



The LOPPET

FOUNDATION

Minneapolis, Minnesota

SPRING 2015

Notes from the Executive Director

By John Munger



It was one of those winters that demonstrates the importance of snowmaking. Even with the Three Rivers Parks District's new Hyland facility there was tremendous pressure on the ski trails this winter. With high school skiers, Minnesota Youth Ski League skiers, neighborhood skiers, racers, training groups, ski

clubs and lessons the trails were packed all winter. But without snowmaking there would have been only a few days of skiing this year.

Despite all of that the winter was a great success in many ways. The Loppet set a new record for registrations, mostly on the strength of the Comcast Luminary Loppet. Fat tire bikers were not deterred by the lack of snow. They rode all winter, and for the second straight year the Penn Cycle Fat Tire Loppet sold out. While the Loppet certainly did not go as planned, centering most of the Festival at Wirth Park was generally well received. Loppet Nordic Racing was successful once again: it was the second overall club for boys, first for girls and first overall! The Midwest Junior Championships & Festival had record attendance, with more than 300 athletes and more than 1,000 event registrations. Better than that athletes in the Loppet's middle school program made tremendous strides in their skiing, and it really showed with some great results, even among some of the best skiers in the Midwest!

On the Foundation level, the organization continues to evolve. We have now completed our move to a new fiscal and membership year - October 1 - September

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IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVE ADVENTURES FOR YOUTH!

FAST KIDS DIRECTOR KIM RUDD

Growing up in the 70s and 80s I have fond memories of both summer and winter adventures right in my backyard. The neighborhood I lived in was filled with kids of all ages. Back then there was not as much scheduled sports activities so there was more room for creative outdoor free time. All summer long we would ride our bikes all over town, swim at the beach, play in the woods, build tree forts, and play pickup soccer and late-night games of kick the can or cops and robbers.

Come winter there were just as many adventures outside to keep me and my neighborhood friends active. We would venture out on a nearby lakes to cross country ski and ice skate. We would sled all day on the famous neighborhood horse pasture hill and spend hours making snow forts in the back yard.

My husband and I have always encouraged our kids to be active outside throughout the years but as our culture

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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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KATIE BONO JOINS THE LOPPET TEAM

KRISTEN SPARGO

This past winter the Loppet added an all-star new employee Katie Bono to our ranks. Katie has taken a different career path. She balances professional rock climbing adventures with her work for the Foundation. She lives in Canada and travels frequently. And, oh yeah, Katie is a former Minnesota state champion cross country skier who was, while in high school, coached by, you guessed it, our own Piotr Bednarski. Katie went on to a successful academic and skiing career at Dartmouth College and now makes occasional appearances in the Midwest, where she still skis with the fastest of the fast.

Fortunately, Katie is as good at writing, analyzing and organizing as she is fast at skiing. We are delighted to have Katie on board! (You might see Katie's Dad Mike volunteering at Loppet events. Mike chaired the Junior Nationals committee a few years ago and has continued to lead efforts around SuperTour and Junior National Qualifying events ever since!)

LOPPET ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

KRISTEN SPARGO

Last newsletter we announced the roll-out of an official Annual Fund 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 Trips for Kids and our middle school teams and provide scholarships to Loppet Adventure Camp. Your contributions also enable us to dedicate time to partner with the Park Board on trail maintenance and park stewardship. And your support allows us to continue to bring new outdoor adventures to the community.

We need more support because we are working to do so much more. The Adventure and Welcome Center. Snowmaking infrastructure. More trails for Masters World Cup and the State Meet. More community outreach. More family activities. All of these endeavours take resources. A lot of resources.

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30 - that more accurately reflects how the organization actually runs. Last fall we were certified by the Charities Review Council, and we recently completed our certification process with the U.S. Ski Association (USSA). We received USSA's gold level certification. We are the first non-alpine club to do so!

The next few years will be crucial if we want to reach our goal of achieving a home base for our work. We are working closely with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board to construct an "adventure and welcome center" in Theodore Wirth Park. The Adventure and Welcome Center will include dedicated staging areas for skiing, and non-winter activities mountain biking, trail running and cyclocross. It will include a building that will act as a jumping-off point for these activities and as a home base for activities like adventure camp, middle school programs, family events, LNR, Trips for Kids and more. The building will include a bike and ski shop, a cafe, a large meeting area, an exercise room, and even locker room space. We are still in the "quiet" phase of our campaign, which includes both capital and ongoing programmatic support, and are concentrating right now on securing five-and six-figure gifts.

When completed we expect this project to change the face of Wirth Park, to change the face of the city and the region, and to allow the Foundation to have an even greater impact on North Minneapolis youth and families.

But to get there we will need the help of all of our friends and supporters. We will need ongoing volunteerism, financial contributions, connections with new supporters, and continued community leadership. Once in place the Adventure and Welcome Center is going to be a big deal. It will be a big deal for the adventure sport world. It will be a big deal for North Minneapolis, and it will be a big deal for the Park Board! It will be a place where people of different economic and ethnic backgrounds can come together through a shared passion for outdoor activity, so it will be a big deal for our community.

I am excited and I hope you are, too! I can't wait to see you there! We have accomplished so much these past years - but the completion of the Adventure Center will, I think, make the rest pale by comparison.

Updated Mission & Vision, and Newly Articulated Values

Over the past few years the Loppet Foundation has been maturing at a rapid rate. Part of that process has involved introspection. Are we headed in the right direction? Does our mission match our trajectory? What is our long-term vision? How can we best measure our growth?

