

*Welcome to our* **FALL 2018** *Newsletter!*

**FOUNDATION 02**  
Executive Director Letter

**ADVENTURES 04**  
Minne-Loppet Update • Adventure Camp • Women's Mountain Biking

**EVENTS 07**  
World Cup Coming to Minneapolis! • Recap of New Events • The Loppet's Volunteers

**LOPPET SPORT 10**  
Loppet Cycle Works • Winter TRAIL KIDS Race Series • LNR Juniors SuperTour

**TRAILS & RECREATION 12**  
A House Made With Love • More Than Just a Building • Club Trailhead



## 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 FALL 2018 JOHN MUNGER



The term Loppet means a journey with an uncertain outcome. Over the years, as a community we have embarked on many such journeys . . . We started running events like the Loppet Festival, the Luminary Loppet, and the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet, not knowing where those events might take us. We ended up building community, and creating what many people think of as their favorite days of the year. We started working on improving trails and snowmaking and ended up with some of the most inspiring urban trails in the world, capable of hosting national and international events within sight of downtown Minneapolis. We started working with the public schools in North Minneapolis, and ended helping thousands of young people learn to love skiing, trail running, mountain biking, and more. We thought it would be a good idea to bring competitive programming under our umbrella, and we ended up winning national championships as the best junior team in the country.

But our greatest journey - the one that has stretched

us the most - was the fundraising for and construction of The Trailhead. This was a journey that took all of us pitching in, and that only happened because we were able to work together with our strongest partners at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. On September 12, we finalized the donation of The Trailhead to the Park Board, and on that day we started our 20-year lease and operating agreements. Of course, this was not the end of our journey. It was, instead, an important milestone along the way. The exciting part was not the pouring of concrete or the construction of walls, the exciting part is seeing what The Trailhead will allow us to do moving forward.

While the doors are open, the The Trailhead is far from complete. Parts of the vision we are still working on include:

- **Restaurant.** To be a great community builder we need the restaurant concession open. After some fits and starts, I am happy to report that construction has started and we expect the restaurant to be up and running this winter.

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- **Mountain Bike Skills Park.** Much of the new trail work is done, but the new mountain bike skills park is not quite complete. This is important because the skills park will become a central part of our community building. Unlike the more linear trails, the skills park is a central focus area where kids and families can gather, learn, and share their experiences.
- **Club Trailhead.** While Club Trailhead is now open, we expect it to take several months before the club and the new yoga/fitness/strength studio finds its community - and there are still some finishing touches to put on the studio space.
- **Adventure Shop.** The Adventure Shop has been open for business, and we are still working on what exactly that will look like long term. Our current thought is to focus on rentals and branded merchandise, with a partner coming in to provide bike and ski services. Stay tuned!

Above all, we are excited for this winter when all of these elements will come together! Tubing and snowboarding open for business right outside the back door. Skiers and fat tire bikers and snowshoers sipping coffee or beer, or breaking bread together in The Trailhead. TRAIL KIDS from North Minneapolis and the whole region hitting the trails together. High school skiers and their families arriving every afternoon for practice or races. Regular users arriving early, going for a ski, stretching in the studio, and then hitting the showers before work. And the whole community - North and South, city and suburb, people from all sorts of backgrounds - coming together around a shared passion for the outdoors.

We expect it to be great! But the reality is that it will probably not happen exactly like that. This is an adventure after all . . . Maybe it will be warm. Maybe it won't snow. Maybe the kitchen won't be done on time. But like all things Loppet we will be looking to our broader community to make whatever happens great. Bring a friend. Invite a neighbor for lunch at The Trailhead. Ski the Pre-Loppet or the Tour or one of the marathon events at the Festival. Rent a fat bike. Join Club Trailhead. Come watch a World Cup ski race and cheer on Jessie and the rest of the Americans with our whole community at The Trailhead. Volunteer at one of the events. Or become a member, give to the annual fund, or help support our youth programming. We don't know exactly what is around the corner, but we do know that with all we are doing we need our whole community involved more than ever.

