

Welcome to our **SPRING 2019** *Newsletter!*

FOUNDATION 02
Executive Director Letter

ADVENTURES 05
Kikkan Visits The Trailhead • Couple Engaged at Loppet Tour • Minne-Loppet Update

EVENTS 08
Fastenal Parallel 45 • The Trailhead's First Winter Festival • Volunteer Highlights

LOPPET SPORT 12
LNR Juniors Program Update • Loppet Cycle Works Begins • Loppet TRAIL KIDS Update

TRAILS & RECREATION 15
Loppet Trails Crew • Loppet + MN DNR Partnership • Start Your Next Adventure at The Trailhead



Mission Statement

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jon Van Horn

Treasurer

Judd Larson

Secretary

Steve Kotvis

Mindy Benton
Mia Como
Penelope Greene
Julia Joseph di Caprio
Beth Lasley
Leroy Leftwich
Joe Pohlad
Carl Shaffer
Bill McKinney
R.T. Rybak -
Honorary Member

FULL TIME STAFF

Executive Director

John Munger

Chief Operating Officer

Nicole Cueno

Chief Development Officer

Marin Byrne

Trails & Recreation Director

Isaac Kasper

Loppet Sport Director

Piotr Bednarski

Chief of Events & Corporate Relations

John Bussey

Adventures Director

Anthony Taylor

Associate Development Director

Ali Towle

Data & Registration Manager

Jackie Baker

Marketing & Communications Manager

Alora Jones

Finance & Administration Manager

Pablo Vargas Urriche

Loppet Sport Manager

Todd Bauer

LNR Head Coach

Chris Harvey

Loppet Cycle Works Head Coach

Bruce Martens

TRAIL KIDS Program Director

Kim Rudd

Trailhead Manager

Ben Bauch

Trailhead Events Manager

Bert Jackson

Trails & Operations Foreman

Jonah Parady

Trails & Grounds Supervisor

Alyssa Prokott

Events & Operations Coordinators

Lindsey Johnson
Paul Johnson

Merchandising Manager

Andrea Bidelman

Volunteer Coordinator

Le Vang

Administrative Assistant

Anthony Afful

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPRING 2019 JOHN MUNGER

When the Loppet Foundation started - back in 2003 - it was a huge success when we had 750 people participate in the first City of Lakes Loppet. Today, 750 people is a slow day at The Trailhead. Indeed, thanks to the work we've done as a community over the past 16 years, every day at Wirth Park is an event now.

Here's what it was like to be at The Trailhead this winter:

Monday morning might start with a strength class in the studio space at 6:00 am. The ski trail lights come on at the same time and, within a few minutes, the parking lots are filling up with early morning skiers. By 7:00 am a few high school teams arrive, coming in the morning to avoid the afternoon rush. The day continues with an adult ski class, and now people are stopping in to purchase coffee and beignets from Cajun Twist. A community group has a meeting in the Ryan Map Room.



We bus in kids from one of our Minne-Loppet schools and their laughter fills the Great Hall before they head out onto the perfectly groomed ski trails.

Come afternoon, things ramp up even more. Six to eight buses unload students in the Theodore Wirth Chalet parking lot and soon hundreds of young skiers and their coaches are hitting the trails. Cubbies are filled with boots, backpacks, and jackets, and The Trailhead bursts with energy and enthusiasm. The 612 Sauna Society has fired up the wood stove and steaming people will soon be sitting out in front of the building in swimsuits - maybe rolling in the snow just for the joy of it. The Loppet Ski Club arrives and adults are hitting the trails. At the same time, families of bicycling enthusiasts are making their way to the back of the Great Hall to put in some time on the trainer as part of a Loppet Cycle Works class. People are sitting by the fire, sipping beers and trading stories of the cold and snow.

1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55422

Phone: 612-604-5330 Email: info@loppet.org Web: www.loppet.org

And just like that, it's 9:00 pm and the building is quiet again. By 10 p.m. the last skiers are heading home. Louis, our custodian, is mopping up the lingering puddles of melted snow, and the groomers are heading out to get the trails in perfect shape for the next day.

And this pattern repeated day after day all winter - with slight variations of course. Some days there were races or events. On weekend afternoons the Minnesota Youth Ski League brought hundreds of enthusiastic children to the building and the trails. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, the tubing hill and terrain park were open with kids and families enjoying the thrill of gravity on snow. Community groups like the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council or Redeemer Center for Life enjoyed skiing, snowshoeing, and tubing. Out-of-towners from Florida or Mexico or wherever rented skis or fat bikes and took a lesson, reveling in all that Minnesota has to offer.

This year, the pattern persisted from November 12 - our first day of skiing - all the way to March 26, when we finally closed the trails for the year. That's 135 days. Not quite matching the 146-day winter we enjoyed last year, but pretty impressive nonetheless.

And then there is a short mud season before the summer - or non-snow - days begin. Mountain biking, trail running, par 3 golf, disc golf, orienteering, Adventure Camps, TRAIL KIDS, bike repairs by Velofix, bike rentals, Cajun Twist breakfast, lunch, and dinner, ski trainings, weddings, and events.

It never stops!

That is the big difference between Loppet today and Loppet of yesteryear. It used to be that the organization focused on its big events - one day every few months when we would see large chunks of our community. Now almost every day is a big event, with thousands of people engaging with the Loppet's work, day in and day out.

