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THE NORTH WOODS is recognized across the Midwest as a winter recreation wonderland, offering snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, ice-fishing, snowshoeing and more.

Besides the many outdoor activities, communities and organizations plan events as an added attraction to the winter wonderland. The events range from dog sled races and snowmobile derbies to ice-fishing contests and hockey games.

The following list of activities was compiled from online listings posted by the Vilas County Tourism and Publicity Department and area chambers of commerce, including Three Lakes in Oneida County. Events are subject to change without notice.

Those planning to attend the events should call local chambers of commerce or information bureaus to confirm times and dates.

NORTH WOODS HOME TO AN ARRAY OF WINTERTIME EVENTS, ACTIVITIES



NOVEMBER

Nov. 22, Three Lakes — Santa will attend the Festival of Lights at Cy Williams Park featuring the lighting of the tree, treats and refreshments. Call 715-546-3344.

Nov. 22-24, Sayner — Christmas in Downtown Sayner features shopping, refreshments and holiday spirit from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily as the restaurants and shops of Sayner officially kick off the holiday season. Visit sayner-starlake.org.

Nov. 29, Boulder Junction — The holiday season will kick off with the 36th annual Christmas Walk from 3 to 8 p.m., with the lighting of the town Christmas tree, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus,

carolers, sleigh rides, and treats for shoppers at downtown stores. Call 715-385-2400.

Nov. 30, Land O' Lakes — The Breakfast with Santa will include breakfast and a visit with Santa from 8 to 11 a.m. at Gateway Lodge. Reservations are required for three different seatings. Call 715-547-3432.

Nov. 30, Three Lakes — The ninth annual Jingle Mingle celebration in downtown Three Lakes will feature holiday deals, free snacks and prizes. Also on-site will be the Village Market Holiday Bazaar. Call 715-546-3344.

Nov. 30, St. Germain — The fourth annual Holiday Marketplace celebration will be held at the St. Germain Community

Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with craft vendors, children's activities, food and more. Call 715-477-2205.

Nov. 30, Minocqua — The Christmas season kicks off in downtown Minocqua with family holiday activities and visits with Santa. Call 800-44-NORTH (446-6784).

Nov. 30, St. Germain — The Jingle Bell Fun Run 3K run/walk event will be held from 4 to 5 p.m., in advance of St. Germain's holiday parade and town tree lighting festivities. Then, Lighting Up St. Germain festivities will go from 4 to 6 p.m. Activities will include a holiday parade at dusk, which ends at the community center and fire department for caroling, the lighting of

the town Christmas tree, and a visit from Santa. Call 715-477-2205.

DECEMBER

Dec. 6-7, Eagle River — Christ Lutheran School will put on its 21st annual Living Nativity from 6 to 8 p.m. Outdoor performances are started every 20 minutes with actors, music and live animals. The final performance begins at 7:40 p.m. Call 715-479-8284 or email christeagleriver@gmail.com.

Dec. 7, Phelps — The Christmas Tree Lighting event will be held in downtown Phelps from 4 to 6 p.m. Accompanying the tree lighting will be a bonfire, caroling, hot drinks and a visit from Santa. Call 715-545-3800 or

visit phelpswi.us.

Dec. 6, Manitowish Waters — Small Town Christmas and tree lighting will begin at 4 p.m. Christmas crafts and games, followed by a Christmas tree lighting at Koller Park with a bonfire, Christmas caroling and refreshments. Santa and Mrs. Clause will also make an appearance. Call 715-543-8488 for more information.

Dec. 7, Eagle River — The Christmas Kickoff will be held at Riverview Park from 4 to 6:30 p.m., where attendees can share Christmas wishes with Santa, take a sleigh ride, watch the lighting of the Christmas tree, and enjoy refreshments and hot chocolate. Call 715-479-6400.



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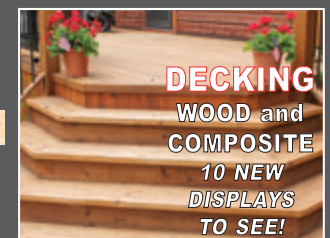
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WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOWMOBILE DERBY TO RUN JAN. 9-19



THE 62ND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOWMOBILE DERBY, along with the 24th running of the Vintage World Championships, will once again bring thousands to the North Woods.

Spectators will witness the track's perpetuated and historic snowmobile racing with 11 days of exciting action in Eagle River Jan. 9-19.

The event is billed as the "Indianapolis 500 of Snowmobile Racing," drawing the best ice oval racers from the United States, Canada, and Europe to Eagle River.

Oval racers will compete on more than 15 inches of solid ice on a slick,

contoured track created from more than two-million gallons of water spread on subzero nights by a pair of 4,000-gallon water trucks leading up to the event.

"The 62nd Derby will feature many exciting activities to highlight this year's events," said World Championship Derby Complex (WCDC) CEO Tom Anderson.

Anderson and additional members of the ownership group acquired the property in 2018 and have since rebranded it the WCDC to take full-advantage of all the facility has to offer for a year-round operation.

The summer of 2022 saw the one-half mile oval totally reworked and updated. GPS systems guided the dozers, loaders, and grading machines to

produce a perfect track surface ready for icing and racing.

The historic site has also hosted several weddings, USA Hockey Pond Hockey tournaments, muskie tournament banquets, Relay For Life cancer fundraisers, a Mud, Sweat and Cheers race, Rotary Club Antique Shows, dealer meetings, swap meets, rock concerts and other area events.

Race fans can get information on advance ticket sales, Hot Seats reservations, motor home parking and more by calling 715-479-4424 or visiting derbycomplex.com.

Long history

Anderson highlighted this highly competitive

series of world championship racing is the oldest and grandest event in snowmobile racing, dating back to the first race on Dollar Lake in 1964.

"The event in the late 1960s and '70s, under the direction of the Eagle River Lions Club, moved the race to a track between Highway 45 and Pleasure Island Road," he explained. "Numerous snowmobile manufacturers helped draw thousands of people to the event."

"The Derby Track then was purchased by the Decker family, who built viewing suites, an expo hall, food service stands and a host of other infrastructure facilities

To **DERBY** pg. 8



Derby from page 7

before we purchased the complex in 2018.”

Today, the facility boasts 30-plus acres of grounds, a famed half-mile banked oval race track that was totally reshaped last summer, a separate youth race track, 15 corporate inside heated viewing suites, a 10,000-square-foot expo hall, and heated and cooled enclosed viewing stands on the home straight.

Additionally, the complex retains full food and liquor licenses with several bars, and 50-plus flat-screen TVs to bring the on-track racing action inside the suites for spectators to enjoy.

Highlights

The festive 11-day show will begin the first weekend with Vintage races.

The second weekend will include the Badger State Winter Games opening ceremonies, complete with the lighting of the BSG

Olympic-style cauldron, culminating after a two-day snowmobile ride from Wausau carrying the torch.

By the end of the second weekend, fans will have witnessed professional oval racing, Kitty Cat racing, motorcycle racing, a 100-lap enduro and two under-the-lights shows billed as Friday Night Lightning and Friday Night Thunder.

Vintage weekend

Vintage racing begins Thursday Jan. 9, culminating with the Vintage World Championship Sunday, Jan. 12.

Promoters are calling it “Snowmobile Week at the World Championship Derby Complex.”

“What started out to be only a couple of Vintage races on Derby Weekend 23 years ago quickly grew into a separate and complete Vintage weekend of racing action that gets a green flag to open the 10 days of exciting racing action on Thursday this year,” said WCDC



Competition Director Craig Marchbank.

“The vintage machines of today are meticulously restored, engines are high-tech tuned, and very reliable,” he added. “The competition is highly reminiscent of the good old days. We expect to see a very colorful showing

of many brands and more than 900 entries of sleds on the track, including Arctic Cat, Ski-Doo, Polaris, Yamaha, Sno-Jet, John Deere, Rupp, Mercury and many more.”

The Vintage World Championships opens Thursday night, Jan. 9. The following evening, racing takes place under the lights for a spectacular Friday Night Lightning show Jan. 10.

Saturday events get underway early with finals and qualifying in a host of different vintage divisions, all culminating with qualifying for the World Championship that afternoon, where typically more than 50 competitors will be vying for a spot in Sunday's finale.

On Sunday, Jan. 11, fans will see more finals, reaching an exciting conclusion to the Vintage weekend with the super-fast Vintage World Championship Snowmobile Derby title race in the Super Mod 440 Class at 3 p.m.

World Championship

The event that puts Eagle River on the world map starts Thursday, Jan. 16, with all-day practice sessions for oval racers in dozens of classes, including Kitty Cats, Juniors, Amateurs and Pro Ovals. Admission is free on Thursday.