See you on the trails!

John





Photo: Steve Kotvis, f/go Photography

## MINNE-LOPPET PROGRAM SUITS UP FOR A BANNER WINTER

ALI TOWLE, DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

As temperatures drop and leaves begin to change, we're getting excited for the start of this year's Minne-Loppet program in November! This winter, we're on track to serve 1,200 third, fourth and fifth graders at 11 North Minneapolis area elementary schools. This will be our largest Minne-Loppet group ever!

Free to schools and students, the Minne-Loppet is an in-school ski program during classroom or gym time. Trained Loppet coaches, school staff and community volunteers teach kids the basics of cross country skiing and good nutrition. Each session starts with a classroom nutrition lesson. After that, kids suit up and head out to the school playground for on-snow ski instruction and games. The program culminates in a Minne-Loppet "race" during our annual City of Lakes Loppet Festival in February.

Some kids are ecstatic about skiing from the start. Others are skeptical. Inevitably, there's frustration about how hard it can be to master skiing technique. Even putting on ski boots, and remembering your boot size when you're surrounded by 30 other energetic nine-year-olds, can be tough! And while coaches ensure that everyone is dressed appropriately, cold weather can be intimidating too.

But there's something magical about the Minne-Loppet. Because the truth is, while learning to ski is great, the program is about more than that. It's about trying something new, and pushing out of your comfort zone in an environment

that's fun, safe and supportive. Perhaps accomplishing something you didn't think you were capable of.

It's about the kid who grins in spite of herself the first time she laces up her ski boots with no assistance.

It's about the fifth grader who for years has spent every gym class sitting against the wall, finally agreeing to put a pair of skis on...and then insisting on helping to put away other kids' skis after the session. "That's the first time I've ever seen him willingly participate in anything," said his teacher.

It's about the kid who, when interviewed after last year's Minne-Loppet race, said his favorite part of the race was the big hill. "I fell down a couple times, but I kept on trying," he beamed, flashing his finisher medal.

We love skiing, don't get us wrong. But one of the greatest things about skiing is its potential to help build self-confidence, perseverance, and the soft skills for success - on snow, in school, and in life. When you learn to ski in a positive, fun environment, the benefits can far exceed newly acquired ski skills!

We can't wait for the stories that will unfold during this year's Minne-Loppet program!



## ADVENTURE CAMP, BY THE NUMBERS

ANDY HARRIS, ADVENTURE CAMP PROGRAM DIRECTOR

With the summer season behind us and the winter season ahead, we look to the stable, steady certainty of numbers to guide us... and, what do you know, they tell us that Summer Adventure Camp 2018 was the best one yet!

Thank you to all the staff, all the counselors and counselors-in-training, all the parents, and, most importantly, all the campers for giving us so many things to count and so many things to be grateful for. We will see you in 2019 at The Trailhead!



Campers camped .....	nearly 500 (!!!)
Counselors worked .....	20, with half coming from North Minneapolis!
Counselors in Training trained.....	11
Adventure races run without a hitch.....	8
Fan Boats spotted on Wirth lake.....	1
Watermelons consumed .....	a whole vine's worth
Band-aids applied .....	153
Giant slip n' slides created .....	1
Trailhead days .....	2, with more in store!
Hugs.....	nearly 500
Goodbyes.....	too many
Percent of a certain camp director's heart full.....	100



Photo: TMB Images

## WOMEN'S MOUNTAIN BIKING IS HERE TO STAY

ERIC ROBERTSON, COACHES' COACH

You have probably noticed a few new things recently out at Theodore Wirth Park. Miles of new mountain bike trails (and more on the way!), a beautiful new Trailhead building with a bike shop, a (coming soon) restaurant, and a regular cadence of mountain bike skills instruction with a focus on the fast-growing group of women getting on the trails!

We are by no means experts on this category of riders, but we're having pretty good success thus far and credit it to a couple of things.

