



Welcome to our **FALL 2019** *Newsletter!*

FOUNDATION 02

Executive Director Letter

ADVENTURES 04

New Adventures Director • 2019 Adventure Camp Changes • Junior & Minne-Loppet Updates

EVENTS 08

World Cup Preparations • 2020 Loppet Winter Festival • Wirth on Wednesdays • 2019 Loppet Event Themes • What it means to be a Loppet Volunteer

LOPPET SPORT 12

Loppet Run 365 • Loppet Nordic Racing Update • Loppet TRAIL KIDS Highlights

TRAILS & RECREATION 15

Trailhead Summer Recap • New Vendor Partnerships • Singletrack Trails Update

THE LOPPET COMMUNITY 18



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 Pohlard

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

Director of Sales & Marketing

Jon Friedell

Associate Development

Director, Chief Program

Officer

Ali Towle

Adventures Director

Ray Aponte

Data & Registration Manager

Jackie Baker

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

Loppet Running Director

Abdi Bile

Trailhead Manager

Ben Bauch

Trailhead Events Manager

Bert Jackson

Trails & Operations Foreman

Jonah Parady

Adventures Manager

Rob Nelson

Trails & Operations Manager

Robert Ibler

Trails & Grounds Supervisor

Alyssa Prokott

Events & Operations

Managers

Lindsey Johnson

Paul Johnson

Volunteer Coordinator

Le Vang

Merchandising & Partnership Manager

Andrea Bidelman

Administrative Assistant

Anthony Afful

Marketing & Communications Associate, Development Associate

Heidi Ledermann

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FALL 2019 JOHN MUNGER



in many ways it was a great year!

Maybe there will come a time when the Loppet is simple. It will be a well-oiled machine with predictable revenues and expenses and a mature trail system. Sponsors will line up like they do for the Twins or Vikings. Events will happen exactly as planned, with no warm spells in the winter or thunderstorms in the summer. People will throw their phones away and the whole world will embrace the outdoors.

But that is not the Loppet of today. Today's Loppet is still, well, a Loppet — that is, a journey over uneven terrain — with inspiration and challenge happening side-by-side. This last year saw the opening of The Trailhead, the start of our Loppet Cycle Works program, the beginning of Loppet Run 365, the hiring of Ray Aponte to lead our Adventures programming, the completion of our mountain bike event trail network, the addition of a mountain bike skills course, and snowmaking infrastructure on the Twin Lakes Trail, by far the earliest opening of our ski trails ever (Nov. 12), and the flourishing of our partnership with the Park Board. So

But at the same time it was a challenging year — full of "first year of The Trailhead" challenges. While we sold more ski passes than ever before, we saw less revenue than we had predicted from things like our locker rooms and studio space. While we rented the Great Hall for many events, we had budgeted for more income from weddings and events. While we gave Cajun Twist a great start, we are now finding a new restaurant partner. While we enjoyed renting bikes and skis, we only just found what we think will be our long-term partner for the bike and ski shop area at The Trailhead. And, we had to invest this year in new programming order to set the table for even greater success in the future.

All these factors have added up to a tough year for our finances; we ended the year in the red. Bad year, or good year? Are you an optimist or a pessimist?

Plant me firmly in the optimist column. All the investments of the past few years mean the Loppet has stronger infrastructure than ever before. The Trailhead provides

1301 Theodore Wirth Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55422

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

a base of activities for all of our programming, it provides office space and meeting space and a home for our entire community. We expect to have all the pieces in place this Spring so that The Trailhead can realize its potential as a place where the community gathers on summer nights — sipping beer or coffee and a meal after enjoying the trails, and perusing Boulder Sport for a new bike or skis, or that commuter light or helmet, or Loppet t-shirt or Trailhead hat that you have always wanted. We expect to have bands and movies in the park, outdoor plays and concerts — and a place where the whole community gathers to celebrate the parks and green spaces that were handed down to us from generations before. We are already seeing an increase in weddings and events scheduled, and, with the lessons that we learned from the first go-around, we expect the next iteration of the restaurant to be fantastic.

But the infrastructure improvements are not just physical. Our staff has grown and improved as well. It is maybe not sexy to discuss, but we have refined our leadership team, restructured, added a Chief Operating Officer along with a Sales and Marketing Director position, and we have begun the difficult journey of reimagining how we work. This has included new work on our vision for the future, with quarterly and annual goals that will help guide us into the future.

Maybe the most exciting improvements involve our potential to deliver real change through our programming. We have re-aligned our programmatic staff in order to avoid any silo effect — meaning that the expertise we have in high-level skiing, biking and running can be shared more effectively across everything that we do. Our long-time head coach, Piotr Bednarski, is now our Chief of Sport — spreading his knowledge and expertise across all of our programming.

We are really excited with the hiring of Abdi Bile and Ray Aponte to lead our running and outreach programming. Abdi is literally one of the greatest middle distance runners in history and a national hero to the Somali community. More than that, Abdi is a fantastic coach, gentle soul, and his very presence inspires people across cultures to join the outdoor active movement; the day after he started nine new Somali youth participated in a TRAIL KIDS Adventure Race!

