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13th Annual City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival Revises Plans Due to Weather *Most events to move to Theodore Wirth Park; Comcast Luminary Loppet now walking-only*

MINNEAPOLIS - January 27, 2015 - Despite an early start to winter this year the recent January thaw is causing significant changes to the [City of Lakes Loppet Festival](#), Jan. 30 - Feb. 1. More than 10,000 people are registered for the three-day event that includes [cross country skiing](#), [snowshoeing](#), [ice-bike racing](#) and the popular [Comcast Luminary Loppet](#). Now in its 13th year, the City of Lakes Loppet Festival is organized by the [Loppet Foundation](#), a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Minneapolis.

"The Loppet is all about adventure - defined as an activity with an uncertain outcome," said John Munger, the executive director of the Loppet Foundation. "This year's Loppet may be one of our best adventures yet."

Most events will occur on or around the snowmaking loop at Theodore Wirth Park, also called the Hap Lutter trail. The notable exception is the Comcast Luminary Loppet, a non-competitive community event that draws thousands of people of all ages who come together in a magical setting of candle-lit "luminaries" and ice structures. The major adjustment for the Comcast Luminary Loppet is that it will be a walking-only event on Lake of the Isles instead of one where participants can ski and snowshoe.

"With a walking-only event concerns about crowding are not as significant as with a skiing event," said Munger. "Therefore, there is more capacity beyond the 7,000-participant limit, which we have to ensure a quality experience for registrants."

The 2014 Comcast Luminary Loppet sold out, and earlier this week the event reached 7,000 registrants. Given the changes those still seeking tickets to the Comcast Luminary Loppet may register online through midnight, Tuesday, Jan. 27; purchase a ticket at the Columbia Sportswear Store in Uptown from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31 or buy a ticket (at a premium price) on site in one of the five registration tents around Lake of the Isles on Saturday evening. The number of available tickets is still limited so advanced purchase is recommended.

Move to Theodore Wirth Park Mirrors 2012 Loppet Festival

Loppet Foundation organizers and volunteers are following plans from the 2012 City of Lakes Loppet Festival when a unseasonably warm winter required similar adjustments. That year the organizers had a full week to prepare for the changes. Given the uncertainty of this year's conditions organizers will have just three days to shift plans.

"At the first City of Lakes Loppet there was no snow - not even a flake - as of the Monday before the Saturday race, and only 30 people were registered," said Munger. "But last-minute snow inspired skiers across the Minneapolis area to participate, and we had 800 racers in that inaugural event."

"From that first race the Loppet Foundation has shown that it can rally to create a great event," said Craig Rudd, the chief of course for the City of Lakes Loppet. "Volunteers, community members, participants and Loppet Foundation staff are working hard to make this year's City of Lakes Loppet a great celebration of outdoor activity and competition."

New Events at the 2015 City of Lakes Loppet Ski Festival

This year the City of Lakes Loppet will present the Mounds Park Academy Fireworks at Theodore Wirth Park at 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 30. The fireworks are a new aspect of the opening night of Loppet Weekend, which features the Finn Sisu Sprints. The Finn Sisu Sprints include two-minute heats in the youth, open and masters categories; the drops, jumps and hills make the event a spectator highlight. The Surly Beer Garden and Vendor Village will also be open that night from 5 p.m. - 9 p.m. The Big Tent at Loppet Village will be located in the Par 3 Parking Lot at 1325 Theodore Wirth Parkway.

Another new event at this year's City of Lakes Loppet Festival is the Pearson's Crew Ski Loppet, a head-to-head competition with 16 teams of six people who ski on 25-foot-long, hand-crafted skis. Winning teams move onto the Final Four under the lights at the Loppet Finish area. Teams compete for giant Pearson's Salted Nut Rolls.

Finally, the third new event at the City of Lakes Loppet is the [Age Gap Relay](#), a skiing relay for parents and their children or youth in the Loppet Foundation's middle school programs and adults from the community or their mentors.

Events of Note

Given the changes in the overall festival the times and exact locations will be available on the City of Lakes Loppet Website, www.cityoflakesloppet.com.

- **Kid-friendly events (12 and under):** The [Minne-Loppet](#) is a non-competitive cross country ski event for youth. Nearly 350 North Minneapolis elementary school children from the Loppet Foundation's Minne-Loppet youth program will be skiing in the event. The [Minnesota Youth Ski League SuperCarnival](#) features obstacle courses, jumps and fun and occurs on both Saturday and Sunday. Limited ski equipment is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- **[Comcast Luminary Loppet](#):** For many, the Comcast Luminary Loppet is the highlight of Loppet Weekend and of winter in Minnesota.
- **[Captain Ken's Kubb Tournament](#):** Billed as "bocce ball meets Scandinavia" and "Swedish lawn games go winter," the event is the largest winter kubb tournament in the World.
- **[Penn Cycle Fat Tire Loppet](#):** Fat tire biking is rapidly becoming a popular activity in Minnesota. The event is sold out but is a fun spectator event.
- **[Chuck & Don's Skijoring Loppet](#):** The world's largest skijoring event in the world takes place during the City of Lakes Loppet Festival and is part of the Subaru National Championships.

Media Opportunities

For a comprehensive listing of the City of Lakes Loppet schedule of events, please go to cityoflakesloppet.com. Also, please note that there will be [road closures](#) and [parking and transportation](#) information that will be important to communicate to the broader public. Other potential story angles include:

- **The Olympic Angle:** Former Olympians will be contenders in this year's cross country ski races.
- **Diverse youth preparing for their first race:** At various times during the week leading up to Loppet Weekend, elementary and middle school youth in North Minneapolis public schools will be preparing for their first "race," which take place on Saturday, Jan. 31.
- **Site preparation:** Loppet organizers will be shifting all operations to Theodore Wirth Park, providing an opportunity to showcase volunteers coming together to make a highly popular winter event occur despite the weather.
- **North Minneapolis Middle School Athletes Participating in the Rossignol Junior Loppet:** The Loppet Foundation has three year-round ski and bike teams at North Minneapolis middle schools. The teams will be competing in the Rossignol Junior Loppet race on Saturday, Jan. 31.

The media team at the Loppet Foundation will be sending out advisories throughout the week. If you are interested in pursuing a story about the upcoming Loppet, please contact Kristen Spargo at 612-816-7916 or spargo@loppet.org.

ABOUT THE LOPPET FOUNDATION:

Established in 2002 with an 800-person ski race, the [Loppet Foundation](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that now welcomes 40,000 participants annually to its events and programs. The Loppet Foundation sparks a passion for year-round outdoor adventures, especially in underserved youth and their families. The organization focuses its efforts around [Events](#); [Adventures](#); [Stewardship](#); and [Loppet Nordic Racing](#), the [2014 national champion for men's, women's and overall club](#). Over the years the Loppet Foundation has taught more than 6,500 youth, including 5,500 from North Minneapolis, to ski, mountain bike, paddle, and generally appreciate the outdoors.

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