



Snow Dance

A Quarterly Newsletter
of the Maine Winter
Sports Center

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THE MAINE WINTER SPORTS CENTER OPENS AT PINELAND

The Maine Winter Sports Center was established in 1999 with a grant from the Libra Foundation and a mission to re-establish skiing as a lifestyle in Maine. Since that time we have worked with the communities of Aroostook County to develop more than a dozen community trail systems and offered programs in 24 communities that have thousands of children and adults on skis regularly throughout the winter. We've built two world-class nordic skiing facilities, which have already secured World Cup and World Championship competitions. These major international events, along with 10 premier biathlon and cross country events already held at our facilities in the past three years, are bringing athletes and spectators from around North America and the world to the County and creating a new economic model for Northern Maine.

Based on our success in Aroostook County, the Libra Foundation asked that we develop a model of what the Maine Winter Sports Center's community programming would look like in Southern Maine and to use Pineland Farms, a truly ideal setting in New Gloucester, as the base for these operations.

A former mental institution from 1908 until 1996 when it was closed by the State, Pineland Farms was bought by the Libra Foundation in 2000. The intent was to take what was once a beautiful campus on 2000 acres in rural southern Maine and bring it back to be an economic, cultural and educational asset for the region. They have certainly done that. In addition to a complete restoration of the campus to one which would rival any in the Ivy league, there is a world class riding facility that focuses on adaptive programs, an impressive YMCA, a working farm and a John Morton designed trail system that takes full advantage of big rolling hills and the beautiful Royal River Valley. The most striking feature however, is the dominating presence of Mount Washington in the distance.

To support the operations of the year round use of the trails, Todd Jepson, Executive Director at Pineland Farms brought Matt Sabasteanski to the team. Matt played a leading role in the construction of the Soldier Hollow Olympic venue in Salt Lake and was the Chief of Stadium for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Matt brings a level of expertise in all aspects of venue and trail development, as well as, grooming that has already made Pineland Farms one of the premier recreational cross country skiing facilities in the East.

Continued on page 3...

SKI TOURING IN THE GASPESIE PARK

In the center of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula you will find a veritable sea of mountain peaks with many over 1000 meters. The distance of these peaks to the ocean give it a varied and unusual winter climate. In the center of these unique mountains you will find Parc national de la Gaspésie. The park

spread out along the vast network of trails. Skiers must remember that it is mountain touring and if you approach the snowfields you need to be aware of avalanches. The park recommends that you travel in groups of at least three during backcountry skiing excursions. The park's winter season for ski activities is from December 15th until May 1.

Rob Kieffer & Norman Page skiing at the Gaspé on a MWSC adventure.



is home to 25 of Quebec Province's 40 highest mountains including Mount Albert with its five square miles of moon-like plateau, and Mount Jacques-Cartier's unique mountain top tundra. This unique mountain wilderness preserves plants that are found nowhere else on earth.

In the center of the park you will find the park headquarters and the Gîte du Mont-Albert. The wilderness mountain setting coupled with the renowned service of Auberge le Gîte du Mont-Albert has rightfully earned it the praise and admiration of visitors. Auberge le Gîte du Mont-Albert is renowned for its hospitality, fine cuisine and mountain décor. This four star inn was opened in 1950 and has a winter season making it a destination for backcountry ski enthusiasts.

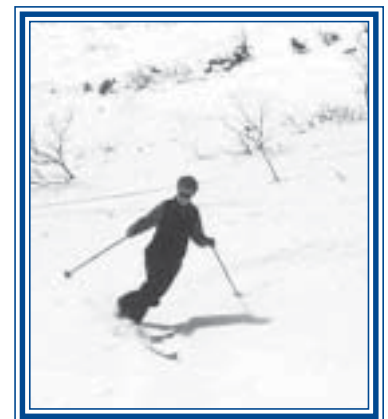
The backcountry skier has over 190 km of marked trails to choose from while skiing in the park. For those wanting a longer tour there are 14 winter huts

three sides by iced mountain cliffs. The trip is a steady uphill ski through the mountains until you reach the lake's edge. There you will find a warming hut supplied with wood making a great lunch spot. The trip is an easy circle trip allowing for the return trip to be a long easy downhill ride looking out at Mount Albert as you steadily descend. While the other backcountry tour is a 24 km trip into Mine Madeliene. The long difficult uphill ski into the hut is rewarded by a beautiful above treeline vista. The hut is an old mining office that sits on the edge of the treeline in a large snow bowl. The trip out is a long downhill ski back to the parking lot.