Ray is going to have an equally inspiring impact. Ray is a veteran of the Minneapolis Public Schools — having served as a principal in schools throughout the district, including the last five years as principal of South High School. Born in Puerto Rico, Ray is a long-time outdoor enthusiast and avid Nordic skier — ask him about his race plan for the upcoming winter, because it's a doozy! He is a strong believer in the power of outdoor activities to inspire confidence and grit.

All of these pieces are important individually. Put them together and we have the potential to do truly great things going forward. We have coaches with incredible expertise. We have inspiring leaders who can relate to and inspire people from all different backgrounds. We have a veteran staff that are set to lead, with a chief operating officer working to set up systems that will allow us to succeed. And



we have a home base for outdoor activities — including trails and a building — like nowhere else in the country.

And, oh yes, we have one other absolutely key ingredient. YOU! We have this amazing community of people who volunteer, and suggest, inspire, give, and connect us to people, ideas and opportunities. Really, we are nothing if not an extension of this amazing community. We hope that you stay with us on this journey. While we have maybe tripped a few times on this unexplored trail, that is the nature of our work. And we know we can count on our community to help steady us and keep us moving along . . . because we are expecting to reach new mountain tops over the next few years — with thousands of youth and families joining our caravan, and events like the 2020 FIS Cross Country Ski World Cup Sprint Finals that will shine a light on all that we do.

Thank you for your faith in us, for your help, and yes, thank you for your gentle nudges and support. We could not do any of this without you — and we are excited for the next stage of our journey.

As always, call or email me with thoughts or suggestions.

John
Executive Director
munger@loppet.org
(612) 618-9681



WELCOME RAY APONTE, OUR NEW ADVENTURES DIRECTOR

HEIDI LEDERMANN, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

The Loppet Foundation is pleased to welcome Ray Aponte as the new Director of Loppet Adventures.

Ray has said that he was initially drawn to the Loppet's mission to create a shared passion for year-round outdoor adventure in underserved communities because it is something to which he connects deeply. When he first moved to the Midwest from Puerto Rico as a child, he struggled with learning English and sought refuge from schoolwork in extracurricular activities and sports. The Loppet Foundation strives to instill a similar connection in each of the youth members in the Loppet Adventures program.

Ray said that adventure programming and outdoor experiences, like those offered through the Loppet Foundation, are exactly what urban kids of color need in order to build confidence and be able to see themselves outside societal norms and constraints.

For the past 25 years of his life and career, Ray has dedicated his existence to the development of youth — preparing them to be successful in this society through a variety of experiences and trusting relationships. While attending University of Wisconsin Whitewater, he started to work with youth groups during his summer vacations. Many people told him that he had a calling and a gift for

working with youth. When he soon realized that was true, he decided to become a teacher. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education. After graduation, Ray accepted a position with Chicago Youth Centers. He worked as an outdoor leadership specialist with groups of diverse students on their social, collaborative, and leadership skills by taking them on camping trips to various locations. As an avid skier and lover of the outdoors, he said that he saw tremendous value in connecting kids with nature.

Ray went back to school to receive his Masters in Art from St. Thomas University. He later accepted a position with Minneapolis Public Schools as a Phy. Ed. teacher in 1986, and then was drawn to leadership opportunities. He became an assistant principal at Northeast Middle School, and he served as a Minneapolis school principal for the past 29 years in high schools, elementary, middle, and K-8 schools.

Ray is an energetic advocate for environmental education and equity issues, which makes him a perfect fit at the Loppet Foundation. He said that as the Director of Loppet Adventures he looks forward to not only being part of the Loppet team, but also blending together his relationship with Minneapolis Public Schools, his passion for exercise, and the need to connect and advocate for kids on the northside.



BIG CHANGES AT 2019 ADVENTURE CAMP

ANDY HARRIS, ADVENTURE CAMP DIRECTOR

When writing articles like these, a prudent Camp Director goes through what he/she has previously said. Some years — like 2015 — wax bucolic with descriptions of canoers hollering out on Wirth Lake. Others years — like 2017 — talk about new-and-improved Counselor-in-Training programs. Each and all talk about what's new at camp and, quite honestly, sometimes, a Camp Director is grasping at straws to talk about what's new.

There's no such grasping here for 2019. This year, Adventure Camp has found its home at The Trailhead. This kind of newness can be challenging — and, for a while, we did struggle.

Brain cells had to be dedicated to finding a way to water for the kids to play in, kind of like we were plopped into the desert. But the Camp Counselors found their way. The new location tripped up some parents, confuddling those whose kids have been with us the longest. "Where is everyone?" came in through multiple phone calls on Monday mornings

as cars sat waiting in the small parking lot on Wirth Lake. But they too found their way. New orienteering maps had to be drawn up, and campers now had to share space with golfers and mountain bikers (and disc golfers, and restaurant-goers, and hikers, and bird watchers). But now we have all found our way.

