

SPOKANE NORDIC NEWS

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New Groomer for Mt. Spokane

by George M. Momany

On February 11, the Winter Recreation Advisory Committee (WRAC) approved Mt. Spokane State Park to receive a new trail groomer, the culmination of a six-year process.

Unlike the current groomer, the new, larger machine will not have to operate at the high end of its capacity, will be able to more easily handle steep hills, and will grind the often-icy surfaces we encounter on the mountain. With fewer breakdowns, we will have more skiing days and lower maintenance costs. With the wider tiller, many of our trails can be groomed in one pass, allowing more trails to be groomed each day. The 300 hp groomer has a 14 ft tiller, 3 track setters, and front rejuvenator (ice breaker).

Many may wonder how this groomer, with a cost approaching \$300,000, can be afforded when Washington State and the Parks are reducing staff and in fiscal distress. The answer is that trail grooming and parking lot clearing are independently funded by the \$80 Sno-Park pass.

Trail widening at the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park will take place this summer on both State Park and Inland Paper Company land. Spokane Nordic has volunteered to survey this

expansion, and all requirements to proceed have been met (no small feat). Spokane Nordic will contribute substantial funds and time to this effort to improve our trails.

The groomer came about through the work of many people over the years. Steve Christensen and Chad Sellers have made several trips and spent time investigating options. Tond Liaboe and Mike Burns showed SNSEF support at an Autumn WRAC meeting when our choice of the larger groomer was



being challenged, and Tim Ray solicited hundreds of supportive comments forwarded to the committee. Lew Persons deserves credit for making the program monetarily sound, so now we have the funds for this purchase.

When people ask about the benefits of being a Spokane Nordic member, the new groomer is one powerful example.

- George is the current NE Washington representative to the WRAC. He promoted the new groomer up to a true budget item with the WRAC two years ago.

Skate Skiing: A Brief History

by Matt Halloran

Over the last ten years, I have received a lot of requests for skate lessons. These requests are usually followed by an exclamation of how fast skate skiers are going and how much fun it looks. When done properly, skate skiing is generally faster than classic skiing and has the look of speed skating mixed with poles, which makes it look exciting. It also doesn't require daily waxing.

Skate skiing has done a good job increasing

the participation base of our sport around the world and surprisingly, skate skiing as we know it today has its roots right here in the USA.

A little back-story: The "marathon skate" is a technique that utilizes one ski in the diagonal stride track and one ski working in a skate like motion out to the side while the upper body is double poling. This technique was born out of necessity. The name "marathon skate" comes from its use during long loppets

(continued on back page)



You Don't Know What You Got ...

by John McCarthy

Having spent my formative years in the 70's, I developed an affinity for the music of those years and one of the more mellow songs of that time that I came to appreciate was Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi." The refrain is "You don't know what you've got till it's gone / They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." The song helps me to be mindful of what we have, and when I think about this from a Spokane Nordic perspective, I realize that we have a lot that I take for granted. It would behoove all of us to be appreciative of what we do have as a Nordic community.

Things we can all appreciate as we enjoy our days skiing include: a robust crew of park officials who work during the dark to create well groomed trails, plow the roads and parking area, give an enthusiastic report on the ski conditions, maintain the trails and keep the fallen trees cleared. These guys have done a great service for all of us and we should be grateful for their presence on the mountain. As outlined in another article in this newsletter, the State Park system is under stress. If you have appreciated their work to make your skiing experience a more positive one, consider letting them know.

Can we agree that Linder Ridge, Paper Trail, and Inland Paper's donation of their land for our use is of huge benefit for us? The use of Linder Ridge as a ski route has been markedly appreciated as a gentle slope with wonderful views. This "gift" of passage on this trail as well as others owned by Inland Paper is something we should all be mindful of and consider ways that we can express our gratitude for the use of this terrain.

How about Nordic Kids/Transition Team/Racing Team? Important? Absolutely! As we live in our increasingly "connected" world and are wired in to phones, pads, and video games, shouldn't we be appreciative of the opportunity to get our youth outside in the winter, getting great exercise, enjoying rather than shying away from the snow? If it was gone, would these 160 kids be given opportunities to have these same experiences, would a subset continue on to the Nordic Racing team, would they gain the self-confidence and sense of camaraderie? Do we owe these volunteer organizers and coaches our gratitude whether or not we have kids engaged? I contend they are adding to the community in ways which are very important for our future.

