

## Rebirth of the Loppet Passport

THE REVIVAL OF THE LOPPET PASSPORT by Cross Country Saskatchewan is starting to get some traction by clubs and skiers. It should be noted that the Passport idea was first started back in the late 80's and ran into the early 90's. It was inspired by some active ski families, one of which was the "Cameron Family". Fred, Em, Laurie and Daren used to travel to lots of the loppets. Laurie, when on the SaskSki Board (prior to the split off of CCS) got SaskSki to initiate this. It ended about 4 years after starting.

The original concept was to have a fun way to encourage our diverse ski communities to experience and enjoy the various skiing options these loppet clubs offer, not only to their own members but to our broader communities. The rebirth hopes to do the same and has also added a "Youth" category that rewards participation with criteria that may not require as extensive travel.

This is a 4 year program so it presents the opportunity/challenge to skiers to plan some distant or local ski travels and take in the hospitality of our loppet hosting clubs. It is very worthwhile. Here are my experiences in 2018.





The 2018 Loppets that give a great experience and varied terrain:

### North Battleford/Blue Mountain Loppet

December 30 was a late addition but was cancelled due to cold weather. No stamp.

### Esterhazy Loppet

January 20 was cancelled due to lack of snow. No stamp.

### Prince Albert Loppet

January 27. Due to cold weather and lack of snow in the south this was the first of the year. It was great to get back on those up and down close forest trails. Unfortunately there was a bit of a mix-up there and the passports were not available on their sign-up desk. For those that did have a passport we were treated to an “original art” personal entry by Bill Jeffery. The Cosmo Centre food and hospitality was great on a cold day and the group start added excitement.



### Elmhurst Cheesecake Loppet

February 4 - north of Turtle Lake. This was a great time on trails groomed by Rick Hartley and crew on his farm/ranch. Cold day at -28 but well treed and gentle terrain plus an up and down “Rollercoaster” section. Great to see participants from Saskatoon, Battlefords, Meadow Lake and all around. The camaraderie and the pulled pork buns and cheesecake were awesome. Rick reminded me that there is a Roadside Retreat bed and breakfast close by for travelers who want to break up any drive. Something to look into. Stamp 2.

## Humboldt Valentine's Day Loppet

February 10. Unfortunately I had to miss that this year but I did get an update from Dave Martinuk (while visiting in "The Shelter") that it was awesome. No stamp.



## Good Spirit Lake Lamplighter Loppet

February 17. Skiing in the dark is quite an experience and fun. While this loppet has been going for the past few years, it grew out of what was a normal practice of skiers getting together to ski during the week, which necessitated headlamps. The trails are gentle with a large part out to "The Warm-up Shelter" flat and going through treed and marsh surroundings. Approaching the "Shelter" all decked out in lights and an outdoor bonfire for hanging out and roasting hot dogs is quite something. The trail loops from "The Shelter" are roly. Activities in "The Shelter" are spirited and lots of laughs. The Loppet is not just skiing as there is great food and games and lots of prizes back at the Park rec center once all skiers have checked back in. 60+ registrations and great hospitality. I should have planned



on an overnight in Yorkton to take in all the après ski activities. Stamp 3.

**Duck Mountain Loppet** – February 24 saw amazing weather, snow and grooming excellence. This is some of the very best ski terrain in the province and the organization and rest stations are second to none (well maybe to those of the Saskaloppet). The post loppet banquet is great and this year Bruno, the chief organizer for the 28 years of the loppet, gave a heartfelt tribute to Peter and Renee Whitehead another family that travelled nearly to almost all ski events in the province. One of the best Loppet events. Stamp 4.

## Yorkton's Sundog Challenge

March 3 was another great event. Excellent facilities at the Deer Park golf clubhouse. The three inner loops that make up the 7km main course are fun and the periodic sighting of other skiers gives a challenge to any competitive skier. Jackrabbit (skiers) abound on the first loop of the three and skate grooming is available on the other two. Great grooming by the club as well as food and refreshments after the options from 7 km to 42 km. Stamp 5.