For each moment of struggle, there have been at least ten moments of fantastic fun and adventure. The smiles have been plentiful and the stories have been, at turns, hilarious, heartwarming, and inspirational. There's something about teaching a kid how to ride a bike -- let alone how to carve a sweet berm on their mountain bike — in the shadow of a building that will welcome them back for their next visit. There's also something about kids walking back from the archery range — another new thing at camp this summer! — with legs so muddy you'd think they'd been dipped in chocolate. The newness keeps us fresh, keeps us silly, keeps us dedicated, and reminds us that a key component to our shared adventure here in Wirth Park is change.



JUNIOR LOPPET TEAMS ARE BACK IN ACTION AT THREE NORTHSIDE SCHOOLS

ALLIE RYKKEN, ANWATIN HEAD COACH

The Junior Loppet teams are going strong this fall. The Anwatin team has been back at practices since early September and has been excited to be a part of the TRAIL KIDS Adventure Running Series. With lots of returning team members and a wave of new 6th graders, they have had over 60 kids come out to practices, averaging about 45 kids each day. When they're not racing, they are busy mountain biking, trail running, capturing flags, or building agility and strength through drills and games. They have been fortunate to partner with Loppet Cycle Works and have guest LCW coaches Guido Palma and Hannah Elde join biking practices. The Anwatin parking lot has also been repaved this past year, and calling for some kids on rollerskis to play on it.

The Franklin team welcomes Greg Klave as head coach this fall. He and Mary Luoma worked with the kids over the summer, and Greg is looking forward to building up a team this year. The core Franklin team has graduated and is off to high school, so Greg will truly get to create his new team. We can't think of a better person for the job, as Greg is Professional Ski Instructors of America certified, one of our lead Loppet Ski Lessons coaches, a Loppet Nordic Racing coach, and has a long history of coaching and passion for sport beyond that.

The Northeast team began its school-year practice on 9/17 with coach Evan Bonneson, with limited practice to returning students until October 7th, in order to build a strong core and train our student leadership. This year is very exciting as they have a record 27 interested new students and counting. Northeast team alums headed off to high school this fall and have joined mountain bike teams, theatre departments, and soccer teams. We are excited to support them throughout their high school journey and welcome them back for adventures whenever they have the time.

Lastly, we couldn't help but notice recently that some of the families coming to the Adventure Running Series have been coming to these races for over five years, because their younger child is currently racing but their older child led the way years ago. At Anwatin alone, over 20 of the 60 kids on the roster are siblings of a current or former Anwatin athlete. And it doesn't end there - younger siblings are asking to sign up for the races, too. One parent, Veeti Tandon, commented on younger sibling Kairav, now in 6th grade, "He's so happy to be doing Loppet. He's literally waited years for this." Well, Kairav, we're happy to have you!



MINNE-LOPPET MEETS WORLD CUP

ALI TOWLE, ASSOCIATE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER

It's fall, and that means we're gearing up for another Minne-Loppet season. And while we're always excited to start the Minne-Loppet program each winter, this will truly be a season like no other: it will culminate with participants engaging in the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival & FIS Cross Country World Cup festivities!

The Minne-Loppet is a free, school-based program which teaches kids the basics of cross-country skiing and good nutrition. We partner with 11 North Minneapolis and Osseo area elementary schools to deliver the 8 week program, which is led by Loppet staff, school staff, and dedicated volunteers. This winter, we expect to engage about 1,000 third, fourth, and fifth graders. More than 85% qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch, and more than 85% are students of color.

Each year, the Minne-Loppet program has culminated in a special "race" during the City of Lakes Loppet Festival, where program participants join kids from across the metro to apply the ski skills they've learned in front of cheering spectators, including family and friends.

Something magical happens when kids complete the Minne-Loppet race and receive their well-deserved finisher

medals and hugs from teachers, family, and friends. It's an accomplishment many didn't realize they were capable of — and it shows on their faces. The profound impact of outdoor adventure on personal growth (which you've likely experienced yourself, if you're reading this newsletter!) is distilled down into one single, poignant moment. We at the Loppet Foundation often say that if you want to know what we're about, come to the Minne-Loppet race.

In March 2020, the magic of the Minne-Loppet will have an international spotlight! On March 17, 2020, the Loppet Foundation plays host to the first FIS World Cup Cross Country Ski World Cup competition in the U.S. since 2001. Through a partnership with the Share Winter Foundation, Minne-Loppet kids will participate in a special race and parade on March 14 and 17, respectively, as part of the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival surrounding the FIS World Cup race.

World Cup athletes (can you say Jessie Diggins?) are sure to inspire, and we can't wait for Minne-Loppet kids to experience the excitement of an international stage and superstar skiers. But, we're equally certain that Minne-Loppet kids will be an inspiration in their own right! We're excited for them to show the world what we're about!



Photo: Reese Brown / U.S. Ski & Snowboard

PREPARING FOR THE WORLD TO GATHER AT THEODORE WIRTH PARK IN MARCH 2020

JOHN BUSSEY, CHIEF OF EVENTS & CORPORATE RELATIONS

If you have somehow not yet heard the amazing news, let me be the first to tell you that Theodore Wirth Park has been selected as the host site for the 2020 FIS Cross Country World Cup Sprint Finals. This is a HUGE deal. There has not been a cross-country skiing World Cup race in the United States since 2001, and not in Minnesota since 1985! The fastest skiers on the planet will be racing on the same snow you ski on everyday outside The Trailhead.