Which brings me to the word of the day at the Loppet: Sustainability.

For years, the organization has been able to rely upon the heroic nature of our staff and volunteers - rising to meet the next challenge. Be it events or snowmaking or making The Trailhead happen, Loppet people have done whatever it takes to deliver year-round outdoor activity to Minneapolis in a meaningful way. It has not just been around staffing. We have been using old equipment, patching and mending when what we really need is to grow and replace our current fleet.

But our scrappy, on-the-cheap model can only work for so long now that our organization has the equivalent of a new event every day. People are only able to work so many big days in a row. Volunteers have jobs outside the



Loppet. Our outdated equipment has become more and more of a problem... So the organization is changing. We added Nicole Cueno, our first Chief Operating Officer, last summer. John Bussey came on a few months later as our new Chief of Events & Corporate Relations. We filled out the events team with great doers like Lindsey Johnson, Paul Johnson (no relation), Le Vang, and Andrea Bidelman. We have grown our Trailhead staff - with Bert Jackson leading events, Ben Bauch managing the customer service team, and now Isaac Kasper leading the whole Trails & Recreation Department.

We knew all of this was coming and we had budgeted for it. But it has been a challenging time nonetheless. Over the past few years essentially all of our financial resources went into The Trailhead project. We have been operating on a razor-thin margin with the goal of getting to this day - and the hope that The Trailhead would work well enough financially that we could pay for the staff and infrastructure necessary to make the organization sustainable.

It is still very early, but so far we're making it work and doing pretty well. People seem to like what we do, and it certainly didn't hurt that we received a little snow before the Loppet Festival this year. Because even with all that we do every day, the Loppet Festival is still a big part of our budget. Having a generally good year with the Festival, and a great year for the UCare Luminary Loppet, really helps take some of the pressure off. But this will continue to be a challenging time for us as we work to make the organization sustainable, and continue to do inspiring work before we have built up a reserve.

So how do we build up a reserve? There are many pieces to this puzzle. The hope is that Loppet Sport breaks even and our events department makes a little, mostly through sponsorship revenues. This is why we brought John Bussey in - to help us grow our sponsorship base. We need to keep bringing in great funding so Loppet Adventures can continue its inspiring work.

But the two real key ingredients are Trails & Recreation and philanthropy. With the recent completion of The Trailhead, Trails & Recreation is relatively new and unproven. It needs a healthy mix of revenue to work. This includes ski pass sales, equipment rentals, ski and bike lessons, rent from Velofix and the Department of Natural Resources, concession revenue from Cajun Twist, wedding and event revenues, sales related to the locker room and studio space, and a little bit from tubing and snowboarding pass sales. The hope is that all of these pieces together can pay for the debt service on The Trailhead project, snowmaking and grooming, the costs associated with equipment purchase and maintenance, year-round customer service staff, Trailhead utilities, maintenance and staffing, and our rent to the Park Board.

And then there is philanthropy. Five years ago the Loppet did not have a development department at all. In fact, its executive director did not even really understand what a

development department was. Since then we have raised over \$5.5 Million for The Trailhead project. And now that the capital campaign is complete, we have a mature development department, with great leadership from Marin Byrne and Ali Towle, that can focus on grant funding and a robust annual fund. And the hope is that we can move donors from the capital campaign to annual support for the organization. In fact, we are counting on our ability to do that as our annual fund now makes up a substantial piece of our budget.

So far, so good. My impression is that people enjoy The Trailhead and feel like it is an important part of their lives. As we move toward a new operating model, one that is focused on long-term sustainability and continued advancement of our mission to create a passion for year-round outdoor adventure, we are looking to our community members (you!) to be part of the journey with us. Thank you for showing up to support the Loppet, in big and small ways, throughout the years. I hope you'll keep showing up as we continue to do great things outdoors for our ever-expanding community, centered around our new home at The Trailhead.

As always, see you on the trails!

John



Photo: TMB Images, tmbimages.com



Photo: TMB Images, tmbimages.com



KIKKAN VISITS LOPPET YOUTH ATHLETES AT THE TRAILHEAD

ALORA JONES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

A lot has happened since Kikkan Randall and Jessie Diggins made history at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang a year ago. As the first U.S. athletes to win a gold medal in cross country skiing, the women put on quite the memorable show in their team sprint race that put the two of them and cross country skiing on the map.

For Kikkan especially, life took a sharp turn after that historic moment when she learned she had developed breast cancer shortly after the Olympic victory. Spending the remainder of the year traveling back and forth between Alaska for treatment and her new home in British Columbia, Kikkan suddenly had a lot less capacity to make public appearances and spend time speaking with her fans. Given this, we were so excited when we found out that she was going to make time in her schedule to visit us at The Trailhead this past winter!

On a stop on her way to Hayward for the American Birkebeiner, Kikkan Randall came by to share her inspiring story, spend some time skiing with Junior Loppet athletes, host an early-morning World Cup viewing party with us, and preview the sprint course for our 2020 World Cup event!

The highlight of this visit, however, was the time Kikkan spent sharing herself, her expertise, and her story with our youth athletes. It's not every day that these kids have a chance to not only meet a world-class athlete (and an Olympic Gold Medalist, at that!), but to get tips on how to

start a sprint race from a master! It was immediately clear that this experience left a lasting impression on many of them.