1. We are hiring amazing women to teach our clinics. A large percentage of women report wanting to ride because their partner does, but that does not mean they want their partner to teach them how to ride.
2. We ensure quality and all of our instructors are [Bike ICP](#) certified Level 2. Our instructors have spent a lot of time and money improving their teaching skills. Our partnership with BICP ensures all instructors are teaching from the same curriculum and safely progressing all riders.
3. It's not about racing. Our skills instruction is about getting people ready to have fun on the miles of trails we have in the Twin Cities - to have fun, progress, and do it safely. Of course, all of these skills transfer nicely to the race course and will help you go faster with less effort!
4. We believe adult riders progress as they gain confidence, and they gain confidence by understanding the foundational principles of mountain biking. We don't use words like "bold" when we talk about progressing as a rider because we don't believe that leads to better riding - confidence and the knowledge does!

We know that any organization must be diverse if it plans to serve a diverse group of people and continue to grow and thrive. We think mountain biking will get better as a whole as it becomes more diverse too. This is a fundamental belief at the Loppet Foundation and core to our mission. We are thrilled to see so many great investments in women's mountain biking being made across the industry and hope for more in the future. There is much more we all can do!

We look forward to seeing you on the trails soon and hope you consider joining us for a co-ed or women's only clinic next summer - and take your riding to the next level.



Photo: TMB Images



Photo: Reese Brown

## **WORLD CUP COMING TO MINNEAPOLIS!** MIKE BONO, WORLD CUP ORGANIZING COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Loppet Foundation is proud to announce that the FIS (International Federation of Skiing) Cross Country World Cup Finals will be coming to Wirth Park for the 2019-2020 Cross Country World Cup season. Minneapolis will be hosting the 1.5 km sprint event in March of 2020 following races in Quebec City, Canada. Approximately 175 athletes from over 20 countries will participate in the event.

The 2019-2020 Cross-Country World Cup will be the 39th official World Cup season. Last held in the United States in 2001 at Soldier Hollow, Utah, this annual cross country skiing competition is for elite skiers who travel from country to country competing in a variety of races. The victor attains the highest honor in cross country skiing and can lay claim to the title of the best in cross country skiing. The FIS uses an average of five finishes in each discipline to rank skiers, which is then used to determine an athlete's Olympic eligibility, as well as the allocation of Olympic quota places. The Cross Country World Cup begins in November of

each calendar year and ends in March, attracting between 30,000 and 100,000 spectators.

The effort to attract the World Cup to Minneapolis gained traction after Jessie Diggins' gold medal performance at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Jessie's dream was to be able to participate in a World Cup competition in her home state. "I'm not retiring anytime soon, but I want this to happen so that before I end my career I have a chance to race in my home state," Diggins said.

The 2020 Minneapolis World Cup Organizing Committee has already begun preparations for this event. There will be numerous opportunities to volunteer in many areas, including helping with the planning as well as during the event. We encourage you and your friends both to volunteer and attend the event as spectators. See you at the World Cup!



## A SEASON OF NEW EVENTS

PAUL JOHNSON, TRAILS CREW/EVENT & OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

Here in Loppet World, we really love putting on fun events for our community of outdoor lovers. You probably noticed that if you were around during the summer and fall, during which we organized another three public races in addition to the usual suspects like the UCare Tri-Loppet and Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet. Needless to say we kept pretty busy!

### Mount Wirth Loppet

In partnership with the Minnesota Mountain Bike Series, we brought our first mountain bike race to Theodore Wirth Park in June. With a great weather day and awesome new trails to enjoy, we were stoked to see around 400 racers come down to The Trailhead for a fun day of racing on the singletrack. As our mountain bike programs continue to grow, we're really excited to bring this one back in 2019 and get even more folks and their bikes on our new trail system at Wirth.