“It is a great opportunity for fans to observe their favorite racers in action and to see who might be emerging as a strong competitor in each class,” said Marchbank.

Friday will be a full day of qualification racing in Oval classes. Then, on Friday night, fans will once again pack the Derby Complex grounds for the most exciting and highly popular event — the Friday Night Thunder show.

“The top World Championship qualifiers go head-to-head under the lights to determine who will sit on the pole in Sunday's championship race,” said Marchbank. “This gives fans a heads-up on who is fastest, who



has the handling and who could be the new 2025 World Champion.”

“The top-16 qualifiers will run two heat races with eight machines in each and pull five racers from each heat for the final,” he added. “The victor automatically qualifies in the top 10 and will sit on the pole position for the final. The winner won’t have to duel it out in qualifications Saturday afternoon.”

Saturday morning will bring oval classes qualifying. As in the past, Saturday afternoon will include qualifying the top-10 finalists for Sunday’s World Championship event.

Sunday’s World Championship brings on the final laps of the most competitive Oval class snowmobile racing as

thousands of spectators surrounding the ice-glazed track watch, and cheer, for their favorites.

Marchbank also mentioned that early Sunday afternoon will feature a last-chance qualifier which will be held early for the two back-row spots on the starting line of the 62nd running of the World Championship, which will run promptly at 1:30 p.m.

After earning the checkered victory flag, the new World Champion will be honored in the newly created Ultimex Winner’s Circle in front of thousands of race fans. The SnowGoer Cup, inscribed with the names of all past WC winners, will be hoisted in victory for the Derby photographers.

“This event is the

single most important snowmobile race of the year for the racers and the snowmobiling community,” said Anderson. “To win the World Championship in Eagle River is a great accomplishment that only a very few have earned the honor of claiming.”

100-Lap Pro Enduro

Immediately following the championship festivities, the oval will host more than 30 drivers competing in the 100-lap World Championship Pro Enduro.

“They put on a great show last year and we are thrilled to have them back for this year,” said Marchbank. “Both the drivers and the sleds take a beating in this grueling race. Thirty-plus sleds all racing at once create nonstop racing action.”

It’s a long race for the

Enduro drivers, most of whom are racers from the Michigan International Racing Association (MIRA), who are starting their 2024 season at the Derby Complex.

World Series weekend

Feb. 21-23 will see the return of the World Series of Snowmobile Racing featuring vintage, late model and enduro sleds in competition starting Friday evening, Feb. 21, featuring the U.S. Snowmobile Association’s (USSA) late model classes.

On Saturday, both USSA and vintage sleds will run to showcase both eras of sleds. Sunday is another “blast” day with a mixture of Pro Vintage Racing (PVR), MIRA and Big Extreme Vintage Racing Association (BEVRA) classes.

“We have combined PVR,

USSA, MIRA and BEVRA into one very exciting weekend of hot racing action,” said Marchbank. “It will be a blast.”

Legend Laps

The Derby Track will host the third Legend Laps show and exhibition Thursday, Feb. 13.

Drivers, collectors and racers will be able to make laps on the legendary Derby Track in a safe, noncompetitive format that will showcase many of the famous drivers, iconic and original, reproduction or collectible race sleds from the past.

“Many of these sleds have not seen the ice for over 30 years,” explained Marchbank. “It’s a great opportunity for drivers, collectors and fans to be a part of this historic event.” ■



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POND HOCKEY RETURNS TO EAGLE RIVER IN 2025

THE CITY OF EAGLE RIVER will welcome USA Hockey to host the 19th annual Laba Blue/USA Hockey Pond Hockey National Championships. This comes after the event was canceled last year due to the abnormal temperatures and snowfall that hit Wisconsin for most of the winter season.

The event is set for Fri-

day through Sunday, Feb. 7-9, 2025 on Dollar Lake, just east of Eagle River. Chanticleer Inn will again be providing the location for the tournament, and the owners are excited to have USA Hockey, a national organization, coming back to the North Woods for the 19th year.

Fifty-three percent of the teams that were



supposed to play in 2024 moved their registration into the 2025 event. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Following the 2024 event cancellation, teams who elected to roll their '24 registration into '25 are already confirmed into their '24 division. Those teams who elected to refund their registration are able to register into the 2025 event," it stated in an update on the USA Hockey website.

The Pond Hockey Championships represent one of the largest coordinated community efforts of the winter for the North Woods, bringing in about 2,000 players and fans each winter. The event, coordinated by USA Hockey, does so with the help of the Eagle River Recreation

Association (ERRA) and the Eagle River Area Fire Department. The ERRA gets involved by supplying referees and scorekeepers for a majority of the games, though some USA Hockey officials are utilized over the three days. To help alleviate parking issues along Dollar Lake Road, the ERRA allows vehicles to be parked at the Eagle River Sports Arena, with participants shuttled by bus.

Comment on the volunteer help from the area

Pat Weber, of the fire department, has been involved in building the rinks on Dollar Lake since the tournament started.

The tournament will feature teams of adults, 21 years or older, registered in 24 no-check divisions for men and women. It will be

structured by four-on-four matchups using a round-robin format. A maximum of seven players can be on a team. Games start in the morning all three days and finish late in the afternoon. The cost to register is \$750 per team. A valid credit card or debit card will be required to complete the registration procedure.

Knowingly entering one's team into an inappropriate division will not improve chances of getting into a preferred division that might be sold out. Registering in an inappropriate division and also going on a waitlist for an acceptable division will move teams to the boom of that waitlist.

For more information and to register, visit usa-hockey.com/pondhockey. ■



AREA SNOWMOBILE CLUBS KEEP NORTH WOODS TRAILS UP TO PAR



MORE THAN 1,000 MILES of snowmobile trails located in Vilas and Oneida counties are in optimum condition during the winter season due to the hard work of local snowmobile clubs and grooming organizations.

Funded through snowmobile registration, trail passes and applicable taxes, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides funding for the maintenance of specified snowmobile trails.

Anyone operating a snowmobile on a Wisconsin public trail or corridor is required to have a trail pass sticker attached to the windshield of their sled.

The annual trail pass is separate from snowmobile registration. Snowmobilers who belong to both an approved Wisconsin snowmobile club and the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) will be able to purchase a trail pass for \$10 through AWSC. More information, including how to order a trail pass, is available online.

For those who have their sleds registered in Wisconsin, but do not

belong to an approved club or the AWSC, the cost is \$30, and the pass must be purchased through the DNR. For individuals whose sleds are not registered in Wisconsin, the trail pass is \$50 per year, and must also be ordered through the DNR. For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov.

Vilas County has about 500 miles of state-funded trails and Oneida County has roughly 400, for a total of nearly 900 miles. In addition, clubs have hundreds of miles of unfunded trails, for a total trail system that exceeds 1,000 miles, on state, county and private lands.

Donations and fundraisers provide for any shortfalls in expenditures clubs might have, and cover the cost of unfunded trail segments. In addition, these groups organize social events for members, including weekly rides, and host safety courses for young riders.

While trails are scheduled to open in mid-December, snow conditions will determine the actual opening date. Trail grooming begins regularly when there is enough

snow and temperatures are subfreezing.

Most clubs groom each night as conditions permit, especially during busy weekends and holiday breaks. Clubs have more than \$200,000 tied up in trail grooming equipment.

Many clubs pay their groomer drivers, but some have volunteers who drive the tractors. Clubs are reimbursed by the state at a rate of \$300 per mile for funded trails, with the possibility of up to \$600 per mile in supplemental funds based on several variables.

Vilas and Oneida counties both have many enthusiastic snowmobile clubs that keep the trails in order.

Sno-Eagles Club Eagle River

The Sno-Eagles Snowmobile Club in Eagle River has a membership

of more than 500 and nonmembers are always welcome at club events.

The club grooms about 80 miles of trails, including 67.4 miles of state-funded trails. It operates three PistenBully groomers, all pulling SnoBoss drags built-in St. Germain.

The club raises funds throughout the year to ensure the trails in the Snowmobile Capital of the World remain in top condition each winter.

Big fundraising events, which help fund trail maintenance and grooming, include the Groom to Ride raffle, snowmobile trail map ad sales, Cash Raffle, staffing concessions at the World Championship Derby Complex's annual Vintage Weekend and World Championship Snowmobile Derby, concessions at the

Pond Hockey National Championships and the food tent at various events in downtown Eagle River.

The Sno-Eagles hold monthly membership meetings the third Thursday of the month from September to April, and host weekly, guided trail rides Wednesdays and Thursdays, departing from the old train depot in Eagle River. Officials noted all are welcome to join the ride.

Each year, the club selects Miss Sno-Eagle to represent the Sno-Eagles at events throughout the year.

All Sno-Eagles events can be found on the Sno-Eagles Events webpage at snoeagles.org/events.