In sharing the story of hers and Jessie's epic win, she talked about an emotional moment on the podium in Pyeongchang when all that she'd accomplished hit her at once. "All of a sudden, my entire career flashed before my eyes and I remembered back to being that sixteen-year-old who got involved in cross country skiing because I loved the way it made me feel and I was excited to try to do something that had never been done before."

We can't wait to see her back at The Trailhead next year, cheering on the U.S. Cross Country Ski Team along with these kids and the rest of her fans!





LOVE AT FIRST SKATE: BREANNE & HUNG

ALORA JONES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Hung and Breanne didn't grow up cross country skiing or really spending much time outdoors at all during the winter months. But upon finding a vibrant, outdoor-loving culture when they moved to Minnesota, all of that quickly changed.

Both hailing from Iowa City, Breanne and Hung moved to Minneapolis some years ago but didn't start skiing until recently. During their first winter in Minnesota, they stumbled upon a little event called the Luminary Loppet and quickly found themselves mesmerized. "In Iowa, people do all they can to avoid going outside in the winter. To see so many people having fun on a frozen lake in February was a new concept for me," Breanne recalled. Knowing immediately that cross country skiing was something they wanted to try, Breanne and Hung both bought skate skis later in the winter the next year. It didn't take too long for the couple to realize what a challenging sport cross country skiing can be, especially without proper coaching, so the next winter they decided to join Loppet Ski Club. A recreational winter program for adults, Loppet Ski Club provides quality coaching and skills development for skiers across the age and ability spectrums. Speaking to his own ski club experience, Hung warmly expressed "Everyone has been so welcoming and patient with us beginners. They're great mentors and all-around great people."



This past winter marked Breanne and Hung's second year of Loppet Ski Club, which is evident by the progress they've each made since they first picked up cross country skiing. As a result of the new skills and confidence they gained

through participation in Loppet Ski Club, the pair decided to enter their first point-to-point event in the City of Lakes Loppet Festival – the Loppet Skate Tour. While Hung and Breanne found themselves pretty worn out after the 10K tour, they hung around the finish line after to watch some other events and talk about participating in a competitive and longer event at next year's festival. That's when Hung asked possibly the most romantic question one ski clubber could ask another: "Well, do you want to do it next year as husband and wife?" Getting down on one knee, Hung fished out the chlorastrolite ring he'd skied with all morning in his pocket (the stone for which originated from Lake Superior, another landmark in their love story with Minnesota and with each other). Breanne enthusiastically accepted, and the two quickly made their way back up north to celebrate with more skiing, watching the waves, and going out to eat at all of their favorite spots.

"I knew a proposal was on the horizon, but absolutely did not expect it to happen after our ski tour!" Breanne explained. "In retrospect though, it was the perfect setting. Cross country skiing and Loppet Ski Club really symbolize a lot about our transition from Iowa to Minnesota, as well as our growth as a couple. The more we got into skiing and embraced winter, the happier we felt being here and making our home in Minnesota."

We know that great things happen when we come together around a shared passion for the outdoors, but this particular Loppety romance definitely has us in our feelings. Congrats Breanne and Hung!



Photo: f/go, f-go.us

MINNE-LOPPET PROGRAM TACKLES BARRIERS, INSTILLS LIFE SKILLS THROUGH SKIING

ALI TOWLE, ASSOCIATE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Winter 2018-19 was a challenging but rewarding one for Minne-Loppet participants.

As Loppet Adventures Director, Anthony Taylor puts it, "Weather is life: you can't change it, but you can change how you prepare for and respond to it. In the process, you find that you can influence the outcomes in your life. And that develops agency."

The Minne-Loppet program, an introductory cross country ski program that takes place from November to early February, engaged more than 1,000 kids at 11 North Minneapolis area elementary schools this year. But during a winter when natural snow accumulation doesn't happen until mid-February, skiing on your school playground before that is, well... difficult.

But while the lack of snow was frustrating for Minne-Loppet participants ["How are we gonna ski when there's just GRASS out there?!"], it ultimately didn't stop them from having fun and mastering some crucial skiing skills.

When you're in elementary school and you don't have a skiing background, the most important thing is to master the basics: gauging what layers to wear depending on the temperature outside; memorizing your ski boot size; putting your boots and skis on with no assistance; and being considerate enough to help your friend with her boots when she's struggling.

And that's exactly what Minne-Loppet participants did. With coaches and teachers facilitating, they discussed the importance of practical layers like snow pants and

waterproof mittens when skiing, rather than looking "cool" and foregoing those things. They had team relays in their school gymnasiums, to see which teams were fastest at dressing a peer in winter gear and ski boots. They pole hiked outside, learning how to hold ski poles and practice classic ski striding while walking.

They even found a way to spend time on snow. This year, the Loppet was able to bus all the Minne-Loppet schools to Wirth Park for a skiing field trip. The kids got to test their skiing skills, check out The Trailhead, and envision themselves at the end-of-season Minne-Loppet race in Wirth Park during the City of Lakes Loppet Festival.

The excitement of skiing at Wirth even prompted some of the more hesitant kids, like Amira, to decide they wanted to do the Minne-Loppet race after all. "My mom works that day, but can you tell my dad to sign my permission slip so I can go?"