## Saskaloppet

March 3 was traded in this year to experience the Sundog Challenge. The Saskaloppet is always an amazing cultural event and celebration of northern Saskatchewan and indigenous communities. Unfortunately, no stamp.

## Northwest Weekend Loppet, Buffalo Narrows

March 10. The inaugural year, was treated to amazing weather and great trails. These trails were the brain child and hard work by Matt Mazurik and countless other club members and citizens. The longest trails are classic and wind thru a diverse eco system and varying tree stands and patrolled by taunting ravens. One section is quite spectacular as it borders beside a huge lake (my guess, Peter Pond Lake). The skate trails are great and run

beside the early classic, but do not go as far. This club has done amazing work in the community and has a great clubhouse and skis for use. Treats and





hotdogs to roast are plentiful post ski. The banquet and food prepared by the high school was excellent. Overnighting for distant travelers was another amazing treat at the Bayshore Guest House. Stamp 6.

### Northwest Weekend Loppet, Ile a la Crosse

March 11. Another spectacular day of sun and warm ski-shirt weather. Headquartered out of the new Rossignol High School we got to experience a LaRonge type start with a ski across the lake (Churchill?) to a network of great trails and one big hill and steep descent. Saw a bald eagle over one trail. The participation by families and lots of kids was amazing and the hill beside the clubhouse was a center for downhill challenges by lots of the young skiers.

Chili, bannock, fruit and treats rewarded participants as well as prize draws. Great event and organization. Stamp 7.

### North Battleford Loppet

March 17. This was a reschedule of the earlier event and was a conflict so it was missed. Reports were that it was a great day on some super trails. This locale was a regular ski venue for Sask Cup races in the '90s and had extra activities for youth and adults after or before the ski event. It will be a great addition to our schedule.

In synopsis, one of the words repeated often above and below is "great". It applies to so many facets of the events on the Loppet Schedule. The people that make these events happen all over the province are quite impressive. Hard working in their own clubs and going

the extra kms to put on these events. You get to meet lots of great people out on different trails and at the post event gatherings. The camaraderie is warm and welcoming and always fun to eavesdrop on the days experience of others. The different locales and ski terrain are a great experience for a guy from the south of the province. Great to get to meet so many.

A "tip of the toque" to all the people that make these events happen.



# Grant Follow Up Report: Illse La Crosse

The 2017-2018 ski season was a year of improvements for our club and lots of snow for our trails. We used the money from the CCS grant to build a lean-to to park our groomer under and for new signs for our trails. The lean-

to was essential this year with the large snowfalls we received and allowed us to groom easily. The signs are attractive and the accurate depictions of our trails make our trails safer for visitors and new skiers. We would like to thank CCS for

their continued support of our ski club. Grants like your make it possible for our volunteers to provide quality trails for our 63 members to ski regularly.



Participants in the 2018 Prince Albert Classic Loppet take off from the start line at Little Red River Park on Saturday, Jan. 27.



## Skiing through Paradise

Things have changed since Scott Fraser last attended the Prince Albert Classic Loppet.

He doesn't remember much from that first trip, being a mere seven years old, but what he does remember stood out. "I don't remember the trails, but I remember it was a really nice loppet," chuckled Fraser, who came up from Saskatoon for Saturday's event. "I'm really happy to be back."

Fraser wasn't the only one. An estimated 180 cross-country skiers came out for the 2018 classic, a total that hasn't been seen at Red River Park in roughly 20 years.

Loppet chair Bill Jeffery said great conditions in Prince Albert, combined with less favourable ones in the rest of the province, helped make Saturday's race a "must-attend event" for local cross-country skiers. A late snowfall on Friday helped bring in dozens more, with ideal conditions settling in by Saturday morning.

"We were wishing for snow, but it could have come a little earlier," Jeffery said. "Still, the crew got out here last night

at around 8 or 9 p.m. and they did the trails.... They've set up nice, fresh snow, just what everybody is hoping for, especially skiers from the south, who've had lousy conditions."

Over the last couple of years, good conditions have been the exception rather than the rule. Jeffery said they've been forced to cancel some past events due to lack of snow. This year was different, and skiers from across Saskatchewan were eager to take advantage of it.