The Minneapolis World Cup will be the capstone of the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival, which will require a massive community effort from all of us associated with the Loppet Foundation this year. And while the World Cup itself will be an absolutely incredible event, the reality is that the [Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival](#) will really be what makes this World Cup event so spectacular. The festival will include live music, craft beer, citizen races, and more.

To make sure that you take advantage of all that there is to do that weekend, I've got three recommendations for you:

First, sign up to participate in the [Fastenal Parallel 45 World Cup Course Tour](#). The event provides skiers with the opportunity to non-competitively ski on the World Cup

course on Sunday, two days prior to the World Cup. It will allow us all to envision ourselves in Jessie Diggins's boots come race day. And even better yet, participants will don their favorite old race bibs for a photo opportunity at the finish line.

Second, you'll want to be sure to take in [Snowball in Hell](#), whether from your skis or on your bike as a competitor, or from the safety of the cheering section. Neither the Fat-Tire BikeCross nor the SkiCross race are for the faint of heart. The big drops, huge jumps, and steep berms will be quite thought provoking — that is they will bring forth thoughts like, "Oh crap...".

Finally, keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) where in the coming months we'll be announcing our musical lineup for the Parallel 45 Music stage. The shows at night on Saturday, throughout the day on Sunday, and before and after the World Cup on Tuesday will feature the best of Minnesota's music scene and will keep you buzzing for weeks.

So mark your calendars, and tell your supervisors you aren't working on March 17, because the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival is going to be epic.

A LOOK AHEAD TO THE CITY OF LAKES LOPPET WINTER FESTIVAL

JOHN BUSSEY, CHIEF OF EVENTS & CORPORATE RELATIONS

The City of Lakes Loppet Winter Festival — the flagship event of the Loppet Foundation's annual calendar — is just around the corner, and there are so many reasons to be looking forward to it.

The Luminary Loppet in 2019 welcomed more participants than ever before to the Lake of the Isles for the most magical night of the year. And this year, the Luminary team headed by Chief Luminarian Jim Young is back and fired up to push their luminary-making limits once again. You can expect the time-tested standard luminaries, but also know that the Luminary team is far from resting on its laurels.

The Skate and Classic Loppets (the marathon distance races that kick off Saturday and Sunday of Loppet Festival weekend) have cemented themselves as must-do events for skiers in the Twin Cities. We are thrilled that the growth we have seen in those races in recent years has been noticed, and for the first time ever, the City of Lakes Skate and Classic

Loppets this year will be points races on the Worldloppet calendar. We do not know who all this new recognition will bring, but we are excited to have the opportunity to show off our city and our great course to the world.

Lastly, what's a Loppet Festival without a new event? Now that we've moved into the Trailhead, we've got more space to explore. This year, that means an added broomball tournament! So get your crew together and start practicing because broomball at The Trailhead is going to be a hoot.



WIRTH ON WEDNESDAYS: AN EXPERIMENT IN MOUNTAIN BIKE FUN

JACKIE BAKER, DATA & REGISTRATION MANAGER

Thanks to the hard work of our Trails & Recreation team, Theodore Wirth Regional Park has become home to over 5 miles of single-track trail, ideally suited to mountain biking and fat-tire biking throughout the year. With the addition of The Trailhead as a base of operations, we decided it was time to embark on an experiment in mountain bike series racing, in the spirit of Buck Hill, and thus Wirth on Wednesdays was born!

Each Wednesday this summer, mountain bike racers of all ages and abilities gathered at The Trailhead to participate in several categories of racing, including Junior, Intermediate, and Advanced. The little ones in the crowd were also invited to participate in the Kids' race, much to the delight of parents and onlookers. Four hundred and fifteen unique participants came out to race over the course of the summer, and many of those racers came back week after week, with an average of 92 racers participating each Wednesday.

The highlight of the series was Retro Night, in which racers

were invited to dress in retro kits or apparel, bring their retro bikes, and ride the courses backwards. Racers embraced the spirit of fun in many ways. Some racers wore spectacular outfits, and some even rode the entire course on vintage beach cruisers! The series was a resounding success, and has now inspired many interesting future Loppet Foundation offerings... But you will have to stay tuned to find out more about those!





RACERS AND VOLUNTEERS MAKE 2019 LOPPET EVENTS A SUCCESS

JOHN BUSSEY, CHIEF OF EVENTS & CORPORATE RELATIONS

The past six months in Loppet Events world has been spectacular. In particular two themes seemed to be particularly consistent...

Tolerance for Adversity and Uncertainty:

In Loppet jargon, Tolerance for Adversity means putting on a smile and leaning into two facts: (1) We cannot know the future and (2) Experiences of value are frequently challenging. It is a value that is deeply held, drilled into the organization through years of facilitating snow-dependent races.