Capital Campaign Co-Chair Dick Howard led us in thinking through these issues over the past several months. First the organization's staff leadership team created a draft, then the staff held a retreat to talk it through, and finally the board of directors weighed

in. What emerged is an updated mission and vision, and the first set of fully articulated Loppet Foundation values:

Mission

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

Vision

The Minneapolis area leads the world in year-round outdoor activities. Ethnically and economically diverse individuals and families come together around a shared passion for the outdoors - a passion that is universal. The Loppet Foundation is at the center of this shared passion in Minneapolis.

Values

Adventure. We believe that living an inspired life requires taking paths with uncertain outcomes. We focus on the journey.

Excellence. We set the highest standards and strive for continuous improvement in everything we do.

Stewardship. We are committed to nurturing the resources - like youth, natural resources, and financial assets - entrusted to our care.

Integrity. We value honesty and high moral standards, but our definition of integrity also includes holding each other accountable for living the outdoor active life that we promote.

Inclusiveness. We believe that an outdoor active life is part of all cultures and we strive to share our passion for outdoor activity across individuals with differing abilities, as well as ethnic and economic lines.

The organization plans to use the updated mission, vision and values in setting a course for the next several years. Each action will be measured against the mission and vision. Does the action advance the mission of creating a shared passion for year-round outdoor adventures in the Minneapolis area? Is there a focus on underserved youth and families? Does the action move us closer to our long-term vision of the Minneapolis area leading the world in year-round outdoor activities? Does the action help ethnically and economically diverse individuals and families come together around a shared passion for the outdoors?

Volunteers, employees, coaches, board members and athletes will be measured against the Foundation's values. Does the person have a sense of adventure? Does the person focus on the journey or only on the results? Is the person committed to nurturing the resources entrusted to our care? Does the person set the highest standards and strive for continuous improvement? Is the person honest and personally committed to living an outdoor active life? Does the person strive to share her/his passion for outdoor activity across individuals with differing abilities, as well as ethnic and economic lines?

LOPPET ADVENTURES.



ADVENTURES UPDATE

ADVENTURES DIRECTOR ANTHONY TAYLOR

Loppet Adventures had a busy and exciting winter across both our youth programs and our adult adventures.

Minne-Loppet programs

The Loppet Foundation's elementary school-based ski programs also shined brightly at this year's Loppet. We trained 1,000 students at 8 schools, of which 7 are in North Minneapolis, and had over 450 parents and youth attend the Loppet Ski Festival. This year Minne-Loppet schools were also able to attend the Midwest Junior Championships and students from Pillsbury Elementary and Park Brook Elementary made a great showing. Congratulations to all of the athletes from Mary McLeod Bethune, Lucy Craft Laney, Elizabeth Hall International, Loring, Pillsbury, City View and Park Brook Elementary schools for making this year's Minne-Loppet program the best.

Adult Ski Club

Winter 14/15 for Loppet Adventures was full of experiences to write home about. The Loppet Adult Ski Club led by Mike Bash and Tom Anderson and the legion of volunteer coaches had highest participation with over 100 members of all skill levels. John Munger was particularly impressed with the diversity of skill levels and the quality of coaching. The group took two trips this season: a Thanksgiving adventure to ABR, where the snow was simply amazing, and second trip in March to Bearskin Lodge to extend the season. All reports from Bearskin buoyed its reputation as a great destination.

There were even reports on the great Fat Tire biking at Bearskin. Look forward to more opportunities to explore with the Loppet Community.

The Loppet Ambassadors

The trail volunteers that help you find your way on the trails and answer questions about trail passes and routes also had record participation this winter. Trail ambassadors have become an integral part of what makes Wirth a great place to ski.

Spring and Summer 2015 Adult Clubs

This Spring/Summer take a dose of anti-aging medicine! Studies supporting the notion that physical activity and exercise can help alleviate the negative impact of age on the body and the mind abound, and I think that most of us agree with this. The new research shows that learning an unfamiliar skill pushes and preserves the highest level of cognitive function. So join a Loppet club - Run Club, Ladies Mountain Bike, Team Loppet or a Loppet paddling program. If you are feeling adventurous, sign up for the Tri-Loppet and put all of these new found skills to the test in the same day. The Adventures team of coaches offer challenge, support and opportunities for growth in the great outdoors at Theodore Wirth Park. Email me at taylor@loppet.org for a recommendation, questions or more information.

Adventure Camp

Loppet Adventure Camp has grown to nine weeks of camp, including one Girls Week. The dates include June 8-12, 15-19, 22-26, July 6-10, 13-17, 20-24 (Girls), 27-31, August 3-7, 10-14. These week-long day camps for kids ages 9-13 are located in the heart of Theodore Wirth Park, and include mountain biking, rollerskiing, canoeing, orienteering, swimming, capture the flag, ultimate frisbee and more!



NELLIE STONE JOHNSON

HEAD COACH JON MILLER

At the end of our fourth season with the Nellie Stone Johnson Ski and Bike team, we are seeing real commitment from these great middle school athletes. We get used to looking for race results, and the NSJ skiers are starting to move up in these. We had great success at the Midwest Junior Championships with a second-place finish in the Age Gap Relay by 7th grader Donovan Blatcher, who partnered with Loppet's new phenom coach John Wessling.