On the west side of the road there are two other backcountry tours. The first is 22 km backcountry tour into a warming hut on the edge of Lake Cascapedia. The trail follows the summer road up through the mountains. As the road goes along the side of the valley each turn produces a better view than the one before. The

lake is on a plateau found on the backside of Mount Albert. The return trip down off the mountain plateau is steep requiring good skiing skill. The second backcountry tour on the west side of the road is into a cirque on Mount Albert. The trail is used to access the mountain skiing area of Mount Albert so it is packed. On the 22 km backcountry tour you will travel to the treeline and beyond. There is a good resting place and warming hut about half way into the Grand Cuve. The Grand Cuve is a large above treeline bowl where you often get a chance to view caribou feeding on what ever they can find to eat. Caution is recommended on these highlands and summits due to harsh weather in mid-winter. There is also a high risk of avalanche in the steep areas devoid of vegetation on the sides of Mount Albert. The ski out is very steep and can be difficult. While I have described four different backcountry tours there are many others within the park.

The park is located in the center of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula and can be accessed from the northern boundary of the park from Highway 132, or from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts on Highway 299. The park's south entrance is off Highway 132 or from New Richmond on Highway 299.



By Eric Hendrickson, High School Teacher from Presque Isle, Maine.

THE WESTERN COLLEGE SKIING EXPERIENCE



Winter has finally decided to pay a visit to Salt Lake City, frosting the mountains with snow and bringing a chill to the air. What a relief! I thought I was going to have to resort to rollerskiing! But the snow has arrived and the team can get on with training as usual.

Skiing here at the college level on the University of Utah Ski Team is an amazing experience. The Western racing circuit is infused with Euros, and I'm not talking about the currency. Our women's team is rather typical with three Norwegians, two Americans, and one Estonian. The level of competition is very high and can be nearly overwhelming at times. As can be the altitude: our last races in Boulder, Colorado took place at over 9,000 feet above sea level! That was a lung burner!

Skiing in the West is great fun in itself, but when it's combined with the girls I ski with on the Utah Team the experience becomes so much more. In the tough individual competition of the cross-country skiing world it can be difficult to develop a good team relationship. The six of us on the other hand have managed to forge a bond that we'll probably carry for the rest of our lives. These girls, representing different backgrounds and nationalities, have become my family here in Utah. From training to racing to ice cream and brownie parties, our time together is filled with fun, laughter, and friendship. I'm lucky and proud to be a member of such a great team. Go Utes!

By Anna Sprague, MWSC Continental Team Member from Stockholm, Maine.



Brent Jepson enjoys some fine cuisine at a bonfire potluck on the Caribou High School trails.

PINELAND



Continued from page 1...

To support Matt, Phil Savignano, who ran programming for the L.L. Bean's Outdoor Discovery Schools for 15 years, has been hired to develop the program model. He will look to build on the model we've developed for Aroostook County and tailor it to the differing needs of the Southern Maine communities. Working with Phil will be Lori Munro who comes to Pineland Farms with a master's degree, specializing in outdoor therapeutic recreation. Lori will be responsible for marketing the programs to the communities and will try to touch as many communities between Lewiston/Auburn and Greater Portland as possible.

Unlike the Aroostook County model, our programs this year will not include competitive coaching, although we will look to bring our Northern Maine coaches down periodically for guest clinics. Our focus will be on introducing as many people as possible to the health benefits of a winter spent outdoors through our community ski programs. We will also focus on creating a reliable world-class skiing experience with extraordinary trails, skilled grooming and a staff that is uncompromising in their desire to make sure that everyone enjoys themselves.