And in looking back on this past couple months there is not much that has defined the events we've thrown more than uncertain and challenging weather. On the May morning of CityTrail the temperature topped out at blustery 42 degrees, the enlivening effect magnified by the pouring rain. The Tri-Loppet happened to fall on arguably the worst weather day of the summer, with an incredibly impressive lightning show throughout the morning and mid-afternoon. Even at the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet forecasts only cleared at the last moment to leave us with the incredible race day we enjoyed.

What is obvious to us Loppet staff is that this value isn't just held by those of us on payroll, it is possibly one of the most defining features of our racers as a collective. You all took advantage of that soaking 42 degree wind at your back to power you all the faster to the CityTrail's Minneapolis Sculpture Garden finish line. At the Tri-Loppet you smiled both as we got drenched at North Beach together and while

we sipped Surly while tearing down the finish area together. And certainly you all seemed to have a blast at the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet.

Thank you for embracing Tolerance for Adversity with us. We'll keep making it happen as long as you show up ready to roll.

Community:

There are a lot of powerfully positive elements of a person's experience at Loppet races. The experience of natural and wild spaces is hugely beneficial, and pushing oneself to perform physically always has positive effects. But there is not much that is more important than the effect of being a part of the Loppet Community.

It's the volunteers who show up race after race and reconnect with one another. It's the Loppet regulars who bring new friends to join them on the trails. And it's racers who relax after their races, sharing their stories of their runs or rides with those around them.

There is no better example of this than the past summer's Wirth on Wednesday. That summer-long mountain bike series established The Trailhead as a hub for biking far beyond what it has been in the past. But more importantly it took individuals who have enjoyed Minneapolis's trails alone and gave them a reason to sit on The Trailhead patio together.

Thanks for helping to create such a warm and welcoming community.



Photo: f/go, f-go.us

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LOPPET VOLUNTEER

LE VANG, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

What does it mean to volunteer? Quite literally it means "to perform or offer to perform a service of one's own free will". But when I look at our Loppet Foundation volunteers, it seems to be so much more than just that. When our volunteers come together to help one another, it is a choice each of them actively makes to do good and be good.

During each and every Loppet event, I have the opportunity to work with great people. Even when things are tough and the weather is rough, there are great people that support us through the most challenging of times. These volunteers who assist with our events are the reason we can continue to spread so much joy each year. Truly, our volunteers are our number one asset! From those who have been with us since day one to those who signed up for their first time volunteering this fall, we always find great people to help out year after year. We put out the call for volunteers and you all continue to show up.

It's amazing how so many of you are willing to help with whatever we ask and are flexible when plans change. I remember recently asking this one volunteer at the Surly Brewing Co. Trail Loppet to switch tasks, and when another Volunteer Lead asked for the same later in the day from this volunteer they did not hesitate to again take on a new assignment. At the end of the event, that volunteer was still there putting in the same great effort. Knowing we are lucky enough to have volunteers like this warms my heart.

Simply put, I personally believe the allure of volunteering is the act of serving; the instinct to help others is remarkably natural. It reminds me of this summer when I was on a supply run for an upcoming event. I had stopped for gas when I noticed a person filling up their tires. I heard the tire hissing and saw it was not filling up. I was perplexed and watched as the man seemed not to notice the issue. I asked the man if he needed help but didn't get a response. However, as I walked away from the man he tapped me

on the shoulder signaling to me, and I quickly realized that he was hearing impaired. I used what little sign language I knew to offer my help. Together we filled the tire and then he signed "thank you" before leaving on his way with a smile. By helping someone else, I felt the reward of being able to offer my assistance. I continued my day, but I kept thinking about how each of us can have such a strong impact on those around us if we just offer our help.

Like that smile the man gave me, I believe that the smiles of our Loppet volunteers are so contagious and that they have the power to electrify hearts and minds of those around them. When we plan Loppet events, we know that our volunteers will put their best foot forward each and every time. Our success is a reflection of the volunteers that continue to support our events, and we adore and love all of our volunteers.

So we hope that given the choice this year, every one of you will take the opportunity to give the gift of helping one another. And to all our past, present, and future Loppet volunteers, thank you for all you do.

.....

Join the adventure!

BECOME A

**LOPPET FOUNDATION
MEMBER**

TODAY!





Photo: David Pierini / North News

WORLD CHAMPION ABDI BILE TO LEAD LOPPET RUN 365

HEIDI LEDERMANN, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

The Loppet Foundation unveiled its brand new running program, Loppet Run 365 on September 25th at the Brian Coyle Center in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis, with the help of two-time Olympian, World Champion, and current record-holder of six Somali national running titles, Abdi Bile. Abdi was recently named the Loppet's Running Director and head of the newly-created program.

The running program's name and logo was unveiled at a Press Conference that featured speeches from multiple influential individuals, including Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. Abdi also spoke about the future of the program. "Sport has the ability to bring people together, build bridges, and unite communities," said Abdi. As a Somali native, Abdi is excited to be in the Twin Cities which has such a rich Somali community. He said that he especially looks forward to including children of that community in the Loppet 365 programming.

Along with an incredibly successful running career, Abdi has made a name for himself over the years as a highly knowledgeable running coach. His distinguished career includes coaching as the National Head Coach of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, the Senior Endurance Coach as Aspire Academy, and the

Junior National Team Coach of Qatar. Bile was also the Co-Founder and Head Coach of the Savannah International Training Center in the United States, sponsored by the International Olympic Solidarity Program.