What gets lost sometimes is the creative outlook these kids bring to the sport. They have changed my understanding about what is important and what is possible in this sport. I have always seen the sport as a race, getting from point to point the fastest. But the kids have helped me see the sport also as an adventure where the style you present as you get to the goal matters. This is most clearly seen when we are playing on jumps. I never expected that turning a 360 on cross country skis would be a goal of mine, but seeing some of my kids land this difficult trick, it became a challenge to me to land a 360 as well. Fortunately, Coach Piotr always sets up great jumps off the upper stadium for us to practice. I only landed one this year, so I have some work to do to catch up to Li'Tavius Munn – who not only consistently lands a 360 on snow, but lands it on rollerskis too. But this new challenge helps keep me interested in the sports that I thought I knew so well. If you see us out for some jumps on the ski trails, come out and join us – we know where they all are.

Editor's Note: Coach Jon does not take enough credit. Part of the "style" of the NSJ kids is their ever-improving ski technique. The Midwest Junior Championships were inspiring not so much for the results – which were themselves good – but for the skill displayed by the NSJ, Northeast and Anwatin skiers. Win or lose, these kids now have the skills to enjoy skiing for the rest of their lives. Hopefully the confidence that our coaches have given them will help them lead happy healthy lives – doing 360s for years!



Nellie Stone Johnson Skier Sherman Powell at the Midwest Junior Championships



Northeast Middle School Skier Mikey Papasadora at the Midwest Junior Championships

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Many nonprofits do large-scale gala events to drive revenue to the organization. Our galas are our events. The Loppet. The Salomon CITYTRAIL Loppet. The UCare Tri-Loppet. The Surly Trail Loppet. This year's Loppet was challenging, which means that your contributions to the Annual Fund are more important than ever. There are many ways to give! You can write a check. Donate online at www.loppet.org/give. Secure a matching gift from your company. Or explore programs like "Dollars for Doers" where companies make donations for employees' volunteer time. Please reach out any time if you would like to get more involved in our development efforts. We have so many exciting things going on that we welcome your support and ideas! Just call me at 612-816-7916 or email at spargo@loppet.org.



NORTHEAST SKI & BIKE TEAM

MEGAN TRUMPER

Now in its second season after its start in November 2013, the year-round Northeast Middle School Ski and Bike team is hitting its stride. Today the team has grown to a roster of 15 athletes.

Winter

In early December the Loppet Middle School program brought a group of middle school girls, including three athletes from Northeast, on an all-girls ski weekend. The brief Saturday-Sunday trip included 21 athletes and five adults. Athletes skied at Timberland Hills Ski Area in Cumberland, Wisconsin and Balsam Branch Ski Trails in Amery, Wisconsin.

In mid-December the Northeast coaching staff hosted a Wax Clinic at Northeast Middle School to teach athletes how to care for and maintain their equipment. Students learned key terminology, such as scraper, groove scraper and wax iron. Students left armed with the knowledge to be experts in Nordic Ski waxing!

Northeast Middle School Athletes participated in Loppet Winter Adventure Camp at Theodore Wirth, December 29, 30, 31 and January 2. At Camp students participated in Cross Country Ski lessons, ski-ball tournaments and other ski-related games, including team relay races and down hill slalom. The Loppet Foundation provided bonfires and cross country ski equipment.

All Northeast Middle School athletes had two unique opportunities to showcase their competitive spirit and snazzy racing uniforms this winter season: March 6-8 at the Midwest Junior Championships hosted at Theodore Wirth and at the Farview Sprints, another fabulous local Loppet event!

Last but not least, this March the team spent three days and two nights at National Forest Lodge outside of Ely, skiing, participating in a polar plunge, listening to live music in the dining hall, bonding, playing games and creating memories to last a lifetime! Despite low snow cover and warm temperatures students were able to do a continuous two-hour ski, showcasing their improved endurance and technique worked on during the season. Team members were also thrilled to see two gray wolves close up, a rare sight even for our generous hosts, and long-time owner-operators Andy Fischer and Lura Wilson.

Spring/Summer

This spring and summer students will practice two days a week. The team's focus will be on learning how to mountain bike, maintain their bikes and equipment as well as improve their technique on Wirth's mountain biking trails.



ANWATIN: TOP 10 REASONS WHY OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL SKI TEAM ROCKED SOME SOCKS THIS WINTER

HEAD COACH ALLIE RYKKEN

10. Top notch coaching staff. Mary Bolla, former Loppet Board member, joined us last fall with unbridled enthusiasm! She is a motivator and a doer. Will Swanson, on his fifth winter volunteering for the Anwatin Ski Team, is no stranger to keeping kids moving and his humor and insight are always appreciated. Also new this year was Joe Clifton, Patrick Henry graduate, outstanding athlete and calm leader. Altogether, we create a band of coaches that just might actually work!

9. 30 engaged kids. This is the largest number of committed athletes we have yet to see, and it is quite a sight! We have built a community of hard work, accountability and most of all an adoration of flying through the snowy trails.

8. Troopers in Tough Times. We have been fortunate to have a hearty group of kids that didn't let this year's bumps in the trails and dirt patches get them down. We are grateful for the good conditions and tolerate the less-than-ideal conditions. No complaints over here.

7. Girls Weekend. In December all three Loppet middle school teams sent their female athletes for a weekend of skiing and bonding! We enjoyed the Timberland Hills and Balsam Branch trails in Wisconsin.