For more information, contact club President Roger Rosenthal at roger@snoeagles.org or visit snoeagles.org.

To **CLUBS** pg. 12

Clubs from page 11**Three Lakes
Brule River Trails**

Three Lakes Brule River Trails is a volunteer organization founded in 1972, responsible for the maintenance and grooming of 186 miles of snowmobile trails from the Three Lakes area, stretching to the Michigan border in the Alvin area.

This includes 132 miles of state-funded trails, including main-corridor trails that run through the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and 54 miles of locally funded trails.

Trails are groomed with both a 2023 and 2021 John Deere tracked tractors, a 2019 New Holland tracked tractor, 2018 and 2014 PistenBully snow groomers, and a 2014 John Deere tracked utility

vehicle for light grooming and maintenance.

On average, the club grooms all of its trails four nights a week (conditions permitting).

Hundreds of volunteer hours go into keeping the trails safe, well-marked and groomed. Riders are reminded that these snowmobile trails were developed with the cooperation of private landowners, without whom there would be no trail system.

Club officials ask that riders respect their property, and the efforts of the local snowmobile club, and stay on the marked trails.

Fundraising events are held each year to help subsidize trail funding, including Snowmobile Day (Oct. 28), a chili cook-off (Dec. 30), a chicken soup cluck-off, gun and meat

raffles (Feb. 8), the annual Groom to Ride raffle, a vintage ride, the Three Lakes Shoot-Out Drag Races (Feb. 14-15) and a golf outing at Big Stone Golf Course each May.

For more information, visit threelakestrails.com, find the club on Facebook or email info@threelakestrails.com.

**Northern Lights Club
Three Lakes**

The Northern Lights Snowmobile Club (NLSC) is celebrating its 57th season in Three Lakes this year.

The club has 511 members and families on its roster. The NSLC is also a founding member of the AWSC.

The organization hosts several fundraising activities each season, primarily to support Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc., which maintains

186 miles of snowmobile trails. The trails connect you to Monico, Hiles, Alvin and Nelma, Sugar Camp, Rhinelander, and Eagle River.

Originally founded in 1967, NLSC created snowmobile trails in the Three Lakes area. Grooming and maintenance activities were handed over to Three Lakes Trails Inc. in 1984.

Club meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month from September through March, except in December, when they host a Christmas party.

A variety of club events are held, including overnight rides, a trailside weenie roast, a trailside chili dump, weekly club rides, a cornhole tournament, a spaghetti dinner and a ride for the ladies, among other events.

Another popular seasonal event is the weekly group ride. Tuesday through Thursday each week, a group of riders leave Three Lakes for a ride to a variety of destinations, usually with a stop somewhere for lunch.

The annual overnight ride is an additional event the group puts on. Each season, volunteers plan and organize a four-day, three-night snowmobiling event at a destination away from Three Lakes, with recent past destinations including Ashland, Iron River, Houghton, Iron Mountain, Mercer, Pembine and Bayfield.

The club fundraising activities this season include various raffles at many area businesses. The most popular ticket raffle is the "Groom to Ride" raffle with the first prize being a new snowmobile, available

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Club members encourage individuals to purchase their raffle tickets for the chance to win prizes at one of the many area businesses or from a NLSC board member.

Other events include a trailside weenie roast Feb. 16, 2025, and other events in conjunction with Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc.

For more information, visit northernlightsclub.com. Like and follow Northern Lights Snowmobile Club on Facebook to stay up to date.

If individuals have specific questions, contact club president Sue Frank at president@northernlightsclub.com.

Bo-Boen Club St. Germain

Having developed a well-marked trail system that utilizes grooming equipment and specifically engineered procedures that are internationally practiced, the St. Germain Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club is the largest club in the state with more than 1,200 members.

The town of St. Germain, the St. Germain Chamber of Commerce and the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club are the proud recipients of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs' (AWSC) prestigious Snowmobile Friendly Town recognition since 2019.

The Club is united with the state association AWSC to protect the future of snowmobiling through legislative initiatives and encourage safe, responsible trail riding.

As it maintains more than 100 miles of trails,

the club's income is comprised of about 30% of funding from the state via snowmobile registrations, a gas-tax formula, and nonresident trail passes. Remaining funding comes from memberships, fundraisers, raffles and donations from individuals and businesses.

Its equipment includes two Tucker Terra Sno-Cats, one New Holland tractor and Arrowhead and SnoBoss drags, both of which are manufactured in St. Germain.

Fundraisers include an annual summer golf outing, the annual Hiller's Radar Run (canceled for 2025), the Classic Sled Roundup and the Arrowhead Groomer show. The club also hosts snowmobile safety courses in December.

Club clothing is available at the Bo-Boen Store at boboen.com/store and features custom apparel including hoodies, vests, T-shirts, jackets and more.

For more information visit boboen.com or email info@boboen.com.

Frosty Club Land O' Lakes

The Frosty Snowmobile Club, headquartered in Land O' Lakes, has more than 300 members and supports trails that connect with hundreds of miles of routes in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Utilizing only two groomers including a new Holland tractor and PistenBully, as well as a brush hog, the club maintains more than 45 miles of trails, including 38 miles which are state-funded.

The club holds fundraising meals throughout the year



at local restaurants, an annual cash raffle drawing at The Alley, a radar run at Bent's Camp during Presidents Day weekend and comedy night at the Gateway Lodge.

It offers snowmobile safety classes in December and individuals can also find Frosty apparel available for purchase at area businesses.

For more information about trail conditions and upcoming events, visit frostysnoclub.com, or contact club President Phil Mendham at 715-547-6199 or mendham@newnorth.net.

Phelps Club Phelps

The Phelps Snowmobile Club and the entire Phelps area has been chosen to receive the recognition as a AWSC Snowmobile Friendly Community for 2023-27.

The club works to maintain area trails using two groomers to maintain 40 miles of state-funded trails, many in the scenic

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Donations from area businesses and trail users to help cover costs related to equipment.

Corridor trail #6 passes within a block of town. These trails will lead snowmobilers to Eagle River, Conover, Land O' Lakes, the U.P. of Michigan and Forest County to the east. The route meanders through both national and private lands and is groomed with a Sur-Trac by Snow Track.

For more information, visit phelpssnowmobileclub.com or email phelpssnomoclub@gmail.com.

Sno-Buddies Club Conover

The Conover Sno-Buddies Snowmobile Club maintains over 54 miles of beautifully groomed trails ranging from old railroad grades to pristine trails winding through county and national forest lands.

County corridor trails passing through Conover

include 8 and 13, while main trails in our area are 3, 12 and 45. When conditions permit, some lake trails cross North and South Twin Lakes, Pioneer Lake and Buckatabon Lake.

Conover added a 2024 Tucker Sno-Cat 2000 to their fleet of groomers last year. The dedicated group of drivers strive to provide some of the best trails in the area.

Conover was named a Snowmobile Friendly Community in 2022 by the AWSC. The Sno-Buddies continue to work with the community and area businesses to invite snowmobilers to Conover.

The town offers various lodging options, snowmobile rentals, excellent dining, taverns, and a gasoline/mini mart, along with many other businesses. Conover also offers a park and ride at Conover Town Park with direct trail access.

To **CLUBS** pg. 15

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Clubs from page 13

The Sno-Buddies Snowmobile Club volunteers raise money for equipment, trail signs and grooming expenses through several fundraisers during the year.

Events include brat fry events, trailside roast, a season-long poker run and BIG CA\$H raffle drawing. Additional events are held at supporting businesses to help the club raise funds.

Club meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month during the season. The meeting schedule and a calendar of events can be found on the club's website listed or its Facebook page.

For more information, visit the club's website at conoversnobuddies.com, or contact club president Randy Remblake at conoversnobuddies@gmail.com.

**Barnstormers Club
Sayner-Star Lake**

The Sayner-Star Lake Barnstormers Snowmobile Club was founded Nov. 26, 1969, in Sayner, the official birthplace of the snowmobile.

Today, the Barnstormers have over 190 family members and we continue to grow all the time. It is well known as one of the oldest snowmobile clubs in the state.

The club grooms and maintains 6 miles of unfunded trails in the town of Plum Lake and 79.5 miles of state-funded trails. The organization owns and operates three groomers that run regularly.

The club was named the American Council of Snowmobile Association's 2019 Club of the Year,

and also was inducted into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame.

Club trail maps are available at Sayner area businesses.

For more information, call club president and trail boss, Dennis Horan, at 715-542-2952 or visit saynerbarnstormers.com.

**Sugar Camp
Snowmobile Club
Sugar Camp**

The Sugar Camp Snowmobile Club was formed in 1971 and has two full-time groomers that maintain approximately 83 miles of trails each winter, 42.5 miles of which are state-funded.