Thanks to the skills they'd built despite the lack of snow, everyone successfully finished the Minne-Loppet race on February 2. Kids were greeted at the finish line with medals, cookies, hot chocolate, and hugs from teachers, coaches, and family members.

Their grinning faces, sticky with hot chocolate, reflected a sense of pride in accomplishing something many hadn't known they were capable of. The season was challenging, but one thing's for sure: Minne-Loppet participants returned to their homes, classrooms, and communities with just a little more self-confidence — and a little more agency — than before.



Photo: TMB Images, tmbimages.com

THE INAUGURAL PARALLEL 45! JOHN BUSSEY, CHIEF OF EVENTS & CORPORATE RELATIONS

We in Minneapolis live on the 45th Parallel, the line of latitude that marks the halfway point between Earth's equator and its North Pole. In fact, the line itself runs directly through the north end of Theodore Wirth Park where a stone monument marks the spot.

As a nod to that line, the Loppet Foundation has named our second major winter festival after it: the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival.

In 2020, Fastenal Parallel 45 will include the Coop FIS Cross Country Ski World Cup. That event will mark the first time since 2001 that a FIS Cross Country Ski World Cup event has been held in the United States. It will also be the first time Jessie Diggins and the rest of the US Cross Country Ski Team has ever had the opportunity to compete on home snow.

But the 2020 Fastenal Parallel 45 will not be the festival's inaugural year, it will be its second. Parallel 45's inaugural

year was 2019.

In 2019, Fastenal Parallel 45 consisted of three events, which will all be reprised in 2020: the Parallel 45 Cup, the MyXC Festival and Championships, and LoppetX.

In the Parallel 45 Cup, college competitors from across the region competed in classic and skate races. Through the MyXC Festival and Championships, younger juniors competed for CXC points and for the love of the sport. And finally, through LoppetX presented by Go Radio some of the best skiers and bikers in the Twin Cities threw themselves over jumps and around berms as they competed for a \$5,000 overall purse.

In short, 2019 Fastenal Parallel 45 was absolutely incredible and sets the stage perfectly for the 2020 version. We hope you'll be part of the action with us by volunteering, coming to enjoy the festival, and watching the World Cup sprint races with us!



THE TRAILHEAD'S FIRST LOPPET FESTIVAL

JOHN BUSSEY, CHIEF OF EVENTS & CORPORATE RELATIONS

It was just a few years shy of 20 years ago that the City of Lakes Loppet was born. At that time, the core of the vision was a simple point-to-point ski race linking together Minneapolis' gorgeous winter landscapes.

From those early days, the Loppet has always been a scrappy affair led by people who hustle to do more with less — and it worked. The hard work, sweat, and sheer grit of our passionate Loppet community members led to the tremendous growth of the City of Lakes Loppet. That growth gave rise to the Luminary Loppet, to our school-based Minne-Loppet programs, to incredible trails, and to so much more.

Maybe most importantly, that effort by Loppet staff and volunteers led to the growth of our community. It led to more and more people feeling at home as they explored Minneapolis' trails with newfound friends.

And now because of the growth of this community, the generosity of folks like you, and our partnership with the best-in-the-country Minneapolis Parks, Minneapolis residents who live to explore the woods and waterways of their home city have a new home at The Trailhead.

The 2019 City of Lakes Loppet Festival was The Trailhead's first. Through the first three days of the festival, The Trailhead played host to record-setting crowds of spectators and participants at Captain Ken's Kubb Championship, the

Chuck and Don's Skijoring Championships, and the Minne-Loppet. It served as the backbone to our classic distance race finish lines. Most importantly, it was the spot to be to hang out and celebrate living in a city where the deeper the snow is, the more reason to get outside!

While The Trailhead shone in the festival's first three days, it absolutely proved its worth on the Festival's fourth and final day. After high overnight temperatures led the trails linking Bde Maka Ska and Theodore Wirth to disintegrate, the Loppet's staff and volunteer crews were back in oh-so-familiar hustle mode. But this year it was different. This year we had The Trailhead and the expanded snowmaking loops of Wirth Park.

Our course on Sunday changed, pulling back to just those snowmaking loops. But that change was barely a step-down. Instead, it meant that festival-goers got to enjoy a full day of entertainment here in one place with food, drink, and fun throughout. Not to mention, the skiing, running, and riding was excellent on our condensed course.

The Loppet Foundation will always be committed to adventure. We will always strive to create races and events that allow competitors to push their limits throughout the City of Lakes. But we are also thrilled to be reminded that even when the weather doesn't go our way, our backup plan is second to none.



Photo: f/go, f-go.us

AN INSPIRING WINTER WITH THE LOPPET FAMILY

LE VANG, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

I've met so many wonderful volunteers since I joined the Loppet Foundation last fall. The goodwill of this amazing, steadfast, and loyal volunteer family is barred none. Our volunteers give time to what really matters! These folks not only show up but engage with the participants and the activity involved. When you come to any of our events, you are with the Loppet Family. I am proud to be among this group and to continue to further the Loppet Foundation's mission.

While all volunteers are indispensable, I would like to introduce a few who show up and take on extra responsibilities to maintain and enhance the Loppet experience...