6. Swift Sixth Graders. This year's sixth graders did not mess around. With a large group of experienced skiers on the team, we worked hard and the sixth graders took it in stride. They worked with each other to catch right up with the rest of the team. Most of them cut their times right in half over the course of the season.

5. Stylin' Seventh Graders. These guys know the drill. We have Katy, who is so fast she can take on nearly all of the boys on the team but is probably the most modest of the bunch; Emily, who went to nearly every Adventure Camp available last summer in an effort to improve her training; Henri, who will fall down a hill and ask if he can try again; Tome, who after a full year of double poling on his skate skis, is now a skating machine; Doua, the natural who is finally coming around to acknowledging that he's pretty good, and so many more!

4. Eighth Graders En Mass! We had 13 eighth graders with us this year - lookout, Minneapolis High Schools! A group of leaders is coming your way. William, Quinlan and Grover were at the front of the pack, always looking for more. Nooshilon, Shina, Simon and Alex weren't far back and constantly worked hard to reel those guys in. We had some newcomers: Nick, Lola and Zeltzin pushed hard to improve and saw it. We will also miss Tony and Talia's constant stream of humor.

3. Increased LNR participation. Watch for some of these athletes in this summer's LNR Juniors program. We hope to have record numbers join this group as a next step in their athletic pursuits.

2. Midwest Junior Championships. It was Anwatin's best team showing yet. We had excellent numbers each day, results of a winter's worth of effort pouring on to the trails, team spirit as every teammate came around the corner into the finish, and one heck of a group hug at the end.

1. Winter Trip. We wrapped up our winter season with a weekend trip to Camp du Nord near Ely. It was the epitome of spring skiing in the north woods: wolf sightings, sloshy and sunny trails, singletrack classic, hot saunas and chilly holes in the lake, warm meals, animated card games, snowman-making contests, and a stop on the way back to greet Lake Superior.



LOPPET EVENTS



EVENTS OVERVIEW

RACE DIRECTOR MIKE ERICKSON

With last winter's poor snow conditions in the rear view mirror, it's time to look forward at upcoming events and Next years Festival.

The UCare Tri-Loppet is just around the corner on June 27. The biggest change, or addition rather, to this years event is a \$1700 prize purse for those using stock boats on the paddling portion of the event. We feel this will enhance the competition of the event and make for a better event all around.

The Surly Trail Loppet will remain unchanged except for some needed reroutes through the Bog area due to the new mountain bike and hiking trails that went in last summer and fall. That part of the run might change a little, but the bog is still one of the toughest and most fun parts of the race. Hope to see you on Saturday, September 26. Registration is open so register early to ensure your spot.

Looking ahead to winter, the Foundation is looking to add a Music Festival component to The Loppet Ski Festival weekend. Picture yourself dancing on ice to some awesome bands, drinking a cold Surly with skiers, skijor racers and fat bikes buzzing by you at the same time. Using the infrastructure we need anyway, we can put on an awesome, one-of-a-kind outdoor winter music festival in what is perhaps the only city that could really

pull it off. Stay tuned for more details, get your Sorels oiled up, and be ready for the next big thing we throw at you.

And do not be surprised if you happen to see a speed skater or 20 zipping around Lake Calhoun as well that weekend. Marathon speedskating seems to be a natural fit for the weekend, don't you think?

On a very quick final note: after a couple of years waiting patiently for operations assistant Lindsey Johnson to finish her coursework at the University of Minnesota, we are proud to announce that besides for a bunch of internship hours working for, well, us, Lindsey has taken her final test and turned in her final papers. She will be an immense help in the planning and activation of all Loppet events, and we look forward to having her around without the distractions of tests, papers, study groups and day and evening classes to get in the way of our Loppet way of life.

So we'll see you on the trails during this warm weather spell, and let's start the snow chant early this year, because we've got big plans for a full course, a full docket of events, and a full winter in Minneapolis and Wirth Park. Remember folks, we are the Loppet, and we own winter.

LOPPET VOLUNTEER PROFILE: CYNTHIA OSTERLING

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR NANCY NELSON

Every one of you contributes so much to the weekend from the Luminary freezers and hatchers, the course crew and course marshals to the medical team, the food stop staffers and more. It is nearly impossible to choose one volunteer as my Ski Festival volunteer extraordinaire.

However, one volunteer stood out for me this year: Cynthia Osterling. Cynthia has willingly volunteered (no arm-twisting needed!) for many Loppet activities: hauling trees out of the woods on Trails Day, spreading the Loppet word at Midwest Mountaineering Expos, volunteering at nearly every event and taking part in Loppet Adventures activities.

In 2014 Cynthia took charge of the Vendors in the Big Tent at Loppet Village. Cynthia noticed that we needed to provide more information about the Loppet Festival activities and that our plan to have a joint Volunteer Check-In and Information Booth was not working, Cynthia took on the task of organizing the tent for Loppet Festival 2015 (and rolled with the last-minute changes), including a Loppet information table! This addition took the pressure off of Volunteer Check-In. So, of course, I was extremely grateful! Thank you, Cynthia!

CITY OF LAKES LOppet SKI FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERING 2015: ANOTHER NEW ADVENTURE!

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR NANCY NELSON

The winter of 2013 - 2014 was nearly perfect, lots of snow, a great new venue for the Loppet, new races, all went off well. We thought we had everything set for 2014 - 2015, the snow came early, and then left and didn't return.