The club utilizes two John Deere tractors with two SnoBoss drags, as well as a PistenBully and Boom Brush to keep trails in great shape for riders. Trail maps are available at local businesses. The club meets on the second Tuesday of the month from September through April at the Sugar Camp Fire Department.

Costs to maintain and groom the unfunded miles of trails are covered through the club's membership dues and fundraising efforts, which include the annual ice fishing jamboree held in February.

New events include a spaghetti dinner with a live band. Tickets will be limited and sold at local Sugar Camp businesses.

For more information about the trails or upcoming events, visit sugarcampsnowmobileclub.org or email club president Chris Dobbins at sugarcampsnowmobileclub@gmail.com.

**Cross Country Cruisers Club
AV-Woodruff-Minocqua**

The Cross Country Cruisers Snowmobile Club of Arbor Vitae, Woodruff and Minocqua is one of the largest snowmobile clubs in Wisconsin.

Its members help groom more than 90 miles of trails of which 80 miles are state-funded, including the Bearskin Trail area.

With four groomers and four drags, the club covers the cost of maintaining the trails with the assistance of volunteer groomer drivers.

The club plans various fundraisers throughout the year, including SNO FEST.

For more information, visit crosscountrycruisers.com or email club President Jon Cooksey at cruiservp@gmail.com.

**Minocqua Forest Riders Club
Minocqua**

The Minocqua Forest Riders Snowmobile Club grooms more than 166 total miles of trails and holds weekly rides every week.

The club has four groomers which are used for trail maintenance. Trails are groomed 6 days a week by club members.

The club holds various fundraising events throughout the snowmobile season, including an annual raffle for a new snowmobile, a Cruise for Cancer event, and monthly meetings at local establishments.

For more information, or to see where a group will be riding, along with weekly trail conditions, visit minocquaforestriders.org or email minocquaforestriders@gmail.com,

or check out the club's Facebook page.

**Sno-Skeeters Club
Manitowish Waters**

With more than 400 current members, the Sno-Skeeters Snowmobile Club has cared for trails in Manitowish Waters since 1968.

It has and grooms 24 miles of trails, all state-funded.

The club holds fundraisers to cover the cost of equipment and maintenance, and major fundraisers are its summer and winter raffles. There are club meetings the first Tuesday of each month during the season.

For more information, contact club president Barry Hopkins at 715-543-2455 or visit snoskeeters.org.

**Sno-Bunnies Club
Presque Isle-Winchester**

Comprised of more than 200 members, the Presque Isle-Winchester Sno-Bunnies Snowmobile Club was formed in 1976.


The club maintains 42 miles of state-funded trails and another 3 miles of a spur trail.

It holds several fundraisers each year, including raffles.

Additionally, area restaurants hold fundraising events, with proceeds donated to the club.

The club was also named the Presque Isle Organization of the Year in 2022 by the Presque Isle Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, contact club president Jack Hinnendael at 414-491-2711 or visit snobunnies.com. ■




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WINTER EXPERIENCES OFFERED ALL SEASON IN ST. GERMAIN

ANYONE SEEKING to have some incredible winter fun this season has the opportunity to do so in the St. Germain area.

Nestled in the heart of Vilas County with towering pines and downy white snow, the North Woods is an ideal area for outdoor enthusiasts to spend the winter months.

Winter offers a unique experience for wildlife viewing, an opportunity to see the North Woods surroundings in a new light.

And, during the winter months, the St. Germain community hosts an array of events that celebrate what many feel is the most wonderful season in the North Woods.

For snowmobilers, seasoned and novice alike, and snowmobile enthusiasts, St. Germain is located in the center of snowmobiling in Vilas County.

The area is webbed with an incredible network of trails which lead

throughout northern Wisconsin and beyond.

For many years, St. Germain has been home to the largest snowmobile club in the state of Wisconsin, the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club. Weekly rides and other events are planned throughout the winter.

When not on a snowmobile, visitors should be sure to stop by the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum, just west of town off Highway 70.

For many in the North Woods, the real fishing season begins when the lakes freeze over. The ice fishing in St. Germain is tremendous. With an endless selection of lakes to choose from — and excellent populations of walleye, crappie, perch, bluegill and northern pike — anglers will have no trouble finding a lake to suit their personal style of fishing.

Other winter sports in St. Germain include

snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fat biking and hiking on the area's many trails, including the Awassa Trail System.

There's really no better time to explore the woodland trails than winter. Visitors can experience the quiet and solitude of being deep in the forest, where the only sound they'll hear is a nearby chickadee and the crunching of pristine snow underfoot.

Community events

Holiday fun starts early in St. Germain with the Holiday Marketplace, Jingle Bell Fun Run, and Lighting Up St. Germain festivities Saturday, Nov. 30.

The day will begin at the community center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the marketplace before heading outside for the fun run from 3 to 5 p.m.

This all leads up to the Lighting Up St. Germain event which starts with a holiday parade at dusk and ends at the community center and fire department, and is followed by caroling, the lighting of the town Christmas tree, and a visit from Santa. More information on these events can be found through the St. Germain Chamber of Commerce.

The 27th annual trail



groomer show, hosted by St. Germain Walker Equipment, home of Arrowhead Groomers, will be held Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 5-6, and feature equipment displays and demonstrations, as well as fundraising concessions run by the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club. Hamblen Equipment is located at 6351 Highway 70 East.

For more information, call 715-479-4200, or visit arrowheadgroomers.com.

The 41st annual Ride

with the Champs, presented by Livingston's Arctic Cat, will be held Saturday, Feb. 15, headquartered at the Snowmobile Hall of Fame in St. Germain. Call 715-542-4463 or visit snowmobilehalloffame.com for more details.

For more information about St. Germain's winter activities and a schedule of events, contact event organizers or the chamber of commerce at st-germain.com or 715-477-2205. ■



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39TH ANNUAL WOMEN ON SNOW EVENT RETURNS IN 2025

THE 39TH ANNUAL

Women on Snow weekend will be held Jan. 23-26, 2025, on Eagle River area trails, with the Women on Snow Tour 2025 to follow on Jan. 26-Jan. 29.

Registration can be accessed through the link on Facebook @ WomenonSnow or visit womenonsnow.org.

This women-only snowmobile event, which



began in Eagle River in 1986, will include a weekend of riding based out of historic Eagle Waters

Resort, the host location for the event.

Check-in begins on Thursday evening. About 120 women will then explore the scenic snowmobile trails through Vilas and surrounding counties and visit many local businesses on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 24-25.

Sandy Voight, a WOS Board member, said, "It is an enjoyable time to get out and ride the Northwoods trails. A weekend with girls who love the sport of snowmobiling. There is time for meeting old and new friends, relaxing and socializing."

The trail rides are led by the Women on Snow board of directors and begin Friday morning and end on Saturday evening. Lunch and dinner, along with rest stops, are made at North Woods establishments along the way. Riders will ride about

100 miles a day.

The Saturday night banquet, a tradition since the first Women on Snow event, is always full of prizes and surprises. The theme for 2025 is Beach Party. Costumes are encouraged, but not required.

Another Women on Snow tradition is wearing the event hat with year bars signifying the years each participant attended past Women on Snow events. New to Women on Snow riders will receive their event hat during the banquet ceremony.

The Women on Snow Tour riders will leave Eagle Waters Resort on Sunday morning. The

tour is for a smaller group with riders who have previously ridden with Women on Snow and enjoy more aggressive riding than done on the weekend.

This year, the group will

ride to a destination in Wisconsin or Michigan, where they will stay on Sunday night.

The group will ride again on Monday and Tuesday to their next destinations and will return to Eagle Waters Resort on Wednesday. Meal and rest stops are made during the daily rides. During the tour, riders will carry their own provisions on their snowmobiles, except for oil and a small bag with medications, which can be put in the support vehicle. Women on Snow weekend prices include all lodging, lunch and dinner meals on Friday and Saturday, entertainment and gas for the snowmobiles.

The price for the weekend is \$385 per person. Included in the tour package of \$400 per person are lodging, meals and gas. Refreshments, oil and incidentals along the trail are not included. ■



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WINMAN TRAILS ANNOUNCES BASECAMP A NEW ERA OF ADVENTURE IN THE NORTH WOODS

WINMAN TRAILS is excited to announce BaseCamp, a new project designed to transform WinMan from a day stop into an overnight destination.

Offering on-site lodging and a second trailhead, BaseCamp will allow visitors to fully immerse themselves in adventure, with seamless access to biking, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing on the renowned WinMan trail system.

BaseCamp vision

Responding to community feedback, BaseCamp is set to enhance the trail experience while creating a sustainable revenue stream for maintenance and growth.