Claire Walters was recently at our MyXC Championship & Festival, leading a part of the festival for all the children. I didn't see much of her as the event was going on. That's because she was busy running across The Trailhead to place the medallion in hidden spots as clues were given out. As

soon as one was found, she was off and running. Through all her hard work that day, she recalled having a great time volunteering at this event.

"I loved the supportive and joyful environment," Claire expressed. "I was immediately welcomed in by Loppet employees and other volunteers. Seeing all the kids running around with big grins on their faces, — racing or participating in the festival games — was an amazing experience and incredibly rewarding. Overall, it was a wonderful experience that refreshes the importance of connection and community!"

Excited to be a part of the festival, Claire was one of many who helped cultivate the incredible experience for all the children that day. She's been a lifelong volunteer, and she was even an overseas volunteer at an orphanage last summer. Her care and spirit resonate everywhere she goes and was evident at the festival. She is also an avid climber and loves to engage with the community and worldwide. Claire's will to inspire others is seen through her commitment to take on challenges.

Melissa Ruebl (or 'Coach Mel') is a leader in the snowboarding program. She is a volunteer that has showed up and been accountable to over a dozen children (and growing!). Coach Mel is proud to have led many successful events in snowboarding which have led to more opportunities for women and girls to compete. When approached with the opportunity to be involved in snowboarding with youth, and be an empowering female role model, she was on board right away. When the weather has been unforgiving and near sub-zero, she is committed to making sure the kids continue to progress with the time given.



Her will to have the kids succeed can be seen throughout the program. When kids showed up the first few times not prepared for the weather, she initiated an effort through her work to collect used gear. Within a few weeks, the kids had better gear and were dressed for the weather. I remember one moment when she gave a child a pair of snowboarding socks. It represented a pivotal point in the progress of this kid's development in the program. It provided comfort and solidified a positive attitude in the child. They showed up with a smile each time thereafter, with the special socks, ready to learn. Simple, yet powerful! Coach Mel is beloved by the kids and respected by her peers that coach alongside her.

Joe Schlosser aka GoJo has been around the Loppet and behind the scenes. His willingness to help, along with the positive charisma, often goes unnoticed. Joe rides his bike to The Trailhead frequently, no matter the weather conditions. You've probably seen him shoveling the paths around The Trailhead. You might have also seen him walking along and compressing the single track with snowshoes. He has helped with cleaning and picking up after long days and events, preparing volunteer and participant food before event mornings, and most recently, Joe even stayed up all night during 24 Hours of Wirth to aid athletes competing in 12- and 24-hour-long races. No matter the role, he always comes with a positive attitude, unwavering spirit, and never sets a limit on his willingness to help support the Loppet Foundation.

Tracy Edwards started taking on more of a leadership role recently and has quickly become an instrumental part of the volunteer team. Her professional skills and talent transfer through her volunteerism. She's an exceptional person and leader, providing aid and support to other leads at events. She has managed other volunteers and made decisions that influence many positive outcomes on event days. And in the Loppet way, she's reacted well to unplanned obstacles and made sound and timely decisions to ensure an awesome event experience for all involved. Tracy not only finds the needed volunteers, but also steps up to lead on our busiest weekends. The success of our events year-after-year only happens because of volunteers like her. I'm honored to name her as a Most Valuable Volunteer!



'Most Valuable Volunteer,' Tracy Edwards

I hope you get to meet these wonderful volunteers as I have. They are kind and generous in their time and resources. I stand proud to have these volunteers represent and support the Loppet Foundation. They embody the outdoors and adventurous lifestyle we promote, both personally and through their volunteer roles with the Loppet Foundation. They face challenges with optimism and are humble about their achievements.

We couldn't do what we do without folks like Claire, Melissa, Joe, Tracy, and all of our fabulous volunteers. From all of us the Loppet Foundation — thank you for your service!



Photo: f/go, f-go.us

Join the adventure!
BECOME A
LOPPET FOUNDATION
MEMBER
TODAY!





Photo: Jackie Schneider, skinnyski.com

LNR JUNIORS — A LOOK BACK ON WINTER AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

CHRIS HARVEY, LOPPET NORDIC RACING HEAD COACH

Winter Season Wrap-Up

Junior athletes in the Loppet Nordic Racing program wrapped up their 2018-19 winter season at U.S. Junior Nationals in Anchorage, Alaska this year. U.S. Ski and Snowboard's Junior National Cross Country Championships is the premier event in the country for high school skiers age 14 to 18. Athletes must qualify for the Midwest team by competing in the CXC Junior Cup, which includes four weekends of racing throughout the winter. This year's Junior Nationals took place at Kincaid Park in Anchorage, Alaska. LNR qualified nine girls and seventeen boys to the Midwest team. Athletes from the LNR program typically make up about half of the Midwest team, which includes the best skiers from Minnesota and Wisconsin. Thanks to a strong showing in the U16 category, the LNR boys took home 2nd place in the club competition and the LNR girls finished as the 3rd best girls club in the country! Boys and girls combined to take 2nd place in the overall category behind Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation. All of the coaches are very proud of their accomplishments this season.

To Collegiate Racing... And Beyond!