Despite lots of last-minute changes, we pulled everything off thanks to our remarkable Loppet volunteers! Many of you showed up not knowing what task we would assign you. But you jumped in and did what was needed.

All of our Loppet events and programs depend on volunteers, and those of you who volunteer are amazing! We see such dedication to making the events and the programs successful. Your efforts are appreciated by everyone from the elite skiers to the Minne-Loppet participants - they have a great experience Loppet weekend because of YOU. THANK YOU, Loppet volunteers!



MIDWEST JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS & FESTIVAL GROWS INTO A MAJOR EVENT

For a long time the Midwest has been jealous of New England. The New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA) for many years has held spring championships for its younger skiers who could not attend Junior Nationals.

So the Loppet Foundation and the Minnesota Youth Ski League (MYSL) developed our own version of NENSA's big spring event: Midwest Junior Championships. In 2011, the first year, there were 75 competitors.

But thanks to an expanded Loppet Foundation middle school programs and FAST KIDS, the involvement of Central Cross Country (CXC), and MYSL's Skiwerx programming and a youth program at Endurance United, we had more than 300 young skiers at 2015 Midwest Junior Championships & Festival. Athletes came from Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Winnipeg, Manitoba with 27 clubs represented.

"This is the type of event that will help us grow and become more competitive as a region," says Yuriy Gusev, executive director of CXC. "It's a tribute to the Loppet Foundation and the Minnesota Youth Ski League that they were able to develop this event to where it is today."



LOPPET STEWARDSHIP.



STEWARDSHIP: PARK BOARD UPDATE

With respect to the Park Board two seemingly diametrically opposed themes emerged over this past winter. On the one hand the Park Board winter recreation operation had a rough year. The Park Board's Director of Golf, Ice & Snow left her position at the Park Board just as the ski season was beginning in early November. At the same time there was no crew in place and opportunities for early-season snowmaking were lost. Finally, with an inability to cool the groundwater that the Park Board uses to make snow, snowmaking operations were not completed until mid-January.

On the other hand staff and commissioners are dedicated to making winter recreation and, really all adventure-based activities, a vital part of the Park Board's offerings. In January, the Loppet Foundation and Park Board staff sent a joint memo to Park Board commissioners outlining all of the successes that the Park Board - Loppet Foundation partnership have produced and providing a roadmap for where the partnership can go in the future.

The response from Park Board commissioners was very promising. They indicated that they want to see a strong partnership. They want to see high-quality adventure-based and winter programming, and they want the work

done very well. They want to see better signage, they want to make sure people are purchasing passes and they want to see a strong trail ambassador program. With these instructions in mind, Park Board and Loppet Foundation staff have worked on the principles of lease and operating agreements that will guide the adventure and welcome center project for years to come. By no means is this process complete - change is always hard. But at this point we are optimistic that we will be able to reach agreement that works well for everyone and achieves the goals of the Park Board commissioners.

As for the operational issues this past winter, there was a silver lining. The issues helped highlight areas in need of attention. Winter recreation staff need to be ready to go as of November 1. The facility needs more snowmaking equipment and the ability to cool the water. The Park Board is committed to having its employees ready going forward. Together we have identified a potential solution for the warm-water issue. And we have applied for grant funding to purchase more snowmaking equipment.

As with any partnership there are always going to be challenges, but this partnership feels like it is in a better place than ever before.

WIRTH ADVENTURE CENTER: GETTING REAL!

PIOTR BEDNARSKI

Things are getting pretty "real" with the Wirth Adventure Center. Planning meetings happen almost every week, and fundraising is moving forward quickly to meet a July 1 milestone. The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and the Met Council have recently made their final approval of the Master Plan that includes the construction of the Wirth Adventure and Welcome Center, and the Park Board is moving to start construction on the golf course by the end of this summer. This summer's construction is slated to restructure the Back-9 of the Golf Course, with a re-design of at least two holes. The construction will hopefully result in a better golf course and room for the Adventure Center - new mountain bike trails, a redesigned tubing/snowboarding hill, and a re-designed Nordic staging area/stadium. The goal is to break ground on the Adventure Center in the Spring of 2016 - with a completion date of November 2016.

The Loppet Project Management Team, comprised of Loppet staff, and Loppet Volunteers Willie Anderson (Crown Construction) and Dave Bryan (Third Level Architecture), has been meeting every 2-3 weeks with HGA Architects, golf course architects, and Park Board Staff to work on the site plan and building design. It has been a very long and complicated process, but it is moving forward and the Loppet Foundation is super excited to see this building become a reality. Stay tuned! The next public open house is planned for mid June.



Skiers venture out on the Skyline Trail at Theodore Wirth Park.



SUMMER TRAIL WORK

MIKE ERICKSON

With the warmer weather here, it's once again time to assess and concentrate on needed trail work throughout the park and ski trail system. The Loppet Foundation will once again partner with Step Up, a Minneapolis youth work program. 4 area youth will work with a Loppet Foundation employee to work on various needed projects, including trail maintenance and upkeep.

In years past these groups have done erosion control on various hills and portions of the ski trail system. They have done invasive species removal, trail clearing, seeding, etc.

Along with this work the Foundation is working with the Park Board on tree planting projects, general trail work ideas as well as more specific ideas surrounding future events and the possibilities of trail expansion.

One specific project will be to create or modify a trail segment in the southwest Wirth area near the Bog, to allow for the Loppet Skate Race to reverse course on Loppet Weekend Sunday.