With a range of lodging options — including tent sites, RV sites and cabins — visitors will now be able to extend their stay, making their adventures longer, more convenient and more memorable.

Adventure launchpad

BaseCamp isn't just a gateway to WinMan Trails — it's a launchpad for exploring the entire North Woods.

Visitors will have access to paved trails, pristine waterways and old-growth forests, supported by local guides, outfitters and

special community events.

Funding the future

To bring BaseCamp to life, WinMan is launching a capital campaign to raise \$1.1 million, with facilities expected to generate over \$400,000 annually.

Each stay at BaseCamp will help sustain and expand the trail system, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the same adventure.

Building BaseCamp

There are several ways to support the BaseCamp project:

- **Donate:** Every contribution, big or small, brings us closer to their goal.
- **Naming Opportunities:** Leave a legacy by naming a cabin, tent site or RV spot, and share a personal story behind it.
- **Spread the Word:** Help build excitement and momentum by sharing the campaign with networks.

For more information about the BaseCamp campaign and ways to contribute, visit WinManTrails.com/BaseCamp or contact Sam Wolter, Director of Community Engagement, at Sam@WinManTrails.com. ■

EAGLE RIVER OFFERS A WINTER WONDERLAND OF ACTIVITIES



WITH A VARIETY of recreational activities and community events for the entire family, Eagle River can give visitors a whole new perspective on having fun in the winter.

Eagle River is known as the Snowmobile Capital of the World® and the Hockey Capital of Wisconsin™.

The Vilas County community has made the most of the snow and winter beauty by mapping out and grooming trails for snowmobilers, cross-country skiers and snowshoers.

The local members of Sno-Eagles Snowmobile Club volunteer hours of time and energy to manicure and maintain trail systems for guests. There are more than 500 miles of scenic snowmobile trails in the area to explore the North Woods. Joining the club offers an opportunity to purchase a state snowmobile trail pass for a reduced fee.

For cross-country skiers, the Nordmarka Ski Club maintains machine-

groomed trails at Eagle River Golf Course for both skating and traditional skiing through the woods. In addition, the Three Eagle Trail offers cross-country skiing on a 5-mile trail between Eagle River and Three Lakes.

The local Eagle River Recreation Association operates the historic Eagle River Sports Arena, known by locals as “The Dome.” It is home to numerous youth hockey teams, the Northland Pines High School Eagles boys and girls hockey teams, the Wisconsin Windigo, and the Eagle River Falcons, a men’s hockey team that plays many Friday and Saturday nights during the winter months.

In addition, the Wisconsin Hockey Hall of Fame was founded in 1975 and is housed in the Eagle River Sports Arena. The hall was established to honor outstanding individuals responsible for the development, growth and success of amateur ice hockey in Wisconsin. The hall, on Highway 70 East, is

open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the season, when the rink is open.

Eagle River is noted for the world’s largest chain of inland freshwater lakes, and for its many events. In combination with the Three Lakes Chain, there are a total of 28 navigable lakes.

The Chain, and many other area lakes, provide opportunities for ice-fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and ice skating during the winter months.

There are many other lakes in the area that offer winter recreation opportunities. Department of Natural Resources safety officers remind those

venturing out on the ice to check with local sport shops and chambers about ice conditions.

During the winter, the biggest event in Eagle River is the World Championship Snowmobile Derby, which is slated to be held for the 62nd time Jan. 16-19. The weekend before, Jan. 9-12, the World Championship Derby Complex will host the 24th Vintage World Championship Snowmobile Races.

Other events at the Derby Complex this winter include the fifth World Championship Pro Enduro Jan. 18-19, Legend Laps Feb. 13, and the World Series of Snowmobile Racing Feb. 21-23.

Another huge

winter event is the 18th anniversary Labatt Blue/USA Hockey Pond Hockey National Championships, which will be held Feb. 7-9 on Dollar Lake. There will be more than 300 teams in 21 no-check divisions playing four-on-four hockey on about two dozen outdoor rinks.

And, if the weather cooperates, a huge ice castle is built in downtown Eagle River each winter. The Eagle River Area Fire Department coordinates the project with assistance from volunteers.

For more information, call the Eagle River Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center at 715-479-6400 or visit eagleriver.org. ■



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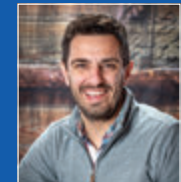
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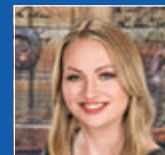
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EAGLE RIVER IS HOME TO HISTORIC ICE CASTLE

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

MANY FACTORS have to coincide correctly for the ever-popular ice castle attraction to be erected in downtown Eagle River.

The castle is built adjacent to the historic Chicago & Northwestern Railway Depot at 116 S. Railroad St., and dates back to Eagle River's King Winter Festival in 1933.

Construction of the 20-foot-tall ice castles require more than 700 hours of labor over a five-day span cutting, hauling and hand-placing nearly 3,000 10-by-20-inch ice blocks weighing in at 60 to 70 pounds each.

It is currently built by volunteers from the Eagle River Area Fire Department out of ice blocks cut from local Silver Lake.

Historic structure

After the initial build in 1933, a second castle was not erected until the winter of 1935-36 and was made

up of only 250 blocks of ice.

The tradition and structure continued to grow in size and stature, soon becoming a popular annual attraction for the area.

F. W. Janusch, a Chicago architect and summer resident in the area, took control of designing the castle until 1942. During this time, ice was provided by Charles Hanke, owner of the C.H. Hanke Ice Co.

Once World War II started, construction of the castle was halted until 1948, when Hanke built the first postwar palace on his front lawn. He continued designing the castles until about 1980, when his grandson, Jack Thomas, took over.

Throughout Hanke's reign as designer, organization of the build changed hands multiple times.

In the '50s and '60s, the Eagle River Lions Club led the project, but once they took over operation of the World Championship Snowmobile Derby,



the Eagle River Area Fire Department stepped in to manage, led by then-Assistant Chief Jack Thomas. His legacy lives on, as the department continues to use Thomas' structures as a blueprint.

The design of the castle changes each year so visitors can enjoy a different structure each time it is erected, but plans have been done the same for decades — with a to-scale size designed using Legos.

Community support

In addition to all of the volunteer time, a number of costs are involved with erecting the ice castle each year.

Equipment needs to be maintained and upgraded, gasoline to operate the cutting equipment and trucks to haul the blocks

from the lake to the building site, and lights to illuminate the castle for nighttime enjoyment add up.

Not to mention, volunteers work up quite an appetite in the frigid December temperatures of northern Wisconsin as they cut, haul and stack heavy ice blocks.

To help cover these costs, many local businesses donate funds as well as in kind support in the way of meals, hot chocolate and other treats for volunteers. Donation boxes also are stationed at the ice castle for visitors to show their appreciation to the fire department.

Fickle winters

But each season, factors such as cold-enough temperatures, thick-enough ice

on the lake and a cold forecast all play into whether or not the magnificent castle will be built.

An ice castle was last erected in 2022, but according to Fire Chief Michael Anderson, in 2019 and 2020 there were rain storms on top of snow that slushed the lakes, and in 2021 the ice just did not really grow to the proper thickness on the lake.

The same thing occurred the winter of 2023, which had a cold start but fizzled out before enough ice could form on the lakes.

Early in December a series of very cold nights and below-freezing days looked to be setting up conditions on Silver Lake to freeze to the necessary 14 inches, but warmer

To **ICE CASTLE** pg. 28



TICKETS ON SALE FOR GROOM TO RIDE FUNDRAISER

GROOM TO RIDE, a major fundraiser for local snowmobile clubs, launched in November and is now underway.

The event is sponsored by Trackside in Eagle River and co-sponsored by four area snowmobile clubs — Sno-Eagles of Eagle River, Sno-Buddies of Conover, Northern Lights Snowmobile Club of Three Lakes and the Phelps Snowmobile Club.

Individuals looking to support these clubs and the work they do for area snowmobile trails are urged to buy raffle tickets throughout the snowmobiling season at local establishments for the chance to win some great prizes.

First prize is a 2025 Ski-Doo MXZ Sport 600 EFI 137" snowmobile donated by Trackside, and second prize is 2026

World Championship Snowmobile Derby Tickets for four, reserved indoor Hot Seat including admission and parking.

Third prize is breakfast for two at Sorge's Daybreak Diner; a weekday snowmobile rental at The Boathouse; a two-night stay for four at Spiritview Lakeside; dinner for two at Layton's 1881 Room and \$100 cash.

Fourth prize is a two-

night stay at Peaceful Pines Resort; a one-day UTV or snowmobile rental from TrackSide; \$100 gift card from Buckshot's North.