### Red Bull Urban Portage

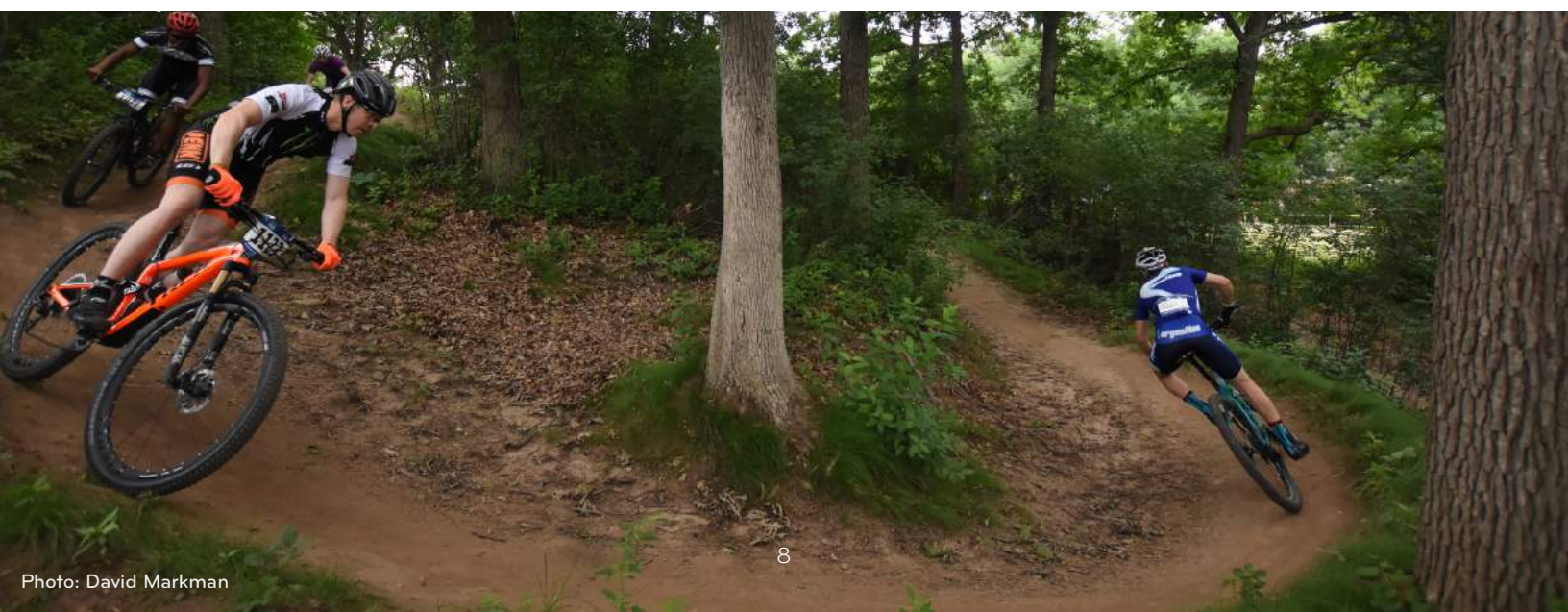
When we were asked to help facilitate a unique racing event with Red Bull, we just couldn't say no! An off-road paddling and portaging race through the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and to The Trailhead sounded right up our alley, and we loved having this opportunity to get more folks to our

new facility at Wirth Park - while also soaking up the final remnants of paddling season. Working in concert with Red Bull and Street Factory, we put on an awesome adventure race like none other - showcasing some of the best land and water trails the city has to offer!

### Loopet Loppet

Inspired by the Icebox 480, the Loopet Loppet is the brainchild of our rockstar volunteer, David Bitner. Consisting of one 5-mile and one 1-mile loop, the course took participants around (and around and around) Wirth Park in the ultimate test of endurance. For twelve hours, racers were challenged to rack up as many miles as possible within that window. Sponsored by Twin Cities Running Company and Tailwind Nutrition, the race welcomed more than 90 participants who took to the trails to test how far they'd come over the trail running season!

With this new era of the Loppet Foundation, it's only natural that we'd work to create new opportunities for folks to have an adventure in the city. But if you weren't able to join us at these new events, never fear! Something tells us that there will be more great things coming out of the Loppet Events Team...





## VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN

JACKIE BAKER, DATA & REGISTRATION MANAGER

Once again, our amazing Loppet volunteers were at the heart of our success for the City Trails Loppet, the UCare Tri-Loppet, and the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet. Course markers and course marshals helped keep everyone safe and on track; registration got everyone bibbed and chipped and ready to race; aid station and finish line volunteers encouraged, hydrated, and energized runners; and medical volunteers attended to scrapes, sprains, and bruises. Without our dedicated team of volunteers, none of our events would be possible!

Our upcoming winter season is one of our busiest in terms of events, programs, and trails maintenance, and volunteers of all skill levels and interests are needed! Love the trails? Come help us groom them! Carpentry skills? Help us build a ski bridge! Enjoy the Luminary? Help us "hatch" the ice sculptures! Your talents are what make our events successful and enjoyable for our participants. If you have a skill, there's a good chance we can use your help! No contribution to our efforts is too small. Rally your workmates, book club, church group, motorcycle gang, etc. for a fun day of volunteering for the Loppet! If you love it, make it a regular occurrence!

Volunteers always receive free swag; and at events, a free beer and lunch! [Learn more and sign up here.](#)





## NEW THIS FALL - LOPPET SPORT AND LOPPET CYCLE WORKS

PIOTR BEDNARSKI, DIRECTOR OF LOPPET SPORT

To compliment the opening of The Trailhead, the Loppet Foundation is re-organizing and adding to the athletic programs that we have been known for. Since 2012, Loppet Nordic Racing (LNR) has been the face of competitive athletic programming for the Loppet Foundation. Within LNR, TRAIL KIDS - our athletic and adventure base programs for ages 7-12 - has really outgrown its place within LNR and expanded its scope. We have also been interested in adding mountain bike programming as well and expanding our strength and flexibility programming, so it's time for a new structure!

Loppet Sport, our newest program division, will encompass these TRAIL KIDS, Loppet Cycle Works, Loppet Nordic Racing, and Loppet Sport Studio. The big news here is the kick-off of Loppet Cycle Works (LCW) - and the hiring of Head Coach and Program Director, Bruce Martens. We are very excited to have Bruce leading LCW and as part of the Loppet Sport staff. Bruce has worked for six years to establish the Minnesota High School Cycling League (NICA), and was instrumental in creating the coaches education and certification program. Most recently, he has established the National Center for Youth Development, an organization that runs cycling education within schools. There Bruce has been coaching its competitive wing, YO DEVO, for the last two years. Bruce holds a Master's Degree

in Integrated Health from the University of Minnesota, specializing in Adolescent Development. He's also a former strength training gym owner/manager, and is an expert in strength oriented programming. A familiar face in Midwest mountain bike racing, Bruce is the top Marathon class mountain bike racer in the Minnesota Mountain Bike Series. He also brings his enthusiasm and boundless energy (yes, it is boundless!) to trail building - and over the last two years has brought many volunteers to join him as he has put his back into developing and improving the new Trailhead MTB trails.

Officially, the LCW programs will be starting in November, but Bruce has been busy coaching strength, TRAIL KIDS, and assisting the Patrick Henry MTB team this fall. Bruce will be looking for part-time and volunteer coaches for the numerous programs he will be organizing. So be sure to keep an eye out for opportunities to work alongside this stellar athlete and coach, and be part of the new Loppet Sport team!





## WINTER TRAIL KIDS SUPER SKI RACE SERIES

KIM RUDD, TRAIL KIDS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

New this year, TRAIL KIDS will be taking their seasonal race series to the snow covered trails with skis! Partnering with Gear West, we are excited to announce the TRAIL KIDS Super Ski Series. The events are made up of four different unique youth race events at The Trailhead in Theodore Wirth Park. These events will test the skills and technique that we have been teaching at winter TRAIL KIDS practices in fun and challenging competition formats. The races include a youth skate relay, mass start classic race, skate SkiCross race and individual skate biathlon race.