Abdi has made it his personal mission to mentor and inspire youth to enjoy sports and a variety of outdoor activities, aligning well with the Loppet Foundation's mission to create a shared passion for year-round outdoor adventure in the Minneapolis area. This new program is aimed at all ages and skill levels will add to the Loppet Foundation's other well-established, year-round outdoor sports programs: Loppet Cycle Works and Loppet Nordic Racing.



Photo: David Pierini / North News



LOPPET NORDIC RACING CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

CHRIS HARVEY, LOPPET NORDIC RACING HEAD COACH

Loppet Nordic Racing has two programs for middle school and high school aged skiers, the Development Team (Devo) is for ages 13-16 and the Competition Team (Comp) ages 16-19. Between the two teams, we saw around 100 skiers participating in Loppet summer training programs or camps. Summer is a time to develop a broad base of aerobic fitness in a variety of endurance sport activities. We find the best way to do this is with out of town training camps where we can unplug from daily life and take young adults to the best locations that offer the best in trails and recreation like Grand Marais, MN and Ironwood, MI.

One of the highlights is the Comp Team's annual summer altitude training camp. This year we took 25 skiers to Frisco, Colorado for a 10 day altitude training camp. We had great training partners and hosts in Summit Nordic Ski Club. Between mountain hikes, rollerskiing on the amazing recreation paths of Summit County, and strength training at the local rec center, most skiers logged 35 hours of training.

Looking ahead to winter, the Adult LNR programs are posted online and accepting registrations. We are excited to offer a variety of adult training programs to get skiers ready for their skiing goals – whether that is making the elite wave in the Birkie or finishing your first ski marathon, our training programs offer something for everyone looking to improve their skills, racing times, and health.





Photo: TMB Images

TRAIL KIDS HAS (ANOTHER) BANNER YEAR

KIM RUDD, LOPPET TRAIL KIDS HEAD COACH

If you have been anywhere near The Trailhead building this past spring, summer, or fall, you may have witnessed hundreds of high energy youth sporting their bright orange TRAIL KIDS shirts riding with their teams on the surrounding single track trails of Wirth Park. This past season, the TRAIL KIDS program experienced an increase in both girls and boys participation in the mountain bike programs bringing a total of three hundred and seventy-five youth participants in the evening TRAIL KIDS mountain bike programs that met at Wirth, Elm Creek, and Lebanon. There were also many participants in the newly-added Wirth half-day summer mountain bike camps.

This year's fall program had two hundred and forty TRAIL KIDS participate in one of our mountain bike and run/orienteering sessions. The fall session included adventure running races where kids ages 7-13 jumped hay bales and ran single track trails around The Trailhead. During the last few races, TRAIL KIDS were excited to warm up on the race course with Olympian Abdi Bile (the new Loppet Run 365 Director). The final event of the fall was the [Loppet Games](#), held Saturday, October 26 at The Trailhead.

Below are the Top Ten highlights of the spring, summer and fall TRAIL KIDS Programs:

1. This past spring alone TRAIL KIDS Mountain Bike Programs served one hundred and seventy youth, **with fifty of them participating in our new Girls Rock Program.**
2. TRAIL KIDS became famous on CCX News: [Watch the clip here.](#)
3. **Mountain bike orienteering, bike biathlon, and bike treasure hunt** were all tested and enjoyed by one hundred TRAIL KIDS this past summer at the [half day mountain bike TRAIL KIDS camps.](#)
4. Around fifty youth and adults participated in the annual [July Hayward Bike Camp](#) and enjoyed single

track riding, swimming, and spending time with friends.

5. This past July one hundred and twenty TRAIL KIDS and adults participated in the annual [Age Gap Mountain Bike Relay Race and Grill out celebration.](#)
6. One hundred TRAIL KIDS ran in the [Adventure Trail Running Race Series](#) this past fall including Olympian Abdi Bile.
7. TRAIL KIDS and parents participated in the [annual Loppet Age Gap Relay race.](#)
8. This fall, TRAIL KIDS learned the [sport of orienteering](#) by finding controls hidden along the many trails of Wirth Park.
9. Special Guest Shaums March (two time Downhill masters World Champion, former Red Bull athlete, and technical skills coach for the USA) made a visit to the TRAIL KIDS July camp and demonstrated a mountain bike high jump.



Photo: TMB Images



A SUMMER TO REMEMBER AT THE TRAILHEAD

BEN BAUCH, TRAILHEAD MANAGER & ADVENTURES COACH

The Trailhead's doors opened to the public in July 2018, and our first year has been nothing short of an adventure. But that's how we do it at The Loppet. The Trailhead's first trip around the sun landed us back in the fun of summer adventures, only this time with more programming, trails, and events than our warm seasons of old.

Summer weekdays around The Trailhead, after the deer and dawn trail runners fled into the woods, were anchored with the day-long activities of our Adventure campers. After years of operating at the Wirth Lake boat launch, we were psyched for Summer Adventure Camp to reside in and around The Trailhead this year. Additionally, summer brought back our community of Par 3 and Disc golfers, now at home in our new space.