Looking ahead, we're also very proud to see a number of our athletes heading off to college and joining new teams. A number of LNR athletes are graduating high school soon, and many have secured spots on NCAA ski teams thanks to their years of hard work and training through LNR. Armstrong high school senior Leah Rudd signed a national letter of intent recently to ski for Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. Blaine senior Sarah Olson will be attending the the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Alex Nemeth will be attending Dartmouth College next fall. Junior National Champion Luci Anderson announced she will be attending University of New Hampshire next fall. Stillwater high school senior Emma Albrecht will attend Michigan Technological University. A number of high school seniors, Matt Clarke, Mae Barnes, PJ Rubin, and Joe Lynch, will be heading to Duluth's College of St. Scholastica. While our coaches are always a bit sad to see kids aging out of programs and moving on to the next part of their journeys, we're also happy to have had the privilege to play a role in their development as both great athletes and great people. Join us in wishing this cohort all the best in what's ahead!



Photo: TMB Images, tmbimages.com

LCW WHEELS ARE TURNING

BRUCE MARTENS, LOPPET CYCLE WORKS HEAD COACH

Loppet Cycle Works (LCW) shot off the start line this year launching youth programming for 12-18-year-olds seeking adventure, development, and competition opportunities on two wheels. We coupled this programming with initiatives to join in community interaction, positive identity development, and individual personal interest activities like career exploration, behavioral health and wellness, and service through volunteerism. LCW provides scholarships for over 20% of all applicants and has free or reduced rates for youth through school-based programming, after-school activities, and weekend events. In addition to youth programming, parallel programming for adults kicked off this spring with offerings for educational and developmental training for coaches, sports enhancement through indoor strength and endurance sessions, and competition team memberships for all levels of interest and abilities.

Loppet Cycle Works has partnered with community organizations around the Twin Cities in order to leverage resources for greater outreach while providing partners and collaborators a platform to participate in Loppet events and activities right here at The Trailhead. From general gatherings to formal festivities, Loppet Cycle Works has been busy supporting home-grown community engagement events

like the City of Lakes Loppet, the Mayor's Challenge, and LoppetX. All this while ensuring facilitators of events like the Loppet Winter Triathlon, Frost Bike, and Minnesota Off-Road Cyclist meetings feel right at home here at Theodore Wirth Park.

This winter, LCW really took ownership of keeping the new single track trails in tip-top shape for winter. Staff and volunteers mastered the art of grooming, from a mechanical groomer, to good old-fashioned snow shoeing to pack down the snow, to our LCW youth spending snow days shoveling out drifted corners, LCW folks spent hundreds of hours ensuring that the Loppet trails were ready to give everyone out there the best experience possible!

Thanks to the many individuals, groups, and businesses that support Loppet Cycle Works and the work the Loppet Foundation is committed to, it is already clear that LCW will be a legacy program in the organization. Check out all of the ways Loppet Cycle Works can serve you by visiting loppet.org/lcw, looking up the Loppet Cycle Works group on Facebook, and checking out a program. We hope to see you on the trails soon!



TRAIL KIDS ON THE MOVE!

KIM RUDD, LOPPET TRAIL KIDS HEAD COACH

Winter Recap

The TRAIL KIDS cross country ski programs held at Wirth and Hyland drew over a hundred participants during the 2018-19 season. Young skiers age 7-13 enjoyed many adventures on skis, learning both classic and skate techniques through drills, games, relays, and races. TRAIL KIDS has some of the best-trained coaches in the Twin Cities area who are also actively involved in races themselves. Some of our coaches have been with us for several years and some are new to the program. Unique this year, we have six coaches that are also students at the University of Minnesota, active in the U of M Ski Club, and compete in local races. Participants, parents, and coaches all enjoyed having access to The Trailhead this year, which provided a larger space for all seven of our country themed teams (France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, USA, Austria, and Finland) to meet both before and after our practice sessions.

New this year to the TRAIL KIDS program was our Super Ski Race Series, held at The Trailhead in Wirth Park, which offered a variety of ski races in both classic and skate. One race was even a skate ski cross event which challenged youth on their agility around barrels, cones, and on rolling terrain. Following each race, participants enjoyed hot chocolate, cookies, and sweet prizes provided by series sponsor Gear West. The overall series age group winners were recognized with medals at the spring LNR/TRAIL KIDS end of season celebration. TRAIL KIDS also enjoyed a day full of ski races and games at the MyXC Festival and Championships held at The Trailhead, as part of the first Fastenal Parallel 45 winter festival. All in all, the 2018-19 season proved to be great for Loppet TRAIL KIDS!

A Look Ahead at Spring....

All of us on the TRAIL KIDS team are looking forward to kicking off spring mountain bike programs! Last spring over ninety youth participated in our mountain bike programs at Wirth, while our summer programs attracted over a hundred youth at all three locations (Lebanon Hills, Elm Creek, and Theo Wirth). We have also seen a spike in the number of girls mountain biking through our girls' mountain bike clinics, along with the new Girls Rock program offered at The Trailhead. This year, we are looking forward to adding three half-day mountain bike camps for kids age 7-13 at The Trailhead. Spring and summer TRAIL KIDS programs will fill up quickly so plan ahead to ensure your kids are on the move this summer too!





LOPPET TRAILS CREW: A LITTLE CRAZY AND A LOT ADVENTUROUS

MARIN BYRNE, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

If you came out skiing in a Minneapolis park this winter, you probably experienced what seemed like magic — miles of skiable trails before a single flake of natural snow fell and beautiful grooming all the way through late March!