We have quickly become a center for training and racing for the middle schools, high schools and colleges in Southern Maine and value those relationships. We will continue to look for ways to meet their needs, but our programs will focus on creating that same level of passion with the people who have yet to discover the magic of gliding through a forest on a cold winter day.

By Andy Shepard, MWSC CEO from Yarnouth, Maine.



CRUST CRUISING SET TO START

For most of Maine, spring means one thing: mud. March is typically the transition from winter weather to rain, sleet, mud, mush and slush. But Aroostook County waits till a later date for the mud season, and that delay provides skiers with an opportunity that is very rare east of the Rockies: a chance to go crust cruising.

What is crust cruising? As the snow settles and the sunshine brings temperatures above freezing in the middle of the day (generally not until late March here in Aroostook County), our generous snowpack compresses to a hardened, thickened base. Every sub-freezing night further solidifies the snow to the point where it will support your weight on skis quite easily. In February, when we are looking at three or four feet of fluff and windblown drifts, it is hard to believe that that same snow will ever support you, but it will. And what a fantastic experience that frozen crust offers!


You can ski anywhere on crust. Right out your backdoor and across the fields. Along woods roads, over frozen drifts. Gravel pits coated in two feet of consolidated crust become fantastic ski parks. A lake or nearby pond provide fantastic game fields. Hardwood stands are a natural slalom course. Ditches and waterbars along logging roads become half pipes and jumps. The possibilities are endless and the freedom is fabulous.

Generally, the crust cruising begins to get good around the last week in March. The season usually lasts for two to three weeks, although good crust cruising can be found in patches for much longer than that in good snow years. Given the excellent base we enjoyed in February, we may be able to crust cruise until early May this year. Early to late morning provides the best conditions for crust. Too early, and the snow may still be a bit icy. But, if you stay out too late and ski through the snow as it really softens, you can leave ruts that will ruin the crust for the next day. Try to get out in the window when the crust is still hard, but your skis won't sink. Crust also gives us a chance to finish our season with some easy distance

and technique work. This can be a great boost to your next ski season. Too often skiers race until the snow is gone, hang up their skis and sit on the couch for a few weeks. Crust cruising gives you a chance to work on the technique issues you noticed in your last few races without the pressure of future racing looming on the horizon.

So get out and enjoy the woods, fields and sun this spring. Just clip into your bindings, head out across the backyard and cruise.

By Will Sweetser, MWSC County Team Coach from Stockholm, Maine.




CELEBRATION

All members, supporters, volunteers and friends of the Maine Winter Sports Center are invited to an evening of celebration.

Please join us on March 27th for a pot luck supper followed by slide show and special recognition at the Caribou High School and Performing Arts Center.

5:45 pm
Pot luck

7:00 pm
Slide Show and Recognition





*May 1, 2001
Skiing at Max's.
Will we set a record this year?*



CROSS COUNTRY SKIING AT BIG ROCK



While Big Rock Ski Area is better known as an alpine ski area it does have a very nice system of cross-country trails. The Big Rock Cross Country Trail was built in 1997 when the golf course expanded and eliminated the old high school racing