"People who are willing to face winter and embrace it are a special kind of people," said Daniel Mireault, who also came up from Saskatoon for the event. "This loppet really represents that. It's such a special thing."

This year's classic even drew a few skiers from across the country. Bryana Van Leeuwen, who hails from Kelowna, was one of several skiers who heard good things about the trials near Prince Albert. She said she was eager to see what they were all about.

By the end of the day, it wasn't just the trails that impressed her, but also the community.

"It's kind of like a little family," she said. "Everybody likes to get outside, likes to see what's out there. It doesn't matter how far or how fast you go, you're all out there enjoying these trails."

Organizers said Saturday's event was a resounding success, and they'll be looking to build on that in 2019. Jeffery said the goal is to get participation numbers back up to around the 200 mark every year.

He said the local jackrabbit ski programs help get families interested, but more than anything they need consistent weather. Given a few days of good snowfall, Jeffery said Prince Albert's ski trails can compete with anywhere in the world. "It's a unique ecosystem that they're (skiing) through," he said. "Sometimes you just have to stop and wonder how this got here. It's just a paradise."

THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* by Jason Kerr



Above: Participating in the loppet last week, from left, were: Stuart Slattery, Pauline Bloom and John Blackwood, all of Teulon, Man., and Anita Gregory of Fisher Branch, Manitoba



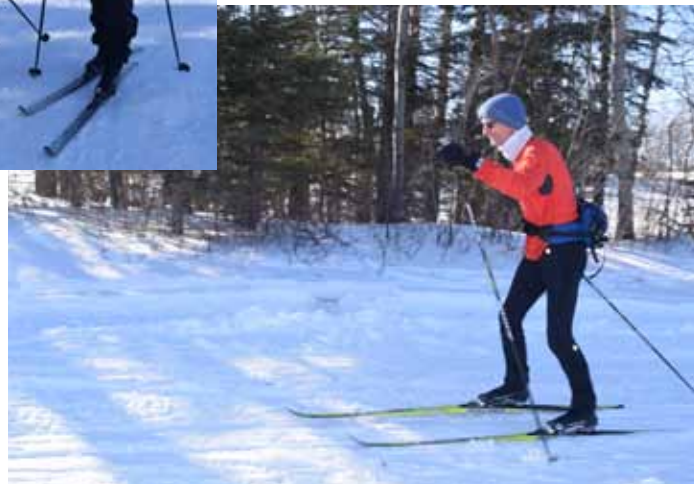
Left: Heading out on the cross-country trail, from left, were: Aldona Torgunrud of Regina, Maya Moore of Saskatoon and Dorothy and Gene Josephson of Regina. Gene has a record of attending 27 of the Duck Mountain Loppets.

