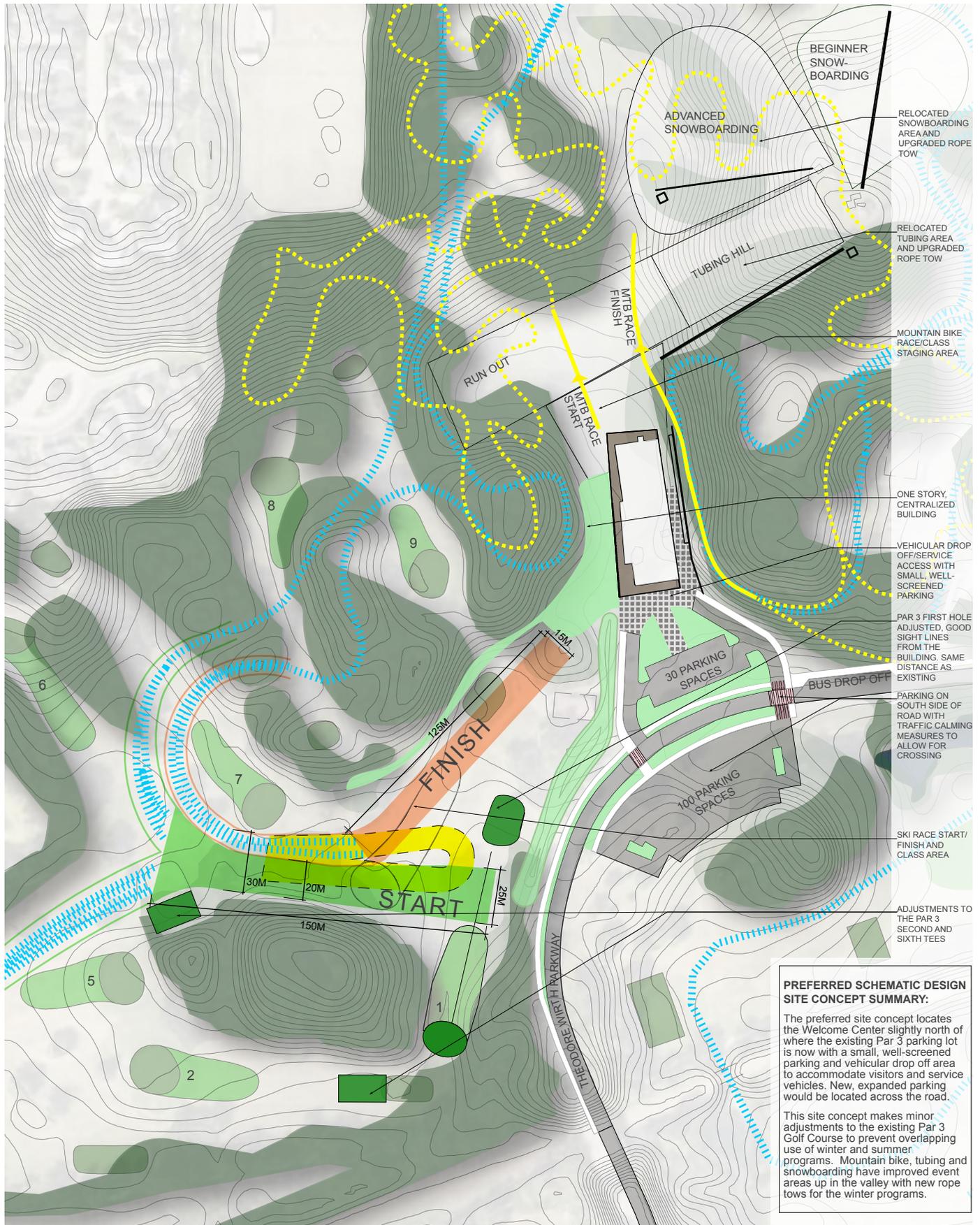
Over 100 parents and youth came out for the annual Loppet Games and Age Gap Relay Event on October 24, 2015.



FAST KIDS celebrated Halloween together while rollerskiing on the Greenway trail!



Many FAST KIDS and their parents traveled to West Yellowstone for a Thanksgiving camp on snow! The kids enjoyed training and games during the trip.



PREFERRED SCHEMATIC DESIGN SITE CONCEPT SUMMARY:

The preferred site concept locates the Welcome Center slightly north of where the existing Par 3 parking lot is now with a small, well-screened parking and vehicular drop off area to accommodate visitors and service vehicles. New, expanded parking would be located across the road.

This site concept makes minor adjustments to the existing Par 3 Golf Course to prevent overlapping use of winter and summer programs. Mountain bike, tubing and snowboarding have improved event areas up in the valley with new rope tows for the winter programs.



WIRTH PARK ADVENTURE AND WELCOME CENTER PREFERRED SCHEMATIC DESIGN



Schematic site plan from summer 2015. Watch www.loppet.org/adventurecenter for more updates.



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Mark Your Calendars!

2016 Loppet Events:

January 10	Peace Coffee Pre-Loppet
January 30	Waffle Loppet*
February 5-7	City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival
February 6	Luminary Loppet
February 13-14	Mayor's XC Challenge
February 27	Waffle Loppet*
March 4-6	Midwest Junior Championships
May 22	Salomon CITYTRAIL Loppet
June 25	UCare Tri-Loppet
September 24	Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet
October 11	Loppet Foundation Annual Meeting

*Loppet Foundation member events

Loppet Adventures:

Programming for a community of outdoor-active people

- **Loppet Ski Club Winter**
Monday evenings and Saturday mornings, Dec - Feb
- **Loppet Run Club**
Monday evenings and Saturday mornings, Apr - Sept
- **Loppet Mountain Bike Club** May - July

Loppet Nordic Racing:

Cross country ski racing programs for all ages

- **Winter Programs**
Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced and Women's groups start in December
- **FAST KIDS**
Skiing, mountain biking, and adventure running for kids 8-13