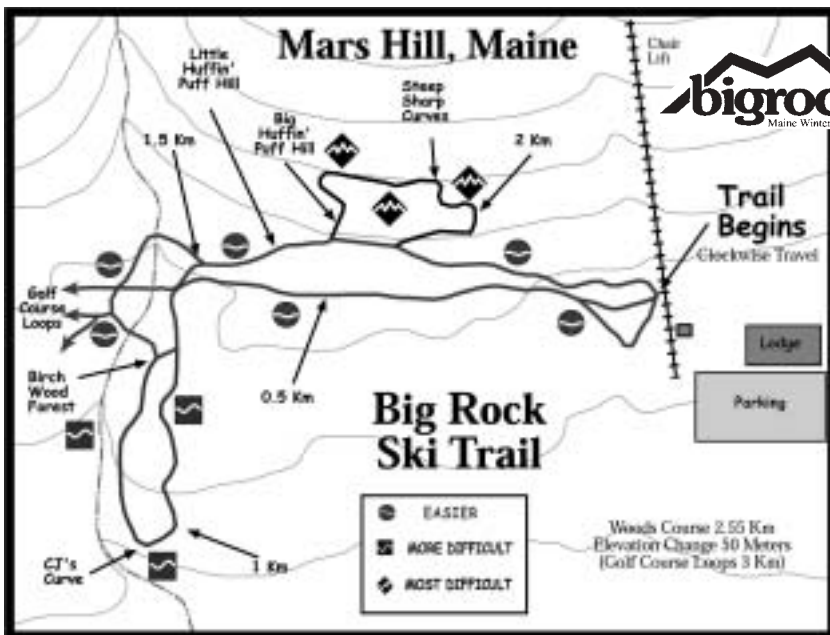


course. While the new course was originally designed as a training course for racing it has become increasingly popular as a touring trail. This 2.5 km trail is divided into three uniquely different sections. The center section is gently rolling with one long downhill and is well suited for skiers just learning. The lower section has a long downhill with a sharp turn followed by a long rolling

uphill. The upper section is a place for skiers to sharpen their downhill skills. After a very steep uphill climb you will find the section finishes off with a series of rolling bumps that are spread throughout a series of five sharp downhill turns. The trail itself is very scenic as it travels through mostly hardwood forest along the base of Mars Hill Mountain. The trail can be located just to the left of the ski area under the chair lift.

While the Big Rock trail is short the trail is extremely well maintained. At the end of the loop are several more loops adding about 3 km more to the system. These loops are on the golf course, which has a beautiful view of the mountain. On the south side of the ski area you will find Little Rock Trail which is a 6 km trail going into Mars Hill and finishing at the high school. So while the Big Rock Trail is quite short it is a great place to practice skills and the other trails give you a chance to do a little touring in a very scenic setting.

By Eric Hendrickson, High School Teacher from Presque Isle, Maine.



THANK YOU

A champion is born from a community.

In the fall of 1999 I sat at an awards banquet in Washington D.C. honoring coaches chosen by their respective national governing bodies and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC).

The evening included two influential speeches on success and youth development, one from the coach of the United States most decorated road cyclist and the other from the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team.

Each spoke about the power of a strong community in the development of successful individuals. Reinforcing the idea that a champion is created by supportive families, strong communities and sustained effort by countless individuals.

Kelsy Bouchard, a high school senior from Fort Kent, Maine represented her nation and region at the Biathlon Youth World Championships this past season. On the final day of individual competition, Kelsy finished as the ninth best youth biathlete on the planet.

It is with excitement that I congratulate the efforts of Kelsy but even more so the supportive community that has created the opportunity for this individual to realize her dreams. This community is prepared for the most demanding challenge in which it should choose to engage at any level, any intensity and capable of every achievement. The effort of your communities is changing the lives of our youth; I see it every day at practice.

Thank you for your hard work.

By Kris Cheney Seymour, MWSC Biathlon Coach from Caribou, Maine.



The small town of Limestone, Maine is making its mark on the Aroostook County map of places to cross-country ski, and in just a few short years, the skiing enthusiasts of Limestone have created what some might call an ideal model for a successful ski club.

One of the first forces of momentum for skiing in Limestone area was the creation of the Trafton Lake Ski Trails, which were opened in 1994. After several years of skiing on these trails, there was interest in expanding the trail system to make use of more terrain while extending the overall length of the trails. With the help of John Morton, a well-respected professional trail designer, with permission from some local landowners to cut trails on their land, and lots of hours of cutting and moving from volunteers, it was possible to open up the new and improved trails in 2001. As a result of the dedication of club members and some help from the Public Works Department, the Trafton Lake Trail system now has two types of trails – the “traditional” trail and the new John Morton skating/classic “Russet Run” trail. The trails are manageable for new comers, yet exciting enough to keep the regulars happy.