I sat down recently with Trails and Recreation Director Isaac Kasper, who oversees snowmaking and grooming for the Loppet, to find out how that magic happened.

Isaac starts watching the weather forecast at the end of October. Generally, he's looking for at least three nights in a row with a low below 23 degrees, with day time highs around 30 or 32.

Of course, it's not as simple as just watching the temperature. The humidity is important too, with lower humidity allowing snowmaking at warmer temperatures. A key to early season snow is the cooling tower (that big silver box near the upper stadium, installed by the Loppet in 2017), which makes it possible to make snow about two degrees warmer—28 degrees on a day with average humidity—than it would be without. It may not seem like much, but Isaac says those two degrees make a huge difference in our ability to make snow, especially in the fall.

When Isaac sees a window for snowmaking, the crew gets the equipment into place. They're working with 11 snow guns, about 27 water hydrants, a parallel system of electrical stations, and extraordinary lengths of electrical cables and hoses. A crew of three people needs about six hours to set up for a session of snowmaking.

As Isaac described how the crew decides where to place the snow guns, it sounded like one of those complicated logic problems they put on standardized tests. Because the snowmaking system was built in stages, certain snow guns only work with certain hydrants and electrical stations. Each hydrant and electrical station can support a limited

number of snow guns. Then, they have to think about the wind, because they don't want to make snow that just blows into the woods. And, the crew prioritizes adding snow where it can most quickly expand the trail system.

This year, they had an added logistical challenge. Cold weather arrived much earlier than normal, and the crew was able to start up snow making on November 8. However, this was so early that golf was still in operation, so they had to figure out where they could make snow, in a usable loop, that also was not in the way of golf! Thanks to their strategic decisions, we opened a 400-meter loop to skiers on November 12.

In a 24-hour period, in average conditions, one snow gun will produce a pile of snow 40 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 8 feet tall. During the height of snow making season, the crew is running 24 hours a day.

To keep things going around the clock, the four year-round trail crew members—Isaac, Jonah Parady, Lindsey Johnson, and Alyssa Prokott—are joined by 20 seasonal staff. The crew was able to cover the whole (and newly expanded!) 6.5K manufactured snow loop with 18 to 24 inches of snow; fill three stadiums, and cover the tubing hill and snowboard terrain park by January 10.

Of course, making the snow is only half of the story. The other half is moving and sculpting the snow into skiable trails, and then grooming to keep it things in great shape. The primary tools for this are our two PistenBullys, which are affectionately called "The Edge" and "Junior". (Junior got its name last year at Super Bowl LIVE when Dale Earnhardt Jr. drove it over the Birkie Bridge!)

According to Isaac, moving snow into place would be virtually impossible without these two workhorse machines. A PistenBully is strong enough to push over a house, which

might seem a bit excessive until you remember how heavy snow is. Remember those piles of snow that a snow gun can produce in 24 hours? Every one can weigh as much as 30 tons!

And, the PistenBullys are ideal for grooming because they have a hydraulic tiller with teeth that go down about three inches to chop up icy patches and renovate the top surface, and the wide tillers create a smoother side-to-side trail.

It takes a crew of two people about three and a half hours to groom the full manufactured snow loop. They generally start at about 10 pm, finishing around 1:30 am so the snow has time to set up before skiers start showing up at 5 am (which happens a lot!).

When there's enough snow to groom the natural snow trails, the crew also uses a fleet of snowmobiles and tracked carts. These machines are better able to handle a shallower snowpack and can navigate the tighter turns and narrower pathways of the natural snow system. To groom the whole 35K of ski trails, staff are joined by a crew of steadfast volunteer groomers who take ownership of grooming much of the natural snow system.

A key to the team's ability to deliver consistently high-quality ski trails is crew member Jonah's mechanical skill. In his typical understated fashion, Isaac says, "Our equipment has had a good life and seen a lot of snow." Which is to say, this was the 11th season for the Edge and 14th for Junior—and both machines have experienced heavy use over those years.

This winter, Jonah spent about half of his time fixing equipment, and the crew brought on an additional part-time mechanic as well. About halfway through the season, Junior suffered a mechanical failure that required it to be sent off-site for repair, so the trails crew rented a third PistenBully to help keep up with grooming. "PistenBullys aren't cheap," says Isaac, "so it made sense to invest that amount of staff time on fixing things this year. But at some point it is just too much to keep old equipment running; we're always keeping an eye on when that balance shifts."

As you might expect, the weather has a lot to do with when the grooming season ends. It also has to do with the Loppet's operating agreements with the Park Board, which specify that without special dispensation from the Park Board, grooming trails on the golf course must end

on March 15, and elsewhere on March 22. As we saw both this year and last, the Park Board is a great partner for winter because they are willing to be flexible and shift those cutoffs when conditions are favorable for an extended season.

Isaac's advice for aspiring trails crew members? "Be a little bit crazy and a lot adventurous," he says. "Plan on things not going to plan, and be ready to be a problem solver. A sense of humor helps a lot." And then he added, "Make sure you have two pairs of boots so one is always drying out. Boots get wet. A lot."

Thank you to our winter trail crew staff and volunteers for another fabulous season, and here's to all the skiing to come!