Summer draws visitors to spend most of their time exploring what's outside the building, but this season also saw a bolstered events calendar in The Trailhead's Great Room. We hosted events such as fundraisers, teacher trainings, weddings, and a celebration of life. And we also screened every game of Women's World Cup Soccer for the public, culminating in a full house for the United States' championship match.

Evenings, which offered daylight past closing time, hosted countless hikers, runners, and bikers of all sorts, and

were punctuated with regular live music and beer on the patio. This summer also brought on our inaugural weekly mountain bike race series, Wirth on Wednesdays, which quickly became a staple for our riding community.

We thrive on adventure and leaping into the unknown at The Loppet, and that's no different for our work at The Trailhead. We are continuing to learn how this space best meets the desires of our program and event participants, general park users and our neighboring communities. We are far from having it all figured out, but we're getting there and beyond psyched to roll into our second winter in The Trailhead.





NEW VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS AT THE TRAILHEAD

ISAAC KASPER, TRAILS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

As the weather turns cool and our focus shifts to winter activities outdoors, The Trailhead indoor space is also making a transition. Our food service vendor and our bike/ski service vendor partnerships are both transitioning to new groups. We learned a lot over the past year about our unique space and our needs, and this learning has shaped the direction we are currently heading. We are excited and eager for the new relationships which are forming and the new team that is being built at The Trailhead.

After going through a formal RFP process we have found a new bike and ski shop partner, Boulder Nordic Sport. BNS is planning a robust retail presence at The Trailhead where they will sell bikes, skis, and associated gear. Along with retail, they will also provide rentals of both classic and skate skis, snowshoes, snowboards, and bikes. We are excited to have BNS on board because we are confident that their model will be able to optimize our unique space and provide a new level of outdoor gear expertise for park patrons. Just imagine a full service ski and bike shop right on the trail!

We are also in the midst of an RFP process to partner with a

new food and beverage vendor. We have had conversations with many local food vendors and restaurants, and we are excited about the prospects!

We also want to wish the very best to our outgoing vendors! Both Velofix and Cajun Twist were great partners with dedicated customers and growing brands. We are confident they will do great business in their new spaces! Our outgoing bike and ski service vendor Velofix is a mobile bicycle repair company, so their services will not change based on their new office location. Our outgoing food vendor Cajun Twist will be opening their own independent restaurant in South Minneapolis, so feel free to ask us for more details about their exact location and where you will be able to find their delicious Cajun dishes!

We are excited for you to come out to The Trailhead, pick up your season ski pass, grab some food, and check out the new shop space! And as always, we look forward to seeing you on the trails!



TRAILS UPDATE: 6 MILES OF AWESOME SINGLETRACK NOW OPEN!

ROBERT IBLER, TRAILS AND OPERATIONS MANAGER

As we head into fall, it's a good time to remark on another notable summer season for the Loppet's trail system. Loppet Trails Crew and numerous helpful volunteers worked hard to open the Loppet's newest mountain bike and multi use singletrack trail, the 45 North trail. 45 North is an intermediate level trail that winds a mile and a half through the woods north of Basset's Creek. In conjunction with the Area 36 and Conundrum trails, the Loppet Foundation now manages around 6 miles of singletrack trails in Theodore Wirth Park.

The Loppet Trails Crew started building the 45 North trail last year, and finished it this June, marking the first time that the Loppet Foundation built a trail system without the help of outside trail builders. However that is not to diminish the extensive volunteer sessions that greatly contributed to our ability to undertake such an ambitious project. In fact, this year marked the start of a weekly Tuesday night volunteer work session that was open to the public. The Loppet also organized volunteer groups from Surly Bikes, REI, Jamf, and One on One Bike Studio that brought eager helpers together to help get the trail open as soon as possible.

This summer also marked the opening of the Mountain Bike Skills Area. This practice area is located directly behind The Trailhead building and has beginning, intermediate, and advanced lines for riders of all skill levels. It is a great place to be introduced to mountain biking, or for more

experienced riders, to hone their skills. This summer the Skills Area was used extensively by members of the public, as well as Loppet Adventure Camp, TRAIL KIDS, Loppet Cycle Works, and numerous other Loppet programs.

It was also a season of improvement for the Loppet's existing trails, Area 36 and Conundrum. We were able to keep the trails in great shape all while putting on inaugural season of Wirth on Wednesdays mountain bike race series, as well as holding a Minnesota Series mountain bike race in June. However, the Trails Crew and volunteers had their work cut out for them in dealing with keeping the trails open during one of the wettest summers in history, as well as being able to keep the trails mowed and trimmed to give riders a great experience.

This fall, the Trails Crew embarked on reconstruction of Area 36's "Tube Trail," our expert level spur trail with jumps and drops. This ongoing construction will provide a much needed area to facilitate advanced-level coaching, and will provide a great spectator viewing experience for people enjoying The Trailhead back patio.

We are excited about all the great mountain biking here in Theodore Wirth Park, and we are excited that so many of you feel the same way! We hope to see you out on the trails as we continue to build and improve.