# Duck Mountain News

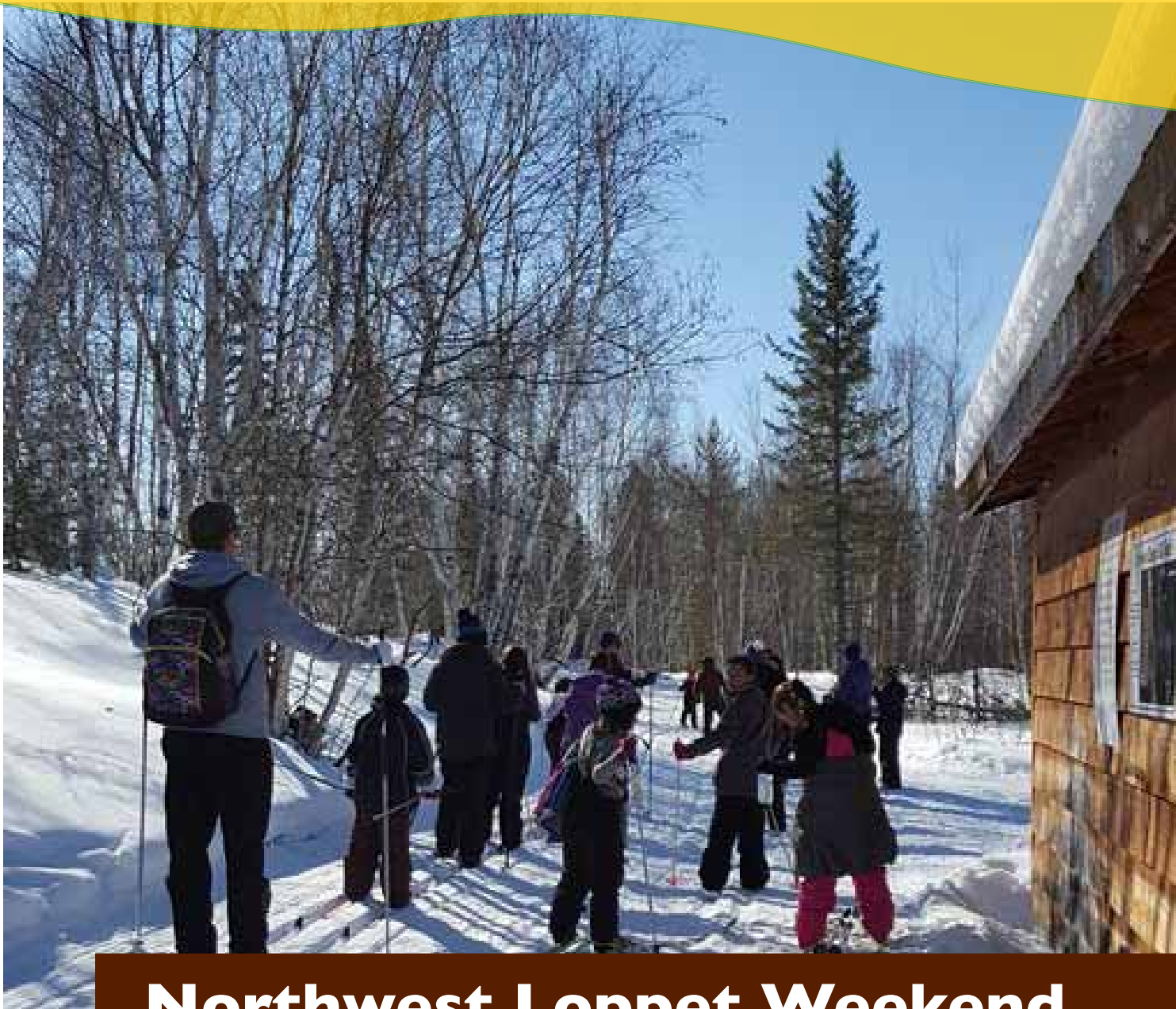


Left: Bill Turner and Dave Kenney of Prince Albert were joined by Rob McLeod of Regina on the loppet course last week

Below: Dale Hjertaas, president of the Regina Ski Club attended the Duck Mountain Loppet along with a busload of skiers from the city.







# Northwest Loppet Weekend

*Ile-a-la Crosse Loppet held on March 11, 2018*

Buffalo Narrows and Ile-a-la Crosse Ski Clubs hosted a two day loppet event on March 10th and 11th. We started out with high spirits on Sunday after a wonderful day of skiing, visiting, and eating in Buffalo Narrows the previous day. With the sun shining bright, our 80 participants started out from the lake in front of Rossignol High School; from there, skiers traversed freshly groomed tracks to our Ski Club cabin where they could continue on to ski whatever distance suited their abilities and/or desires. After three hours of skiing and enjoying the fruit and home-baked muffins and cookies on the trails, the skiers made their way back to the high

school where all participants gathered to enjoy the après-ski meal of chili, bannock, fresh fruit and vegetables. Once bellies were full and door prizes were distributed, the Northwest Loppet Weekend came to a close. We were very excited to have participants from as far south as Regina and as far north as La Loche. All those involved, including participants, organizers, and volunteers, were exceedingly pleased with the events and are already looking forward to the 2nd annual Northwest Loppet! Please mark it on your calendars and come enjoy our beautiful communities and hospitality!



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### Have a Story or Photos to Share that Might Interest CCS Members?

Please submit any articles or stories to Alana [ccs@sasktel.net](mailto:ccs@sasktel.net) before Nov 18, 2018.



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