Youth racers accumulate points by placing in their age brackets with all four Super Ski Series races counting towards the overall score. Top three places in each age group will be awarded after the last race event. The race series is included in all Loppet TRAIL KIDS winter registration fees, but the race series is open to any kids 7-14 years old. Day-of registration is available for the entire series or for a single race if your child is not enrolled in the Loppet winter TRAIL KIDS program.

More information about the dates and event schedule can be found at [loppet.org](http://loppet.org). We look forward to seeing you all out on the trails this winter at Theodore Wirth Park and The Trailhead!




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## JUNIOR ATHLETES COMPETING IN 2019 SUPERTOUR

CHRIS HARVEY, LNR DEVELOPMENT COACH

Returning to the 2018-2019 winter race schedule is the Mayor's Challenge weekend, which will take place February 15 - 17 at Theodore Wirth Park and be hosted by the Loppet Foundation. The races are a part of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard's Supertour Series - the highest level of racing in the country! Skiers compete for prize money and world cup starting rights. The Mayor's Challenge will also stand as the NCAA Regional Championships. The central region collegiate ski teams will be competing to qualify for the NCAA Championships later in March. The main body of racers will comprise of the hundreds of youth and junior racers competing. Divisions U12 and U14 are racing in

the CXC Youth Cup - a regional race series for these age groups. Junior skiers (U16, U18, and U20) are competing for final places on post-season competition teams. Post-season race opportunities include the Midwest Junior National Team, which will compete in Anchorage Alaska's Kincaid Park in mid-March, and the New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA) U16 Trip, which takes U16 athletes to compete at the NENSA U16 Championships taking place this year in Maine. Over 400 skiers are expected to participate over three days of racing and a variety of age appropriate categories and distances. Be sure to come down to Wirth Park and cheer them on!



## A HOUSE MADE WITH LOVE: VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS BRING THE TRAILHEAD TO LIFE

MARIN BYRNE, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

When you walk in The Trailhead building, you see something that is the work of our whole community. There are so many people who contributed in so many ways, from being part of the original citizen advisory committee for the Wirth Park Master Plan, to fundraising, to legal and construction advice, and even to washing windows. We thought people might enjoy knowing about the community contributions that you can actively see when you walk into the building.

Long-time Loppet volunteer Jeff Richards is the mastermind behind many of the beautiful natural wood elements of the building. From his workshop, he created the half-log benches on the front plaza; the exterior window counters; the interior customer service counter; the round tables in the lounge area; the large rectangular tables in the Great Room, the huge table in the front conference room; the unique display table in the shop area, and the interior wooden bench. (He's also the creator of the famous six-person Winter Festival crew skis, among many other previous projects!)

Any time we have a TRAIL KIDS group in The Trailhead, one of the most heavily used features is the storage cubbies that run around the Great Room and along the wall of the lounge area. The cubbies are the work of Paul Holte, who spent many late nights at The Trailhead sanding, nailing, and finishing. The long section of cubbies against the wall of windows is one solid unit that Paul assembled on-site! It took about a dozen people to move them inch-by-inch into their final location.

When you first enter The Trailhead, you are greeted by the work of Joseph Duffy, who is the force behind the look of the Loppet's overall brand. The wallpaper along the bathroom wall showcases many of the designs Joseph has created over the years for various Loppet programs. He also designed the beautiful donor recognition art piece made of wooden skis.

Joseph and his father Joe Duffy were the main creators of the four-season mural gracing the wall above the Club Trailhead Studio, Ryan Map Room, and Adventure Shop. Based on original artwork by Joe, the outline of the mural was transcribed on the wall by Joseph and Joe, and then filled in paint-by-number style with help from kids in our youth programs. If you look closely at the light post banners outside the building, you can see images from the original pencil sketch of the mural!

Finally, we come to the ski fence. The ski fence not only brightens up the space, but hides a bunch of mechanical equipment that, while important, is not the most picturesque. The ski fence was created from skis donated by Loppet community members too numerous to name, but who were willing to entrust the skis of their past to us. It has been fun as people have come into the completed building and pointed out their skis — or sometimes pointed out skis just like the ones they are still using!