What about Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation? Is that worth being mindful of? I think of the folks who stock the lodge with wood, get out on the smaller snow machines when the big groomer is down, plan new

The only parking lot I hope to see is the one cleared by our diligent State Parks crew.

trails, create Langlauf, the Selkirk Series, and the Junior National Qualifier races, work with the Parks department to get the best groomer for our trails, educate our community about the joys of making friends with winter and snow.

They are great people doing great things for advancement of our community.

When I am out skiing, I am grateful for the opportunity to be mindful. There is much more to appreciate about what we have here on the mountain. As I enjoy the view from Twin Lakes, I am aware that at any point someone can "pave paradise" and it is good to be aware that we currently have a paradise of sorts on this mountain. The only parking lot I hope to see is the one cleared by our diligent State Parks crew.

- John is the new President of the Spokane Nordic Board



Caught in the Act

> members share their skiing lives

Brad Thiessen

>First Nordic Experience:

"When I was a kid in Edmonton, Alberta, my whole family took cross-country ski lessons, and my brothers and I would ski our 60 acres of flat, open land with a creek winding through it. After my teens it would be 25+ years before I'd ski again."

>Gear:

Skis (classic) - Fischer Superlight Crown; Poles - Karhu Glide Widetrak; Boots - Salomon Escape 6 Pilot (from ski swap)

>Favorite Trail:

Quartz Mtn-Buckland-Mica Road

>Most Memorable Nordic Moment:

"Showing up at Mt. Spokane in mid-December this year with a brand-new pair of skis, seeing a lodge that was a lot more substantial than I'd expected, and then feeling like a giraffe in figure skates for the first half hour on the trails."

>Little Known Fact:

Brad came on board as Spokane Nordic's Membership Coordinator in fall 2011.



ON THE HILL

Gals Get Going

This season, the Gals Get Going program got 29 women out to ski together and raised money for Spokane Nordic. These women in the purple hats built friendships and sharpened ski skills thanks to coaches Lisa Sunderman, Lael Hinds, Alison Wiener, and Eric Ginn. We had an amazing day for our individual skate sessions as you can see by Kjersten, Lisa, Natasha, Kate, Heidi, Barbara, and Jayne's smiles! Great fun was had by the whole team and more is planned!

- Lisa Sunderman,
Spokane Nordic
Board member



Langlauf

The Langlauf race was a success again this year. The day started with "liquid sunshine" in the form of fog and low clouds. A hint of real sunshine tempted the 248 racers, only to disappear behind the clouds after the start. The grooming was superb thanks to two inches of new snow, and Kenny (State Parks Groomer) waiting till 3:00 am before grooming the course. As usual, waxing was an issue, with the overall winner Brad Bauer (27:33.8) deciding to go with a pair of zero's. Full results for all the Langlaufs back to 2006 can be found at milliseconds.com/timers/home/1; type 'Langlauf' in the search box.



The event would be impossible to put on without our wonderful volunteers, several of whom helped set up on Saturday and then raced on Sunday. Of the fifty volunteers, close to half were from Spokane Nordic.

Next year will be our 35th, and planning will start soon. Who knows—thanks to the new grooming machine, we may have a new course. If you would like to volunteer to be a part of the longest-running cross country ski event

in the Northwest, sends us an e-mail at skixc@hotmail.com. You can also 'like' us on Facebook.

Most of all, make sure to patronize our great sponsors. You can find them at spokanelanglauf.org/sponsors.htm.

- Tim Ray, Langlauf organizer

Group Health Challenge

The weekend of February 19th Spokane Nordic hosted the Group Health Challenge, its fourth Junior Nationals Qualifier. Over 160 participants from Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Washington competed. Over the years, this race has repeatedly shown how this community can rally to put on a great event for the racing community of the Northwest.

The week-end's snowfall, which was unusually heavy, made for a little trickier and slower skiing conditions. As Coach Matt Halloran likes to remind his crew, the weather is part of the skiing experience and one needs to be prepared for anything.