Fifth prize is a two-night winter stay at Phelps Hillside Resort/Phelps Lakeview Lodge; \$100 Fuel from Phelps Convenience Center.

Sixth prize is a two-night (up to four persons) stay at Bauer's Dam Resort and \$100 to use at Bauer's Dam Resort.

Raffle tickets cost \$10 each or three for \$20 and are available at local restaurants, bars, resorts, marinas, businesses, and at the World Snowmobile Headquarters in Eagle River. The drawing will be held at the World Championship Derby Complex on Saturday, March 15, 2025, at 5 p.m.

The winner does not need to be present.

"Having well-maintained snowmobile trails is critical to the local economy. Not all snowmobile trails receive state funding, and state funds do not cover all the costs of maintaining the funded trails. The clubs will use funds raised to maintain area snowmobile trails," said a snowmobile club official.

This event would not be possible without the support from Track Side, Private Chef Luke, the World Championship Derby Complex, Pike's Pine Isle Lodge, Stone Harbor Marina, SpiritView Lakeside Restaurant, 32 South Bar and Grill, Bauer's Dam Resort, and the local businesses that are promoting and selling the raffle tickets. ■

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WINTER SPORTS AND EVENTS IN THREE LAKES

THE TOWN OF THREE LAKES is a winter sports venue offering forest trails and scenic lakes to suit snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, snowshoers and ice anglers.

A gateway to the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, this quaint little town offers 180-plus miles of groomed snowmobile trails, access to national forest ski trails, and the world's largest chain of freshwater lakes.

The Three Lakes Chain, along with other lakes in the area, offers angling diversity that ranges from good crappie, perch and other panfish action, to tip-up fishing for walleye

and northern pike.

Perch and crappie can be found in good numbers all winter off the many rock bars on the Chain. Other nearby lakes, such as Thunder, Maple, Spirit, Butternut, Franklin, Sevenmile and Whitefish, hold northern pike, panfish, and some walleye.

To provide more winter excitement for residents and vacationers alike, organizations sponsor several winter events, including poker runs for snowmobilers in January and February, and guided snowmobile rides every week.

With the use of three groomers, Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc.

keeps more than 180 miles of state-funded and club trails groomed to the best possible condition all winter.

Volunteers with Three Lakes-Brule River Trails, the trail grooming organization, and the Northern Lights Snowmobile Club, a social group, put in hundreds of hours to prepare and maintain the trail network.

A favorite of snowmobilers is a 65-mile loop encompassing the Kimball Creek trail that includes trails in Three Lakes, Eagle River, and south to Hiles, all passing through the national forest.

There are county maps of the entire trail system available for both Oneida and Vilas counties, making touring easier.

Cross-country skiers will find miles of groomed trails, including the Three Eagle Trail offering 5 miles of ski trails, just north of Three Lakes off Highway 45.

Skiers also can venture east toward Franklin Lake, where they will find the Anvil Lake and Nicolet North trails.

Snowshoe enthusiasts can find marked trails and plenty of national forest logging roads for bushwhacking. The Tara Lila Ripco Road Unit Trail, just north of Sugar Camp, is the newest snowshoe trail network and also includes a system of groomed fat-tire bike trails.

Winter events

The Three Lakes community plans several events during the winter season. For the most up-to-date information, contact event organizers

closer to the scheduled time and date for any updates or cancellations.

Santa will attend the Festival of Lights at Cy Williams Park, featuring the lighting of the tree, treats and refreshments Nov. 29, followed by the tenth annual Jingle Mingle celebration downtown Nov. 30. Area shops and establishments will feature special holiday deals, free snacks, and prizes. Contact the Visitors Bureau for more information.

Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc. will host a chili cook-off Dec. 28 from noon to 3 p.m. at Pine Isle Lodge. The event goes to support maintenance of local snowmobile trails.

The Three Lakes Tavern League will host their first Poker Run of the season,

January 16-18, with the final party at Headwater Bar & Grill in Hiles.

A chicken soup cluck-off will be held Jan. 25 at Lindy's Hideaway from 2 to 5 p.m., benefitting Three Lakes Trails.

On Feb. 1, SpiritView Lakeside will hold an LSR Vintage ride. Starting at Spiritview Lakeside and ending at Tavern on the Loop. Bring your vintage sleds and equipment from yester-year. Proceeds benefit Three Lakes Brule River Trails. Spiritview will also host the Three Lakes Trails Gun & Meat Raffle on Feb. 8.

Three Lakes Tavern League will put on its second poker run for the season from Feb. 13-15 with the closing party at Lindy's

To **THREE LAKES** pg. 28



Events from page 5

Dec. 13, Presque Isle — Youths and families are invited to the Old Time Christmas event at Pipke Park from 5 to 8 p.m. Santa will arrive in his sleigh, and sledding and ice skating under the lights will be available (weather permitting). Horse-drawn sleigh rides will also be available. Call 715-686-2910 or visit presqueisle.com.

Dec. 14, Eagle River — Mistletoe Magic in downtown Eagle River will provide participants with the chance to finish their Christmas shopping and register to win prizes at participating businesses. The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 715-479-6400.

Dec. 14-15, Land O' Lakes — Frosty Snowmobile Club will hold its annual benefit breakfast at Sunrise Lodge, located on Lac Vieux Desert. Serving time is 7 to 11 a.m. each day.

Dec. 21, Conover — The annual poker run put on by the Conover Sno-Buddies snowmobile club begins. Participants can pick up a game card at local area businesses, then ride the trails to collect stamps. A draw party will be held in March, 2025. Visit conoversnobuddies.com.

Dec. 28, Three Lakes — Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc. will host a chili cook-off from noon to 3 p.m. at Pike's Pine Isle Lodge. The event goes to support maintenance of local snowmobile trails. Find the club on Facebook.

Dec. 30, Conover — A nighttime sledding party is planned from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Conover Town Park sledding hill. Hot dogs, chips and hot cocoa will be served alongside an evening of sledding, s'mores and a warming bonfire. Donations toward park improvements are appreciated.

Dec. 31, Eagle River — Trees For Tomorrow will host a New Year's Eve Candlelight Hike from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person and includes a self-guided candlelight hike through the campus forest trail. Snowshoes will be optional on the packed-down and lit trail. Hot chocolate and snacks will be available by the bonfire. No registration is necessary. Youths ages five and younger may attend at no charge. Visit treesfortomorrow.com.

JANUARY

Jan. 4, Land O' Lakes — Frosty Snowmobile Club will put on a Benefit



Breakfast Night this weekend, at Pine Cone Cafe from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Jan. 9-12, Eagle River — The 24th Vintage World Championship Snowmobile races will be held at the Derby Complex, featuring snowmobiles from the 1960s, '70s and '80s. Call 715-479-4424 or visit derbycomplex.com for racing details.

Jan. 17-18, Minocqua — Cross Country Cruisers SnoFest 2025 fundraising event kicks off Friday,

Jan. 17, with fish fry and lasagna dinners at 4 p.m. On Saturday the main event will continue with a Vintage Snowmobile Show, Shine and Ride event, including awards and guided vintage rides. Activities start at 8 a.m. Food, beverages, music, games, raffles and groomer rides will take place. Admission is free. Call 608-807-9643 or visit crosscountrycruisers.com.

Jan. 11, Conover — The Conover Sno-Buddies and the Phelps Snowmobile Club will team up for a nostalgic trailside roast. It is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The trailside roast, held at the intersection of trails 8/45 and 6 near Blong Road, will feature hot dogs, brats, s'mores, hot cocoa and more. Visit conoversnobuddies.com.

Jan. 16-19, Eagle River — The 62nd annual World Championship Snowmobile Derby and Pro Enduro will be held at the Derby Complex. The event

will include oval racing, Friday Night Thunder, mini oval racing and more. Championship and Enduro races will be held Sunday, Jan. 21. Call 715-479-4424 or visit derbycomplex.com for racing details.

Jan. 23-26, Eagle River — The 39th annual Women on Snow event is a snowmobiling weekend for women only. Trail rides are planned throughout the area. The event will be headquartered at Eagle Waters Resort, followed by the Jan. 28-Feb. 1 Women on Snow Tour. Visit womenonsnow.org.

Jan. 24-25, Eagle River — The annual Pitlik's Sand Beach Resort Winter Regatta will feature a pond hockey and cornhole tournament. There will be a fish fry event Friday night and kids' games and activities on Saturday. Live music, food and raffles will be available. For more information, visit pitlikresort.com.



FEBRUARY

Feb. 7-8, Minocqua — The American Pond Hockey Invitational tournament features authentic elements like a wood-burning sauna for registrants to use, military-grade shelters on the lake, live music and entertainment, prize giveaways, craft beer and concessions, winter tailgate games, activities for children, and stadium seating and lights. This pond hockey tournament is free for spectators, and final rosters are due by Jan. 1. Visit minocqua.org.