Having great trails is a great benefit, but having them regularly groomed is heaven for any skier. With that in

LIMESTONE SKI CLUB - CREATING SKIING TRADITIONS

mind the Limestone Ski Club has made a commitment to keeping the trails freshly groomed on a regular basis. Norman and Peter Page replaced the older track setter with a newer

professional type and the old antique “Grizzly” double track snowmobile was also replaced with a shiny new Skandic Ski Doo courtesy of Maine Winter Sport Center (MWSC). Skiers that visit the trails at Trafton Lake are sure to be impressed by the quality of tracks and consistency of grooming. It is one more way the Limestone Ski Club is trying to ensure that people will not only come to try these trails, but that they will have so much fun that they will keep coming back.

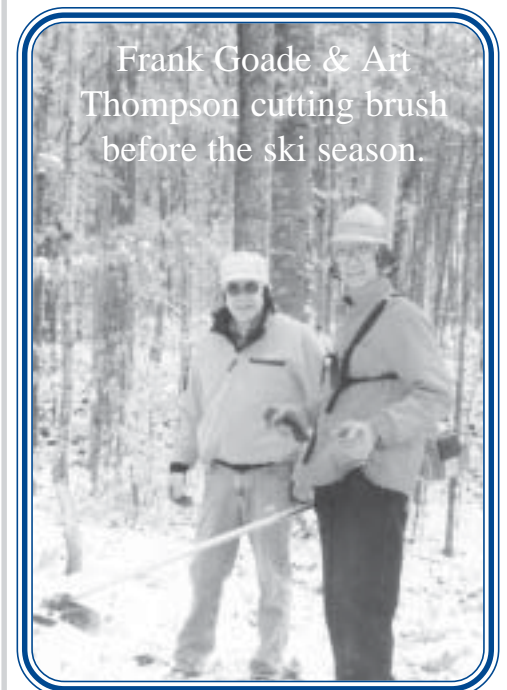
A few other features of the trails at Trafton Lake are worth mentioning. New signs are being placed at intersections around the trail system, a map of the trail system can be found at www.mainewsc.org, and a paper map can be found in a box at the entrance of the trail system. And for those chilly days of winter, feel free to experience the Honey Bear Warming Hut, which can be located on the map and in a very central location within the trail system. These are all great resources for a new comer to the Trafton Lake Trails.

The local skiing enthusiasts in Limestone wanted more people to get to experience the trails at Trafton Lake, and increase the numbers of skiers within the community, and so with the help of Will Sweetser, from MWSC, the Limestone Ski Club (LSC) was officially formed in 2001. The mission was and remains quite simple - get more people skiing. This goal has helped the club to decide to spend its limited resources to rent skis for the middle level school to try to expand the

Recreation Department’s winter ski program, and also helped to get skiing within the local schools by offering to assist the local PE program with ski instruction for its students. The hope is that skiing will become a regular part of the PE instruction for students in Limestone before too long. In another effort to stimulate skiing at the school, the Limestone Ski Club and its head groomer Norman Page have been grooming a trail from the Trafton Lake Ski Trails to the Limestone Community School and Maine School of Math and Science. This trail is used regularly by students at the schools and offers even more skiing to everyone.

The LSC is also helping to keep alive a ski racing tradition by helping to put on the C-ME-Ski Race, which was started in 1989 by Greg Wardwell. This year will mark the 15th year of this event and is on the schedule as a 21km Classic event to be held on the Page Farm. Shorter distances will be available for the kids, and the start time is 10 a.m.

Continued on page 7



THE AROOSKI 2003!

Limestone continued from page 6

One of the most unique features of the LSC is their sponsoring of a group ski program on Saturdays throughout the winter. The club has a schedule of dates and locations of trails around the County that they can try as a group. This is a great social opportunity, as well as a great outreach to go experience trails and meet people at other ski areas. Anyone is welcome to participate, so contact Linda Page at **325-4603** or nlpage@mf.net for more information or a schedule.