Other potential projects center around the initial planning and a trail alignment around the new Adventure and Welcome Center, as well as work preparing for the 2018 World Masters Nordic Ski races that the Foundation is in the process of bidding on.

Of course we will be holding our annual Trails Day to prepare for the 2015-2016 ski season on October 25 as well.

If you are interested in volunteering for any or all of these projects, please keep an eye on our website, and Stewardship pages for opportunities. And feel free to email me, at erickson@loppet.org if you come across issues on the trail that might need to be addressed.

LOPPET NORDIC RACING



LOPPET NORDIC RACING JUNIORS WIN SECOND CONSECUTIVE OVERALL NATIONAL TITLE

LNR HEAD COACH PIOTR BEDNARSKI

Thirty four LNR athletes traveled to the Junior Nationals (aka JN's), March 7-15, in Truckee, Calif. as part of a 54-athlete team from the Midwest Region. For the first time, the Midwest fielded the largest team at the JN's, with a total field size of 500. The top regions generally include New England, Rocky Mountain, Intermountain, the Midwest and Alaska. The Midwest coaches and athletes were definitely a little apprehensive going into these races with very warm conditions and an altitude of 7,200 feet.

To help acclimatize, 10 athletes traveled to Truckee a week early with Loppet member, volunteer and athlete-dad John Schneider. It was a historically terrible snow year for Truckee due to California's drought. Fortunately, organizers were prepared, and things worked out fine even if they had to confine races were confined to a small, 2.5 - 3K loop.

Racing kicked off with the Skate Sprint. LNR athletes had super results in the qualifying heats but as often happens in sprints for a variety of reasons many of our top athletes did not advance.

Top LNR athletes in the Sprints included:

Tamer Mische-Richter U20M, 9th ("U20M" translates to under 20 - or 18 and 19 year old males)
Zak Ketterson U18M, 2nd
Sarah Bezdicek U20F, 3rd
Vivian Hett U20F, 4th
Kelly Koch U16 F, 10th

Probably the very best day for LNR at Junior Nationals was the Skate interval start race. Top results included:

Kelly Koch U16 F, 10th
Nicole Schneider U18 F, 5th
Abby Drach U18F, 6th
Margie Freed U18F, 9th
Zak Ketterson U18M, 2nd
Vivian Hett U20F, 1st
Sarah Bezdicek U20F, 4th
Allison Ternes U20F, 5th
Anna French U20F, 10th
Luke Brown U20M, 4th

The Classic Mass Start was a challenge for the Midwest Team, and was definitely our worst day in the results. Klister skiing in 50F weather is something we'll need to work on for the future. Notable results were:

Luke Brown U20M, 8th
Vivian Hett U20F, 2nd
Anna French U20F, 4th
Zak Ketterson U20M, 5th

The last day of racing was the Classic 3 x 2.5 Relays, and this went much better. Highlights included:

3rd Place U18 Women: Rocci Woelk (NordicWerks), Nicole Schneider, Margie Freed
1st Place U20 Women: Vivian Hett, Anna French, Caroline Brisbois (NMU)
4th Place U20 Women: Allison Ternes, Amanda Kautzer, Sarah Bezdicek
1st Place U18 Men: Mac FitzPatrick (CXC), Leo Hipp (NordicWerks), Zak Ketterson



One of the really fun aspects of JN's is the competition between the regions, and a real regional camaraderie develops over the week of racing. Midwest athletes finished in second place behind only New England. This equaled last year's placing at JN's in Vermont, but with a much smaller points margin this year.

Competition for the Club Championship is also an important honor at the JN's, and one that LNR has figured prominently in for the last three years. For the second year in a row, Loppet Nordic Racing won the Overall Club Championship. The LNR Women dominated the women's club competition, easily winning the women's title. The LNR men finished second to APU, and in the overall club scoring LNR won by a large margin over Alaska Pacific University.

The LNR and Midwest coaching staff are looking forward to racing at home in the 2016 Junior Nationals at Telemark, Wisc.

Junior Training

Summer Junior Training (ages 13-19) kicks off on June 8 and run 8 weeks through August 7. The main goals of our summer programs are to teach good ski technique, learn good training habits, and, of course, develop skiing endurance and strength. Our largest programs are three-day "Basic" programs - numbering 120 athletes. For those interested in really committing to a higher level of ski training, we have the Competition Team, which trains seven times per week, and has three week-long camps over the course of the summer. We have 35 athletes training on the Competition Team.



THE LOPPET FOUNDATION EARNS PODIUM/GOLD CLUB CERTIFICATION FROM USSA

This spring the Loppet Foundation received the highest level of club certification - Podium/Gold Certification - from the US Ski & Snowboard Association (USSA). USSA's podium-level certification process involves a rigorous self-study and peer review of best principles and practices for ski and snowboard clubs.

The certification process started with a two-day visit to the Loppet Foundation by Brian Krill, USSA Club Development Director. Brian met with Foundation staff, board members and Loppet community members to better understand the workings of the Foundation, especially relating to the various USSA focus areas such as governance, finance, club development, etc.

The next step was to submit a formal application for USSA certification. Again, staff, board members and Loppet community members all contributed to assessing our strengths and weaknesses as an organization. In the end, USSA staff approved the Foundation for podium/gold certification. The Foundation is the only cross-country-only club in the nation to be certified by USSA and is among the top-20 of almost 400 clubs in the country.