Feb. 1, Eagle River — The Winter Challenge will be held at the Ripco Road Unit, beginning at 10 a.m. It is a 5.1 Km race, and it is \$20 to register. All race proceeds will be donated to Trees for Tomorrow and the Three Eagle Trail Foundation. For more information, please contact race director Chris Nafziger at himanajirace@gmail.com.

Feb. 1, Minocqua — The Wolf Tracks Rendezvous 42K marathon and 24K half-marathon cross-country ski races will be held in waves from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m., with awards beginning at 1 p.m. at Minocqua Winter Park. Visit minocquawinterpark.org.

Feb. 5-6, St. Germain — The 28th annual Groomer Show, hosted by St. Germain-based Walker Equipment, home of Arrowhead Groomers, will feature equipment displays and demonstrations, as well as fundraising food concessions run by the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club. Call 715-479-4200 or visit arrowheadgroomers.com.

Feb. 7-9, Eagle River — The

19th annual Labatt Blue/USA Hockey Pond Hockey National Championships will be held on Dollar Lake starting at 8 a.m. each day. There will be four-on-four teams in 21 divisions on natural ice outdoor rinks. Call 715-479-6400 or visit eagleriver.org.

Feb. 13, Eagle River — The Legend Laps will be held at the World Championship Derby Complex. Sponsored by Pats Motorsports, this live event is for collectors, drivers and racers of oval race snowmobiles to take laps on the legendary Derby oval track in a safe, noncompetitive format. The event is a fundraiser for the Snowmobile Hall of Fame in St. Germain and the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame in Eagle River. Phone 715-479-4424 or visit derbycomplex.com.

Feb. 14-15, St. Germain — The 41st annual Ride with the Champs allows attendees to choose from six unique group rides through the North Woods scenery. Breakfast buffet, dinner and cocktails are provided by Whitetail Inn. Call 715-542-4463 or visit snowmobilehalloffame.com.

Feb. 14-15, Three Lakes — Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc. will hold its Three Lakes Shootout drag races on Spirit Lake.

Feb. 15, Phelps — Sand Lake Pub will hold its ice-fishing tournament on Big Sand Lake from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., with prizes awarded after the tournament. Call 715-545-3200, email mprimich@gmail.com or visit facebook.com/SandLakePub.

Feb. 15, Conover — Northwoods Blizzard Blast will be held from 10 a.m.

to 4 p.m. at Conover Town Park, offering a variety of activities including horse-drawn sleigh rides, giant ski races, recliner races, ice bowling, slap shot hockey, firefighter competitions, children's activities, food and refreshments, an artisan bazaar, and archery and snowshoeing demonstrations. Back also is the popular Snow Bar, along with heated restrooms and warming fires. Event proceeds benefit area fire and emergency medical services departments. Call 715-547-8120 or visit northwoodsblizzardblast.com.

Feb. 16, Conover — The annual Great Northern Jerk-Off, held at Club 45 Bar and Grill, starts at 5:30 p.m. Participants take part in a jerky-making competition, while the public samples and votes. Proceeds go to Warm The Children, for winter clothing for area children. Call 715-477-0575.

Feb. 15, Land O' Lakes — Hundreds of sledgers gather on Mamie Lake at Bent's Camp to see how fast a snowmobile can go over ice. The Radar Run begins at 11 a.m., ends with a Bikini Run, and serves as a fundraiser for the Frosty Snowmobile Club. Visit frostysnoclub.com.

Feb. 16, Three Lakes — A trailside weenie-roast is scheduled to benefit two Three Lakes snowmobile organizations, Three Lakes-Brule River Trails Inc. and Northern Lights Snowmobile Club Inc. For the latest details, find the clubs on Facebook.

Feb. 22, Three Lakes — The infamous Junker Sled event returns to Three Lakes, with races starting at 10 a.m. near



Don Burnside Park. Beater sleds will race in a series of categories in this lighthearted and fun event. There is a \$5 spectator fee. Visit junkersled.com.

Feb. 22, Presque Isle — The Winter Fest and Ice Fishing Jamboree will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with ice-fishing on Presque Isle Lake. Wilderness Park will be set up for registration of fish caught, and food and other activities will make this fun for all ages. Call 715-686-2910 or visit presqueisle.com.

MARCH

March 1, Conover — Conover Sno-Buddies will host their fifth annual Poker Run Wrap Party at Twin Lake Pub from 1 to 4 p.m. Riders can get a game card at local businesses, then stop at local businesses to fill

out their card. The wrap party will offer raffles, 50-50 games, food and more. Proceeds benefit the Conover trail system. Visit conoversnobuddies.com.

March 14-15, Eagle River — The World Series of Snowmobile Racing will be held at the World Championship Derby Complex. The event will feature races in various categories including vintage, oval, junior and youth classes. Call 715-479-4424 or visit derbycomplex.com for racing details.

March 17, Conover — The Conover Sno-Buddies will host a fundraising St. Paddy's Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner from 4:30 to 8 p.m., at Club 45 Bar and Grill in Conover. Proceeds benefit the Conover snowmobile trail system. Visit conoversnobuddies.com. ■



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SNOWMOBILE HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM PROVIDES HISTORY; SPECIAL EVENTS SET IN FEBRUARY



ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR

winter attractions in the North Woods is the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum in St. Germain, with its racing history displays.

The Snowmobile Hall of Fame (SHOF) offers something of interest for everyone. Admission is free, although a donation box is provided. The hall is a nonprofit corporation that depends on donations from visitors, fundraisers, individual memberships and corporate sponsorships.

Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays, the hall is located at 8481 Highway 70 W., just one mile west of the St. Germain Chamber of Commerce, on Sled World Boulevard. Appointments to visit the museum are also available by calling 715-542-4463.

In the winter, the museum is accessible by snowmobile trails that run along Highway 70.

All operations are in one location on the 20-acre

SHOF campus. Visitors can see exhibits and read the exciting histories of more than 40 inductees into the SHOF. Sleds of some of the SHOF racers are on display.

Many makes of snowmobiles have been donated to the hall, ranging from Polaris, Arctic Cat, Yamaha and Ski-Doo to Moto-Ski, Chaparral, Bolens and Ariens.

Visitors can stop in and see historic race sleds, trophies, clothing and the Ramstad photo collection. Championship sleds on display include oval, enduro, hill climb, cross-county, watercross, snocross and drag sleds.

The museum's display is always changing; many machines are on loan, and their owners can take them at any time, so visitors wanting to see a particular sled should contact staff ahead of time to make sure it is available at the time of their visit.

Special events

The fourth annual Legend Laps snowmobile

show and exhibition will be held at the World Championship Derby Complex (WCDC) in Eagle River Thursday, Feb. 13. Sponsored by Pat's Motorsports of Greenland, Mich., this live event is for collectors, drivers and racers of oval race snowmobiles to make laps on the legendary Derby oval track in a safe, non-competition format.

Legend Laps is a partnership event between the WCDC, the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum, the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame, and Country Cat. A portion of the proceeds from Legend Laps will benefit the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum in St. Germain and the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame in Eagle River.

For race fans, Legend Laps will showcase many famous drivers along with their iconic original, reproduction and/or

collectible race sleds on the famed half-mile world championship track.

Participating drivers and sled owners will relive the famed ice oval, sleds, and glory representing every storied era of snowmobile oval racing. Drivers, collectors, and racers can participate in this event, which will be limited to 40 sleds.

"Many of these drivers and sleds have not seen the ice for over 30 years," said Craig Marchbank, vice president, race director and co-owner at WCDC. "This is a great opportunity for drivers, collectors, and fans to be part of a historic event, and to experience the track again, or for their first time. Plus it's a fundraiser for both snowmobile halls of fame."

More information and registration forms are available at derbycomplex.com. Participation is limited, so reserve a spot early.

Legend Laps will kick off a big weekend of

snowmobile events in the North Woods, culminating with the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum's annual fundraising Ride with the Champs, and SHOF induction ceremony in St. Germain on Saturday, Feb. 15.

Ride with the Champs, this year celebrating its 41st year, is presented by Livingston's Arctic Cat of Hillsboro, N.H. It will take place Friday and Saturday, Feb. 13-15.

2025 Ride with the Champs activities start Friday with the opportunity to join one of three poker runs, each with its own format, which will leave from the SHOF at 9 a.m.

The Ride with the Champs Fish Fry will follow the poker run at 5:30 p.m. at Whitetail Inn, 9038 Highway 70 W. in St. Germain. The cost of the fish fry is \$35, which includes a fish/chicken dinner buffet followed

To **MUSEUM** pg. 28

Museum from page 27

by a special presentation. The fish fry will include a series of guest speakers, to be announced at a later date.