AN LNR HEADBAND AND THE GREATER LOPPET COMMUNITY

MINDY BENTON, BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER

Many of the things we wear these days are covered with some type of logo, from a swoosh to a polo pony, or letters and phrases. In fact, all of the Loppet Nordic Racing ski gear is branded with the big LNR symbol. And although most of our clothes have some sort of logo, I never gave any thought to the impact of the logos I wear until last winter.

Usually when I put on my LNR headband, I'm headed to Theodore Wirth Park — just a mile from my home and home to the Loppet Foundation. There, I grind out intervals at 6:30 am in the frigid winter mornings with the LNR LEMONS (Loppet Elite Masters On Nordic Skis) group and watch as skiers from the LNR Juniors and the LNR YAMS (Young Adult Master Skiers) groups ski by in similar garb. I also wear my LNR hat while teaching lessons to my Groovy Glider Girls TRAIL KIDS group at Hyland Park — a popular trail system where many Loppet programs take place. I was even wearing my LNR headband in the local Minneapolis grocery store when the clerk mentioned randomly, "I love the Loppet Foundation". But when people make comments in these communities which the Loppet Foundation so heavily impacts, I am not surprised. In fact, I expect them to recognize the logo. In Minneapolis, LNR and the Loppet Foundation symbols are more than just logos, they represent

a sense of purpose and place for me and many others.

But the sense of place that the LNR and Loppet Foundation logos can bring is even stronger when seen in unexpected places around the world.

In March 2019 I had the opportunity to travel to Switzerland to race the Engadin Nordic Skate Marathon, one of the World Loppet ski marathons. Myself and a group of other Minnesotans traveled with Garrott Kuzzy, a Golden Valley native and former Olympian, who now owns Lumi Experiences which organizes trips to European ski events.

While previewing the famed "Mattress Hill" two days before the Swiss race, I bumped into long-time City of Lakes Loppet volunteers Rick and Diane Budde who recognized my LNR headband. It made me think about how even though we were on the other side of the world, we were still able to find people who we could connect with and share common stories with.

Then on the morning of the race, I again donned my LNR headband. There were plenty of people in the crowds — 13,000 participants to be exact — so imagine my surprise

when I spotted another LNR hat boarding my bus to the start! Enter Patty Carlen with a smile — and an LNR headband! I had met Patty on the Wirth trails earlier in the winter, but had no idea that she was also traveling to Europe. The chances of us both getting on the same bus in a crowd of thousands of skiers in Switzerland had to have been miniscule at best, but I am glad we did. Seeing Patty's matching headband gave me a sudden sense of home and reminded me of all the countless hours of training I put in with my teammates from The Loppet Foundation, giving me the extra surge of excitement I needed on race morning. I hope that seeing my LNR headband did the same for Patty.

There is some type of implicit endorsement of a company or group, when you wear their apparel with their emblazoned logo. Most people wouldn't walk around promoting something that they don't believe in. Personally, I have had a lot of fun wearing a smile and my LNR headband around the neighborhood and around the world. While many people know what LNR stands for, an equal number of people don't know. And that's great too because I love it when they ask me. LNR is just one part of the Loppet Foundation, which provides an amazing home base for many people interested in some type of outdoor activity. I am proud to represent the Loppet Foundation and its

mission to create a shared passion for year-round outdoor adventure in the Minneapolis area, focusing on underserved youth and families. So now every time I place that logo on my head, or my thigh or chest, I think about the impact that doing so can have on those around me.

Quite a few other Loppet athletes had the good fortune to travel around the world this past winter, and they all chose to wear their Loppet Ski Gear too. Dan DeRoma wore his awe-inspiring bright pink and yellow YAMS uniform when he also raced in the Engadin. My LEMONS teammate Tom Ajax wore his LNR uniform while racing the German World Loppet race in 2019, the Dolomitenlauf. Matthew Egger, an 18-year-old graduate of Edina High School and LNR Juniors racer, earned a Wave 1 spot for the Norwegian Birkenbeinnerrennet race, based on his blistering fast time from the American Birkebeiner. His mother, Dr. Lisa Hollensteiner, who is a regular member of the Wednesday morning Loppet Ladies lessons, also completed the Norwegian classic race.

So whether it is skiing around Theodore Wirth Park or cheering on Birkie racers the Main Street of Hayward or competing across the ocean, will you make the choice to don your Loppet gear? We hope so! And we hope you come back to tell us the stories of the impact you left.

MARCH 14-17, 2020
**COME SEE THE BEST SKIERS IN
THE WORLD AT WIRTH PARK**



SAVE THE DATE!

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 5
PRE-LOPPET

.....

JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 2
CITY OF LAKES WINTER FESTIVAL

.....

FEBRUARY 1
LUMINARY LOppet

.....

FEBRUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 29
24 HOURS OF WIRTH: WINTER

.....

MARCH 1
LOppet WINTER TRIATHLON

.....

MARCH 14 - MARCH 17
FASTENAL PARALLEL 45 WINTER FESTIVAL

.....

MARCH 17
COOP FIS CROSS COUNTRY WORLD CUP



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