With a newly established Ski Club, fresh new trails, regular grooming, programs and events designed to stimulate the growth of skiing, and lots of die-hard skiing enthusiasts, this community is establishing a respectable skiing tradition and culture that should stand the test of time.



MWSC MISSION STATEMENT

- * *To re-establish skiing as a lifestyle in Maine.*
- * *To leverage that lifestyle to create a new economic model for rural, isolated communities of Maine.*
- * *To further leverage that lifestyle to create opportunity for the youth of Maine.*

Aroostook County is an amazing place to live for cross country skiers. We have many trails to choose from as we are surrounded by them. With 20 trails being groomed on a regular basis it can be difficult to decide which trail to ski on each given day. This is a very fortunate dilemma to be in. The question arises; have you skied them all, or any other than the one out your back door? This year we will be able to answer the question with a resounding "YES".

Introducing the first annual "The Arooski", a 24 hour event where we travel to and ski all of the trails in Aroostook County. We will not ski every kilometer of the trails, but a small section of each trail for a grand total of over one hundred kilometers. The event is scheduled for the weekend of March 29th and 30th. We will travel as a group and ski, eat, laugh, sauna, rest, and get to know one another all over the county. After meeting at Stans on Madawaska Lake at noon on Saturday, we will ski: The Nordic Lakers, Snowy Mountain, Westmanland, New Sweden, Woodland, Caribou Cross Country, Caribou Ski Center, Aroostook County Ski Touring Center, Eagle Lake, St. Francis, 10th Mountain Division Center, Madawaska, Split Cedar, Limestone Country Club, Aroostook National Wildlife Refuge, Trafton Lake, Fort Fairfield, Big Rock, Little Rock, Aroostook State Park, and The Nordic Heritage Center finishing up around noon on Sunday.

We are still in the planning stages so a few things may change. But if you're interested contact Greg Rawlings, at the MWSC, and become a part of the Arooski 2003. Remember as the county gets more trails this event will become harder, so join us this year while it's still easy!

A volunteer work crew puts in hundreds of hours to help make the new ski lodge in Caribou a reality.





Maine Winter Sports Center
 154 Development Drive, Suite E
 Limestone, Maine 04750

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!



The Demo trailer will be at all Aroostook Cup races for free equipment usage

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| March 1st | Caribou Teague park demo clinic . 1-3 pm |
| March 7th | OLN coverage of World Cup Biathlon sponsored by Aroostook County. 2pm. |
| March 12th | Skill Pin Testing . Caribou Ski Trail 4-6pm |
| March 14th | World Cup on OLN. 2pm. |
| March 15th | Benedicta Demo clinic |
| March 16th | Pin testing FK 3-6pm |
| March 19th | Wax clinic NH |
| March 20th | NENSA Spring Series . Nordic Heritage Center. Sprint race. |
| March 21st | World Cup on OLN. 2pm. |
| March 22nd | NENSA Spring Series . Nordic Heritage Center. 5k/10k classic race. |
| March 23rd | NENSA Spring Series . Nordic Heritage Center. 10k/15k skate race. |
| March 23rd | Wax clinic NH 12:30 |
| March 23rd | Pin testing NH 1-5pm |
| March 25th | NENSA Spring Series . Nordic Heritage Center. 15k/30k classic race. |
| March 27th | MWSC Celebration . Caribou HS and Performing Arts Center. 5:45pm. |
| March 28th | World Cup on OLN. 2pm. |
| March 29th-30th | Aroski 2003 . 24 hour ski tour of the county. Noon Saturday to noon Sunday. |
| April 4th | World Cup on OLN. 2pm. |
| April 11th | World Cup on OLN. 2pm. |

**DON'T FORGET TO VISIT
 OUR NEW WEBSITE FOR
 THE LATEST NEWS AND
 EVENTS!!!**



WWW.MAINEWSC.ORG



Dave Chamberlain (left), MWSC Continental team member, was in a photo finish with two Olympians this winter in Canada.