Loppet Nordic Racing Head Coach Piotr Bednarski is excited about this development. "Club certification shows that we are doing things right. From coaching, to finances, to board supervision, the Loppet Foundation and LNR is among the best in the country. I'm really proud of that!"

Board Chair Bill Blazar echoes this sentiment. "Over the past several years we have worked to raise the performance of our organization in several ways. From the board, to the staff, to volunteers and the community, we have all taken the job of organizational development seriously and the Foundation is achieving better outcomes for all of our constituents because of that."



Importance of Outdoor Active Adventures from Youth

Continued from page 1

has become more scheduled and screen-time happy. I have seen a dramatic change in the amount of time that kids spend having adventures outside. We are robbing today's youth of the simple pleasure of playing outside!

With this in mind it has been a privilege to lead the FAST KIDS year-round outdoor adventure programs for kids ages 8-13. We divide the year into three sessions or seasons: summer, fall and winter. During the summer kids play in the woods of Wirth Park. They mountain bike, rollerski, run trails, canoe, go orienteering, swim and just play outside. They also participate in the FAST KIDS Adventure Mountain Bike Series held on the Wirth single track trails. Last summer's highlight was the inaugural Age Gap Bike Relay race where parents and mentors paired up to do a two-leg relay race with kids.



The Fall Program includes trail running, agility, strength and rollerskiing to prepare for the winter ski season and the FAST KIDS Adventure Running Series, which drew about 50 kids ages 8-13. Kids enjoyed running through streams, jumping haybales, running along wooded single track trails and even getting muddy in one of the rainy races! We ended the series with the annual Loppet Games event in October which was attended by over 100 kids!

The momentum continued into the winter. We had more than 80 FAST KIDS participants in the 2015 Skiwerx Race series with many of them at the top of their age class. We also had 64 FAST KIDS race in the

new U12/U14 CXC Youth Cup Series with many of our kids filling the top 3-5 podium results. The FAST KIDS race season ended with the Midwest Junior Championships event that drew over 300 participants from across the Midwest and Canada. Over 50 FAST KIDS raced in both classical and skate competitions and had many podium results in all the age categories U8 - U16 for both genders.



In a culture where kids are spending way too much time indoors, FAST KIDS is a breath of fresh air and has become a vehicle to get kids active outdoors. Last fall the Lyndale Farmstead FAST KIDS coaches led a running scavenger hunt on the trails in the bird sanctuary by Lake Harriet. One of the kids came back with only one shoe because he had lost it in the mud on the trail. What fun adventure memories we are making for these youth! Hope to see your kids this summer at some of the many outdoor FAST KIDS events and camps!

For more information on upcoming events:
<http://www.loppet.org/lnr-fast-kids/>.





TEAM GREGG UPDATE

The Loppet Community has had the benefit of having "Team Gregg," Brian and Caitlin Gregg, as coaches, mentors, and training partners for the the Loppet Community for years now. Over the last year the Foundation has officially helped support Team Gregg and is proud to see Caitlin and Brian wearing the LNR race suit at national and international events. Team Gregg has been very involved in all four parts of the Loppet Foundation: coaching, inspiring, recruiting and transporting kids for Loppet Adventures programs, coaching and training with LNR Juniors and FAST KIDS; racing in the major Loppet Events; and helping with trail development and fundraising for the Adventure and Welcome Center. Brian and Caitlin live on Thomas Ave N, some 200 meters east of the Loppet Ski trail.

This past year was a hugely successful one for the Greggs. Caitlin started the season with a very frustrating World Cup tour in December, having come down with shingles. She came back hungry. Three weeks after her return she won the US Nationals 5km skate race. She followed this up with a huge training block focused on the World Championship 10km Skate, surprising the international field by winning a bronze medal, finishing a few seconds behind Jessie Diggins, also of Minnesota. Caitlin's feat was notable for a few reasons. First, Caitlin is not on the US Ski Team, and was not even invited onto the Olympic Team. And this was the first-ever

medal for the US women in a distance event at World Championships! She ended her season on a high note, winning the 30km Freestyle National Championship by nearly three minutes.

Brian earned a World Cup start position for his very best event, the 50km Freestyle, and was the top American at the Holmenkol 50km. This course is known to be the toughest and most storied World Cup course. In typical Brian fashion, he started conservatively and slowly moved his way up through the field, finishing 35th. Brian held onto his end of the family responsibilities at the season-ending 50km US National Championships, placing third among Americans and eighth overall.

Team Gregg is looking forward to another year focused on international racing. For the first time in her racing career, Caitlin has been nominated to the U. S. Ski Team for the training year and next winter's World Cup season. With a great winter under their belts, and new recognition from the US Ski Team, Brian and Caitlin kicked off their spring training season in their own, very unique way: they got home from Spring Series in early April, and the next day they kicked off their Elementary School running program at the Boys and Girls Club. A week after that Brian spent two weeks in a remote Eskimo villages in Alaska teaching elementary school kids how to ski. It's this attitude and generosity that has really been a huge factor in the success of the Greggs!



Brian Gregg starting the Classic Sprint at US Nationals, in Houghton, Michigan, sporting his LNR uniform.

