



Norpine News

Issue 15

Winter 2019-2020

Norpine News
is the official Newsletter of the
Norpine Trail Association



Norpine Trail Association
3719 West Highway 61
Lutsen, MN 55612
www.norpinetrails.org

Ski Passes - Now Even Easier to Get

A ski pass is required for anyone 16 years of age or older on all Norpine trails. Passes are for sale at Cascade Lodge, Solbakken Resort and Cascade State Park. Daily passes are \$10 each. An individual statewide pass is \$25 annual or \$70 for 3 years. The year is effective from July 1 to June 30th. Ski passes are also available on-line at the MN DNR website or from any local business that sells DNR licenses. Norpine gets money for trail grooming from the DNR which comes from the sale of XC ski passes.

New Board Members and Volunteers Needed

The ongoing success and operation of the Norpine Trail System depends upon you, and your willingness to contribute time and energy. We are always looking for new members, and welcome Board additions. If you love to ski/hike, we'd love to have your help. We need help brushing and maintaining trails as well as office type help such as sending out letters, writing articles for the newsletter, soliciting funds to support the trail maintenance. Currently, we have board members who have served a long time and we would really appreciate some fresh blood to continue our efforts. We appreciate whatever time you can afford to help us. The Board meets quarterly with an annual general membership meeting in the fall. Contact us at info@norpinetrails.org

Norpine Trail Association was formed in March 2009. We are registered with the State of Minnesota as a non-profit organization and approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization so that your donations are tax deductible contributions. 2019 was Norpine's 10 Year Anniversary. The purpose of the organization is to be responsible for the maintenance and grooming of 57 K of cross-country ski trails that had been maintained by the owners of Cascade Lodge, LLC and Solbakken Resort. Norpine has fully accepted the responsibility for managing the maintenance and grooming of the entire trail system. The club has done a lot in a short period

of time. The trails have been improved and widened, bridges repaired, signs and maps replaced, trailhead parking lots built or improved and with the help of grants have acquired equipment to keep the trails groomed and maintained. Our most recent grant allowed for the purchase of a backhoe and a new brushcutter.

In 2016 the O'Phelan's, owners of Cascade Lodge, donated their Pisten Bully to Norpine. In 2016 Norpine built a 36' x 30' Equipment Storage Building to store our grooming equipment in. An important financial donation to the building project was a grant from the North Star Ski Touring Club.

Fall Trail Preparation

Last fall Norpine volunteers went over the entire trail system removing limbs and trees that had fallen across the trails prior to their being mowed before winter. In addition, "leaners" that were over the trail were removed so that if they had come down on the trail this winter the groomers would not have to contend with clearing them. Last fall we also had a lot of rain that made finishing mowing difficult. When the ground froze and before snow came most of the mowing was completed. In addition, a group of volunteers from



the North Star Ski Touring Club (NSSTC) came to our area in late October to work with the Sugarbush Trail Association and Norpine to help with the never-ending job of clearing encroaching overhanging brush from the trails. Last fall the work detail took place during midweek. As usual a lot of work was accomplished. The



North Star Ski Touring Club celebrated their 50th Anniversary during the 2016-17 season. If you live in the Twin Cities metro area, we would like to recommend that you also consider joining this active group. To learn more about them visit their website: www.north-stars.org. We are fortunate to have the NSSTC volunteers help each year with the job of preparing the trails for winter. Cascade Lodge and Solbakken provide lodging for the North Stars that work on the Norpine trails and Cascade Lodge feeds breakfast and lunch to the crews. A buffet provided by resorts and businesses in the area was hosted by Solbakken that evening for everyone that helped on the Sugarbush and Norpine trails.

Norpine Fat Tire Bike Race Event January 11, 2020 in Lutsen, MN

The 4th Annual Norpine Fat Bike Classic Race will be held this year with Cascade Lodge being the new Race Headquarters. They are located at 3719 W Hwy 61 and will also be hosting the Friday Check-in & Saturday Post Race Party! The race course will be very different and will start and finish at the Cascade River State Park Snowmobile Parking lot that is off Hwy 61 west of Cascade Lodge. The race course will be entirely on the Norpine trail system. The Race website is www.norpinefatbikeclassic.com and has complete race detailed information.



Fat Tire Bikes on the Connector Trail between the Ski Hill Road and the Cascade State Park Snowmobile Parking Lot

The Norpine Board has agreed to continue the trial this winter allowing fat tire bikes to use the skating lane on the connector trail **when trail conditions allow bike use without damage to the groomed trail.**

Bikers will have to go to our web page and look at current trail conditions that will indicate if the trail is open or closed to bike use. If bikers do not respect staying off of the trail when it is closed the trial will be terminated.

Also, biking winter or summer, is not allowed on that part of our ski trail that goes through the DNR's Lutsen Scientific Natural Area. This Restricted Area is well marked at both ends of the ski only trail through the SNA and needs to be respected by all bikers.

If the trial is successful it will allow bikers another place to share a safe winter experience with cross country skiers. Norpine gets a significant contribution of money for grooming from resorts and businesses in our area. Allowing fat tire bikes on the trail provides another opportunity for their guests to experience the outdoors. We also hope that bikers will become Norpine members and purchase MN DNR Ski Passes when on the trails.

Fall Trail Mowing & Winter Grooming

We have contracted again with Mark D Consulting, LLC to mow and groom the trails in the west half of the system from the Cascade River State Park Snowmobile Parking lot to the Ski Hill Road in Lutsen, including the Hall/Massie loops and the trails between Jonvick Creek and the Highway across from Solbakken Resort. We have also contracted with Cascade Lodge to mow and groom the trails north of the lodge including the historic Pioneer loop and the Deer Yard loops. We are fortunate to have these folks grooming our trails again this winter.



This last winter we were again "blessed" with two storms that caused serious damage due to wet heavy and frozen snow bending brush and breaking tree trunks onto the trails. It was a nightmare to go back and clear the trails to get them ready for skiing again. It almost looks like one of the effects of climate change is going to be this kind of event.



Norpine has Purchased Trail Cameras



Norpine has purchased two Trail Cameras and based on initial results has permission to purchase two more cameras. The price of trail cameras long used by sportsmen has been reduced as quality and versatility of the unit has improved so that they can be a valuable way to determine who is using our ski trails.



Are they classic skiers, skate skiers on trails groomed for that purpose or fat tire bikers? Which trails get the most use? What days and times are the trails used? Hikers and snowshoers can be counted along with creatures that live in the wild. Trail cameras are a new tool to take the guesswork out of how much use do our trails get.

Now it is Possible to Become a Member or Donate using PayPal or a credit card

We have added a link on our website so that you can either donate to Norpine or pay for your membership using PayPal or your credit card through PayPal. Our cost to keep Norpine Trails open include not only grooming but also trail maintenance, equipment maintenance, insurance and heating for the new equipment storage facility. We depend not only on the money we get from the DNR which helps with grooming expenses, but also from donations and memberships from those skiers that use our trails. Please help if you are able. We are trying to make donating more convenient and user friendly. If you have any suggestions please let us know.