After an unusual year last year with no Spokane representation at the Junior Nationals, Ian McCarthy will be our local representative to the competition this year, competing in the J2 (14-15 year old) division. Overall, Spokane had a great showing with 47 local racers attending, and a number spent time on the podium in both the classic and freestyle races. - John McCarthy

Souper Bowl

The sun was shining and the snow sparkled for the 278 women that came out for the 7th Annual Souperbowl Snowshoe and Cross Country Ski Sunday. \$12,766 was donated to the Women' and Children's Free Restaurant. Souper Bowl organizers want to thank sponsors Sterling Savings, Fitness Fanatics, REI, Mountain Gear, and Atlas Snowshoes. We also send a big thanks to our State Park staff, the Mt. Spokane Ski Patrol and Spokane Nordic for partnering with us for this event. The Souperbowl continues to run smoothly because of many Spokane Nordic volunteers that help us in so many ways! - Karen Cross Momany, Souper Bowl organizer



SPOKANE NORDIC SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Membership Form

Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation **teaches** all ages how to Nordic (cross-country) ski, **develops and maintains** the Mt. Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park (in cooperation with Mt. Spokane State Park, Inland Paper and other agencies), **hosts** ski competitions and events, and **informs** the community about cross-country ski developments. *SNSEF is member-funded.* Consider becoming a member at www.spokanenordic.org or mail this form with your donation to the address below.

Yes! I want to become a member of the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation.

** Membership runs October - September*

Member: \$30 (include payment as directed below)
 Premium Member: \$50
 Bronze Member: \$100
 Silver Member: \$250
 Gold Member: \$500
 Lifetime Member: \$1,000

Name: _____ Additional family members: _____ Age (children) _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

I want to allocate my support to the following:

New Trails and Grooming Fund: Help fund trail maintenance and upkeep of the grooming machine. Trail expansion is in the works! \$ _____
 Nordic Kids: Your support gives children and their parents the opportunity to learn, develop and enjoy cross-country skiing skill together. Parents and other adult volunteers lead groups of kids in fun activities designed to teach the fundamentals of skiing. \$ _____
 Racing Team: Support the Nordic racing team at Mt. Spokane. SNSEF hosts Junior Nationals trials for aspiring racers throughout the region. \$ _____
 Susie McDonald Fund Student Scholarship: Help provide ski lessons and equipment for families who need a little financial assistance. \$ _____

Date: _____ Total SNSEF Contribution \$ _____

In signing and submitting this form, I recognize that cross-country skiing involves strenuous activities, is potentially hazardous, and involves inherent risk. I knowingly and voluntarily assume all responsibility and risk for my actions and my family's actions while cross-country skiing, during travel related to Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation (SNSEF) activities or during use of SNSEF facilities and equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, falls collisions, effects of weather, conditions of equipment and trails and other areas while skiing or participating in SNSEF activities. I hereby for myself, my heir, administrators, or anyone else who may bring claims on my or my family members' behalf, covenant not to sue, release and discharge the SNSEF, its Board and Committee members, and all related organizations or individuals, for any and all claims of liability for death, personal injury, or property damage arising from my or my family members' participation in SNSEF activities.

Member Signature

Date Signed

Make check(s) out to SNSEF and mail your tax-deductible membership contribution with this form to: SNSEF, PO Box 501, Spokane, WA, 99210.

*SNSEF is a non-profit, 501(C)(3) organization
Learn more about our programs online at www.spokaneNordic.org.
Email questions about membership to info@spokaneNordic.org



Spokane Nordic
Ski Education Foundation

Parks Changes and a Call to Action

by Brad Thiessen

The well-publicized cuts to State Park funding have fallen into place. Park Ranger Steve Christensen reports that staffing has been decreased by forty per cent, and one of three ranger positions has been eliminated.

Christensen says, “These changes mean that the public will have to take more of the reins.” While Parks staff will continue to run and maintain the groomer, it will be up to public to create a mechanism to handle skiers’ feedback on the Mt. Spokane trails and facilities and determine grooming priorities.

Christensen suggests creation of an Area Trails Council made up of Spokane Nordic and representatives from the snowshoeing and skijoring communities. Holly Weiler is a new representative for snowshoeing and has set up a Facebook group “Snowshoeing Mt. Spokane.”

At the same time, Citizens for Parks and Recreation, based in Olympia WA, reports that “State Park funding has shrunk over eighty percent in just three years. Even with

the creation of the opt-out system and the Discover Pass, the State Parks budget is way too low to be able to sustain the state park system. It is not realistic to expect the state park system to survive without general fund support.”

Citizens for Parks and Recreation is asking all of us to call our legislators now regarding state parks funding. Legislators will be meeting most every day until the regular session adjourns on Thursday, March 8th, with the possible exception of Sunday, February 26th and Saturday, February 25th). Any day anyone wants to go to Olympia and help make the case, contact Jim and he’ll help organize a visit and meetings with your local legislators.