A GATEWAY TO STATE PARKS & TRAILS IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

BEN BAUCH, TRAILHEAD MANAGER

Walking through The Trailhead, keep an eye out for something special — the DNR's portal to Minnesota's State Parks and Trails. Nestled between our Adventure Shop and the Ryan Map Room, you'll find a carved out space fully dedicated to sharing information about outdoor adventure opportunities in Minnesota State Parks and Trails.

Arguably one of the most valuable state agencies, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages 75 state parks, 25 state trails, 35 state water trails, 62 state forest recreations areas, and much more across the state. With more than 75 years of experience, the DNR was a natural fit for partnering with the Loppet! We share a joint commitment to urging more Minnesotans into the great outdoors — especially towards Minnesota State Parks and Trails.

Working in concert with the DNR's new Urban Outreach Initiative funded by the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment, we created a space in The Trailhead for visitors to learn more about opportunities to experience Minnesota State Parks and Trails. Here you can find information about upcoming recreation programs, the best places to camp, trails to explore, and other ideas for blazing your next great outdoor adventure — one that can take you beyond the bounds of Theodore Wirth Park. Aimee Gerhartz, one of the MN DNR representatives you can speak with while visiting the DNR's space at The Trailhead, shared "It's exciting to answer questions, provide real-time information and resources, and share inspiration to connect people with outdoor opportunities."

So stop by next time you visit The Trailhead to pick up a map, plan your next weekend trip, and say hello to the DNR's friendly staff and volunteers!





MEET US AT THE TRAILHEAD FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

TAYLOR TINKHAM, TRAILHEAD MANAGER

Whether in the winter, spring, summer, or fall, you're always only steps away from your next outdoor adventure at The Trailhead. Coming off the heels of a fantastic winter season full of great trail conditions for skiers, fat bikers, and snowshoers alike, we are pushing full-steam ahead into what will surely be an equally great spring and summer. Whether you're looking to rent equipment, take your swing at the Par 3 golf course, or just explore the singletrack by going for a hike or trail run, The Trailhead is your jumping off point for outdoor activity at Theo Wirth Park. With so many ways to get outside and active, there's no better place in the city to start your next adventure.

Here are just a few ways we'd recommend getting started:

Take a Class. Between the Women's Brick Session, LNR Strength programs, and the new outdoor Summer Wellness Series there are tons of ways for adults and families to get active with plenty of guidance and instruction along the way. Plus when you take a class through the Loppet Foundation, you can always trust that your coaches and instructors will be top-notch and take excellent care of you on your fitness journey. Take a look at some of the classes [here](#).

Rent a Mountain Bike. Right outside the doors of The Trailhead, you'll find an entry point (marked by two large wooden posts) to the Loppet-managed singletrack trails of Wirth Park. Our trails crew is responsible for maintaining approximately 5 ½ miles of packed dirt trails which welcomes mountain bikers, fat bikers, trail runners, snowshoers, and hikers throughout the year. At The Trailhead, you'll find everything you need to explore these trails no matter your mode of transportation (though we'd highly recommend going a mountain bike for added thrills!). See maps, rental information, and more [here](#).

Join a Club. Getting outdoors and active is always more fun with a group! In the spring and summer, you can explore dozens of urban trails with the Loppet Run Club.

This group of distance-running enthusiasts quite literally runs the gamut from those training for the CityTrail Loppet 10K to those looking to up their game to marathon and ultra- races. The same can also be said for the winter social group, Loppet Ski Club. Another fun and casual way to get out there more with a group, Ski Club welcomes skiers of all levels and abilities. No matter where you fall on the spectrum, you're sure to fit right in with either of these motley crews of endurance athletes. More on that [here](#).

Dine Al Fresco. We don't know about you, but all of that exercise and adventure makes us hungry! What better way to unwind after an afternoon on the trails than by enjoying a cold beverage and a carefully crafted Creole dish from our fabulous partners at Cajun Twist. From the po'boys to the catfish to the red beans and rice, you're sure to find a menu favorite (or three!) to refuel your body and nourish your soul. Learn more about Cajun Twist, including menu offerings, [here](#).

With all these and so many other ways to have a great experience outdoors, we've got you covered for spring and summer fun at Wirth Park. No matter what you're wanting out of your Wirth Park experience, make sure you start it at The Trailhead!



SAVE THE DATE!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 19
CITYTRAIL LOPPET

.....

JUNE 5 - AUGUST 14
WIRTH ON WEDNESDAYS

.....

JUNE 23
MOUNT WIRTH LOPPET

.....

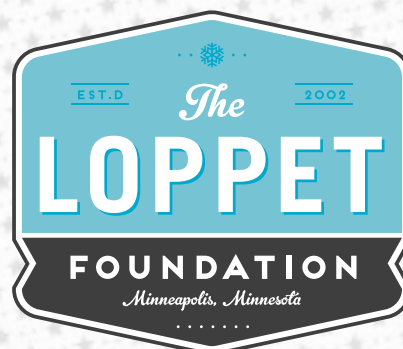
JULY 20
TRI-LOPPET

.....

SEPTEMBER 21
SURLY BREWING CO. TRAIL LOPPET

.....

OCTOBER 13
LOOPET LOPPET



1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55422
Phone: 612-604-5330 Email: info@loppet.org Web: www.loppet.org