All this to say... The Trailhead wasn't just built by staff at the Loppet Foundation, but also by you! The many members of our larger Loppet family who pull together and help us make great things happen in our community. Thank you for helping us build this space, and don't forget to come in and enjoy it!





## THE TRAILHEAD... MORE THAN A BUILDING

ISAAC KASPER, TRAILS AND OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT

There are many reasons to be excited about this winter at Wirth Park... and The Trailhead building is only one of them! The increased snowmaking capability, improved grooming, new snowboard terrain park, and groomed fatbike trails are pretty exciting as well!

We have 2.5 miles of fatbike/multi-use trails that we will be grooming with a fatbike grooming-specific machine. We are really excited about this new grooming machine and confident that with a little practice, we will even be able to navigate our tight switchbacks! We are thrilled to be able to provide a trail system with suitable surfaces for winter biking.

Our veteran trails team will enable us to make snow on our entire 6K course quickly and efficiently. Our snowmaking team is fortunate to be returning many of our valued team members. Our knowledge and execution will be better than ever as our team has another season of experience under our belt. Almost half of our 18-person team will be returning for our third year of snowmaking and another handful will be back for a second season. Knowledge and experience can be the difference between iced up and broken down equipment or making a good decision that keeps them running all night. We are very excited to have so many veterans returning.

We continue to work this fall to add electrical pedestals and water hydrants on the Twin Lake Trail, which will help us make snow more quickly and efficiently. If the weather cooperates, we should see more trails open sooner than ever!

Not only will the snow be made quickly, but the trail surfaces will continue to improve as our grooming equipment is



upgraded and operator skills continue to advance with more experience and professional training. The training is coming by way of a new groomer training program that PistenBully has launched this fall. Our operators will learn more details about how to manage various snow conditions and how to maximize the snow cat's capabilities. We also realize we are only as good as our equipment, so we continue to invest in our machines. Our older cat has received a new comb which will help us provide a more uniform trail finish.

There will also be a touch of an alpine feel in the air with the re-opening of the snowboard terrain park and tubing hill. The snowboard terrain park will be on the north side of the tubing hill and will have a variety of jumps and rails. The old rope tow will be resurrected to get you back to the top of the hill. We are also excited to re-open the tubing hill with its proximity to the new Trailhead building. Parents and guardians will be able to watch their loved ones glide down the tubing hill right in front of the large north windows as they enjoy a warm beverage in the warmth of The Trailhead!

We think a lot of people will come to see The Trailhead this winter, but they will stay because of the trails!



## SHOWERS, YOGA, SAUNA, OH MY!

EVAN BONNESON, ADVENTURES PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Club Trailhead is growing! The Trailhead is seeing more and more new faces every day. New this fall are Club Trailhead classes and a new partner — the 612 Sauna Society. We are now offering free classes to our Club Trailhead members on a weekly basis. Yoga courses are now available at 45 and 60 minute lengths for all of our members to bend, sweat, and relax their way to a healthier self! Plus power up with a brand new boot camp class which combines strength and cardio to give participants a high-energy and well-rounded workout. Stay tuned for more fun group fitness classes to come!

If you have been by The Trailhead in the lately, you've seen the 612 Sauna Society mobile sauna parked outside the building! That's because we're working together to provide our members and 612 Sauna Society's member-owners access to all the best things in one place! The Trailhead provides a home-base for the 612 Sauna Society in beautiful Theodore Wirth Regional Park and our members get to enjoy a discount on their next round of sweat-sessions! Just remember to check on their website at [www.612saunasociety.com](http://www.612saunasociety.com) for available reservations and to learn more about the benefits of sauna.

Thinking of joining the Club? A membership with Club Trailhead is a health club that you can feel good about. The Loppet Foundation uses proceeds from events, programming, and memberships to fund good works across the Twin Cities that help kids get outside in new and different ways. Call or stop in today for more information on membership, or visit [loppet.org](http://loppet.org) to learn more about how to get involved!





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