A state parks rescue plan has been created by Citizens for Parks and Recreation, and is posted at spokanenordic.org. Also posted is an outline of how to contact the toll-free legislative hotline. You can also contact James L. King at (360)480-0038.

Transition Team

Building confidence, enjoyment and fitness by Jud Ford

It’s 9:30 a.m. on Mt Spokane. Skiers are crowding around waxing benches to get ready for the day. Questions fly: “Skate or classic?” “What are we waxing?” “What’s the snow temp?” “Where are we meeting?” With a group of over fifteen transition team skiers this year, there is quite a bit of chaos involved in getting out of the lodge and onto the snow. But once they get going there is nothing more exciting than seeing them move down the trail with remarkable skill.

The transition team is made up of skiers aged eight to thirteen who have been in Nordic Kids for a number of years and are ready for more of a challenge. Perhaps you’ve seen them out on Saturday and Sunday mornings flying around the trails, playing games and working on fundamental skiing skills. Or maybe you witnessed the amazing nerf biathlon. Many of these skiers also stick around during Nordic Kids to help with skate skiing lessons, or just ski along with a younger group. No matter where they go they are visible in the Spokane Nordic black jackets with gold lettering.

Many of these young skiers have also traveled to such

faraway places as Schweitzer Mountain and 49° North—not to mention Leavenworth and Yellowstone—to participate in races and events. And of course, most skied in Langlauf and at our own Group Health Challenge Junior National Qualifier.

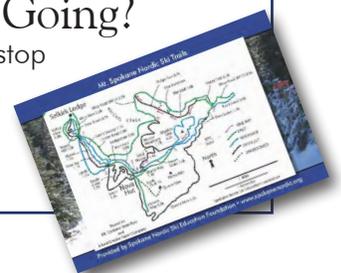
The program is not all about speed and racing. The main goals are to keep kids skiing and developing their confidence on the snow. By skiing with friends, playing games, exploring the mountain and traveling to events where skiing is happening, we hope that these transition team skiers will be the future of our sport!

- Jud coaches the Spokane Nordic Transition Team



Know Where You're Going?

Before you head onto the trails, stop by the Selkirk Lodge for a pocket-sized trail map, courtesy of Spokane Nordic!





S.N.S.E.F.
 P.O.Box 501
 Spokane, WA 99210

Spokane Nordic
 Ski Education Foundation

Skate Skiing *(continued from page 1)*

when a skier's wax no longer worked but they still had to complete the race. The marathon skate not only allowed them complete the race, it turns out that on flat terrain and moderate uphill, it was faster than the diagonal stride.

Fast-forward to the early 1980s, and the era of the American skier Bill Koch (if you do not know who he is, please google him). Koch went to Scandinavia to participate in the long (50-100 km) marathon races that are a tradition there. Koch observed the marathon skate that was utilized in the last half of the races and how effective it was. When he returned to the US he began to practice and refine it. In 1982 Koch used the marathon skate on the world cup circuit in shorter races. This proved very effective and Koch used it to win the overall world cup—the first, and last time an American has done so.

The rest of the world took note and began to utilize a mix of marathon skating and classic striding in all races. By 1984, skiers were starting to not even put kick wax on their skis. This was the beginning of skate skiing as we know it today. The governing body of skiing didn't think that skating was good for the sport and took measures to ban

it. This included making berms of snow next to the track and disqualifying skiers who used the technique. Neither of these tactics worked, and people kept skating.

In 1985, racing was divided into two categories: "freestyle," which allowed skating, and "classic," which did not. We have been on that path ever since. Only today, "freestyle," which meant a skier could use whatever technique they thought was faster, has been replaced by "skate."

Over the last twenty years, skate technique has evolved and will continue to do so as equipment and grooming gets better, but please don't forget about classic skiing. It is fast and fun too!

- Matt coaches the Spokane Nordic Racing Team

Surprisingly, skate skiing
 as we know it today has its
 roots right here in the USA.



Spokane Nordic
 Ski Education Foundation

The Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation is your very own non-profit group that works with the Mt. Spokane State Park on trail grooming, sponsors Spokane Nordic Kids and the Mt. Spokane Nordic Racing Team, makes facilities improvements and keeps an eye on the future of the Mount Spokane Cross-Country Ski Park.