LOPPET FOUNDATION LAUNCHES TEAM LOPPET - MOUNTAIN BIKE

LNR HEAD COACH PIOTR BEDNARSKI

Adding to the Loppet community generally, the Foundation has launched a mountain bike club/team this year - "Team Loppet MTB." We conceived the club as a way for Loppet members and friends to bike together, with a particular emphasis on mountain biking and mountain bike racing. The team will get together for periodic training rides and will typically break up into groups organized by ability level - with a few tips on how to negotiate trails on a mountain bike. The team will be racing at Minnesota mountain bike series races, as well as many other regional events. What is unique about racing as part of a team in the Minnesota mountain bike series is that all ages can score for the team. That means ages 7-70 can race in different categories (Kids Comp, Citizen, Expert) and can contribute toward a team score.

Currently we have 42 athletes registered for Team Loppet, and we will have athlete support (tent, water, energy drink, and moral support) at seven designated events this season. We have a Team Loppet MTB kit that team members can order, and we now have three official sponsors: Penn Cycle, Subaru, and Greenfield Kitchens. For more information on joining Team Loppet MTB, as well as our race schedule, look us up under the LNR tab on the Loppet website.

Mark your calendars for upcoming Loppet events!



Saturday, June 27, 2015

UCare Tri-Loppet

www.tri-loppet.com

Off-road urban triathlon:
Paddle, Trail Run, Mountain Bike



Saturday, September 26

Surly Trail Loppet

www.trail-loppet.com

Trail Running
Half Marathon • 13.1K • 5K



Tuesday, October 13

Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 24

Trails Day



February 5-7, 2016

City of Lakes Loppet Festival

www.cityoflakesloppet.com

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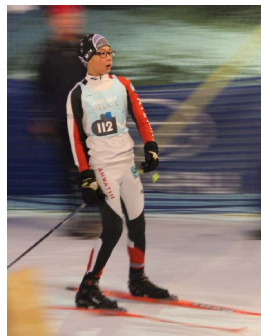
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Chip Specker
Andy Spolar
Ryan Steger
Hannah Stenoien
Jacob Stiele
Jack Stillman
Re'von Stone
Addie Streble
Geni Streble
Jack Strong
Quentin Struwe
John Struyk
Wesley Sumner
Maddie Tatum
Alec Tauer
Trey Taylor
Allison Ternes
Violet Tessier
Doua Thao

Josh Vorbrich
Molly Voss
Leif Walker
Lukas Wammer
Grover Warner
Graham Warriner
Wellsley Warriner
Johanna Weber
Hannah Weber
Anna Wegner
Alyson Welch
Seth Welder
Griffin West
AJ Westanmo
Dylan (Jane) White
Quintrell Whiting
Kaleb Wight
Andranae Wilborn
Jake Williams
Sam Williams
Joe Williams
Triana Willmert
Talia Willmert
Molly Wilson
Alex Wilson
Emily Wilson
Charlie Wilson-Jackson
Cabrini Winkels
Brynn Winter
Samuel Wischmeier



Alex Larson
Alyssa LeBow
Nolan Lee
Lamarr Lesure
Etta Leugers
Senowa Leverentz
Mara Levine
Zack Levy
Bemah Lewis
Trevor Lien
Marissa Lindaman
Erik Lindquist
Lucas Linnebach
LaCharob Little
Davis Long
Erin Long
Zoey Lovold
Rebecca Lucke
Alayah Lyman-Robinson
Ethan Lynch
Joseph Lynch
Matthew Lynch
Simon Lynn-Klimenko
Thomas Macalester
Thalie MacKimm
Ian MacKimm
Tess Maginas
Sara Magnuson
Modesty Manion

Ellie Munger
Lauren Munger
Li'Tavius Munn
Henry Munnich
William Munnich
Maia Murphey
Samuel Myers
Bailey Naatjes
Dominick Navarre
Anna Mae Nelson
Gretchen Nelson
Gabe Nicholas
Wauneen Nieves
Isak Nightingale
Thomas Norman
Charlie Nyberg
Kurt Nystuen
Justyce Oatis
Caitlin O'Donnell
Anders Olson
Annika Olson
Conlan Olson
Jennifer Olson
Kai Olson
Brian Olson
Luke Omodt
Mia Overvoorde
Michael Owens
Sam Pahl

Marcus Russell
Melvin Russell
Marie Ryden
Maccoy Saber
Hailey Salden
Micah Sampedro
Carson Sando
Nathan Schacht
Peter Scheller
Gunnar Schmitz
Lucas Schnirring
Dylan Schuller
Sam Segelbaum
Andrew Selchow
Gabriel Senseman-Cassidy
Tommy Seyfert
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Douglas Shield
Sara Shriver
Oskar Simons
Tate Singleton
Caden Sipe
Kyle Sipe
Anni Skillicorn
Benjamin Skinner
Abby Smith
Katie Smith
Maurica Smoot
Maurisa Smoot

Keng Thao
Aten-wa Theba
Cori Thibodeaux
Jai Thibodeaux
Lexi Thibodeaux
Jake Thies
Reece Thompson
Kathleen Thomsen
Jaycie Thomsen
Will Tieleman
Ben Todd
Monica Toussaint
Adevionna Tramble
Victoria Trantow
Isaac Trockman
Sean Tuff
Skylar Tupper
Libby Tuttle
Marco van Heteren-Freeze
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Tome Vang
Cesar Vasquez
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Racquel Wohlk
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Thomas Woolhouse
Alex Worcester
Barak Woyke
Celia Woyke
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Eric Wurst
Pheng Yang
Angela Yates
Danny Yates
Rocco Zadra
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Mikaela Ziegler
Harmony Zweber-Langer



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