On Saturday, Ride with the Champs begins with a 7 a.m. breakfast at Whitetail Inn, followed by celebrity introductions and a group photo. Ride with the Champs sledders will have the opportunity to choose from six different rides, divided into both vintage and late-model groups, with participating sledders riding alongside some of snowmobiling's more legendary racers, engineers, tuners and pioneers.

The trail rides start and end at Whitetail Inn. The day's festivities wrap up at Whitetail Inn, beginning at 5 p.m. with cocktails and an autograph session, followed by dinner, live and silent auctions, and the 2024 SHOF induction ceremony.

This year's four

inductees will include Corey Davidson, a tour de force in snowmobile competition, who boasts a career spanning more than three decades; Levi LaVallee, who began his hall of fame career in snocross racing and is one of the most recognizable and popular snowmobile racers/athletes of the modern snocross and freestyle competition era; Russ Lemke, a self-described self-taught engineer, who developed and built some of the most powerful and reliable snowmobile racing engines to ever grace a racetrack; and Jeff Ludwig, often regarded as the ultimate independent, whose impressive career spanned more than four decades.

Memberships to the hall also are available. For more information on the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum or the 2025 Ride with the Champs, call 715-542-4463 or visit snowmobilehalloffame.com. ■

Three Lakes from page 23

Hideaway and Swamp Witch Inn.

Shootout-drag races are scheduled Feb. 14-15 on Spirit Lake, followed by the trailside weenie roast slated for Feb. 16. The weenie roast is sponsored by Northern Lights Snowmobile Club.

The infamous Junker Sled event returns to Three

Lakes Feb. 22, with races starting at 10 a.m. near Don Burnside Park. Beater sleds will race in a series of categories in this light-hearted and fun event. Visit junkersled.com for more information.

Downtown Three Lakes, Inc. will again host March Mania, a downtown shopping event Saturday, March 15. Be sure to visit downtown for specials,

samples, and more.

For more information regarding Northern Lights Snowmobile Club or Three Lakes-Brule River Trails events and club information, find the clubs on Facebook.

For more information or to confirm other event dates, call the Three Lakes Area Visitors Bureau at 715-546-3344 or check threelakes.com/events. ■

Ice Castle from page 21

temperatures paired with rain and sleet that arrived in the North Woods hindered ice formation.

Ice thickness on Silver Lake needs to measure 14 solid inches for local volunteer firefighters to cut and harvest ice blocks for an ice castle. In addition to being at the mercy of fickle meteorologic considerations, the window for constructing an ice castle is relatively short, running between Christmas and the run-up to the World Championship Snowmobile Derby, this year slated to be held Jan. 16-19, 2025.

"We won't build it Derby weekend and we generally won't build it after Derby weekend," said Anderson. "Usually if it's not built by then we just scratch it because it gets pretty late in

the season at that point."

But since it is something that is not guaranteed and does not happen each year, that can make the years where a castle appears much more rewarding. Lit from within, the ice castle provides photo opportunities for residents and visitors alike both in the daytime as well as at night.

The impressive castle stands until mid-February, as weather allows.

Volunteer help necessary

Since the castle is built by volunteers, the many hours of work that go into it have to be done in their spare time, usually around working full-time jobs.

"Ideally, we like to do it between Christmas and New Year's, just because so many of our guys are available," said Lieutenant

Mark Zima. "A lot of places are closed during that time, or guys are using up personal time they've got leftover."

Anderson noted that as an organization, the department takes a lot of pride in building the castle and really tries to own it. He added the ice castle projects are good for building camaraderie and teamwork among department members.

Although it is a lot of work, the department hopes this winter will provide the proper weather to be able to build the structure.

Visitors to the area also love being able to stop for a photo op in front of the impressive icy structure.

"I'll bet there have been a million pictures of people in front of and around the ice castle," Anderson said. ■

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THREE LAKES PREPARES FOR THE ANNUAL JUNKER SLED RACE WEEKEND

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

WHAT STARTED OUT

as a humorous suggestion some years back went on to collect momentum when enough people wanted in on the laugh. That is how the Junker Sled Race in Three Lakes was born.

Slated next year to be held Saturday, Feb. 22, near Don Burnside Park in Three Lakes, snowmobile fans and racers are invited to come and experience the cheap thrill that is Junker Sled Weekend. Racing begins at 10 a.m., and there is a \$5 spectator fee to attend.

According to the event website, the idea for the race started in the hunting shack of Chris Dobbins' grandfather in Sugar Camp, where Dobbins was hosting a trail ride weekend with friends.

Late on a Saturday night, one of Dobbins' friends, Nick Johnson, suggested that they

should do two rides a winter — but instead of their normal trail sleds for the second ride, they would be required to bring some \$500 beaters.

The friends had a laugh and all but forgot about the plan, but Dobbins kept thinking of the possibilities.

He then decided that the Junker Sled event needed to happen, but began reformulating the logistics and ultimately decided that keeping the chaos in one location was the solution.

Dobbins shared his idea to race \$500 old beaters to several friends, and it was very well received. One of those friends was John Kendall, who was immediately in on the plan, and they decided to host the event on Kendall's property, locally known as The Barn. This was how the first Junker Sled Weekend came to be.

The first year boasted

a modest 11 racers, but race day was a blast for participants. The event continued to grow for three years, headquartered at The Barn. Spectator turnout was great for this new event, which included grilled brats, music and what organizers called "legendary post-parties."

Once the high of the fumes dissipated, the boys in charge realized that insurance was a legitimate concern. Suddenly, Kendall and Dobbins found themselves sitting in on a Three Lakes town meeting, hoping for approval to use a town park to host Junker Sled Weekend. The town approved the request, and the new venue became home to the Junker Sled Races.

Dobbins said his biggest drive behind creating the junker races was to offer competitive fun for snowmobile enthusiasts starting at a very amateur skill level.

"Racing can seem intimidating to get into, and Junker wants to welcome anyone, especially people who thought they'd never enter a race," he said.

Organizers explained they want to run in parallel with other sanctioned races, offering the "for fun" event for weekend warriors to compete with small budgets and limited time.

"We want everyone who shows up to race to actually get to race, and to also enjoy the camaraderie. You'll have a hard time finding another competitive event with more racers working on each others' machines," organizers said.

This event has been built by a group of people who love snowmobiles and a good laugh. It is a perfect mix of competition, hilarity and unreliability (sleds only — the people are great!).

It draws a variety of people, including some who get creative with the body work, paint jobs and modifications while being mindful of the \$500 price limit, while others purchase their junkers the day ahead of the event.

Although racing only takes place on Saturday, organizers refer to the event as Junker Sled Weekend because of the many "scary-looking things sporting skis, tracks and race numbers" that can be spotted all around town on Friday afternoon. Participants can be found Sunday morning with crooked smiles, grabbing breakfast on their way to help clean up and already making plans for the next year.

"We welcome you to come watch ... or race! We just hope your snowmobile blows up before ours does," organizers said. ■



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DOG SLED RACING RETURNS TO LAND 'O LAKES FEB. 1-2

THE ANNUAL Three Bear Sled Dog Races will bring back the North Woods tradition of sled dog racing to Land O' Lakes for a weekend of racing fun Feb. 1-2, 2025. A true community event, many organizations, businesses and volunteers band together to put on the races every year. From planning to organizing to trail building, this popular winter activity draws large crowds to the two-day event. It is known as one of the premier spectator races in the northern Midwest and is a favorite destination for mushers alike. Racers come from across the United States to participate.

The Three Bear offers beautiful trails in eight, six, four and two-dog races, as well as juniors and skijoring classes. Area civic groups also join in the festivities.

Several activities will also be going on throughout the duration of the races. Members of the Frosty Club help groom and prepare trails for the races each year, while the Land O' Lakes Chamber of Commerce also assists in preparing the town for expected large crowds.

Races begin at the Land O' Lakes Town Hall before heading through wooded areas. Warming bonfires, refreshments and treats

are provided to visitors by volunteers, along with youth activities.

Four and six-dog adult sled classes are accredited by the International Federation of Sleddog Sports, including Nordic breeds. Drivers must have a current driver identification number to earn World Cup points. Drivers entering the registered breed classes must be prepared to present registration papers to race officials. For the latest information and updates, visit [Facebook.com/threebearsleddograces/](https://facebook.com/threebearsleddograces/). ■

A NEW ADVENTURE COMES TO BOULDER JUNCTION

BOULDER JUNCTION RESIDENTS and visitors will soon have a different way to navigate through the woods in the winter.

The Boulder Junction Community Foundation is proud to assist in the community's new, innovative winter recreation activity — the skating ribbon.

The foundation's \$5,000 fall cycle grant award, made possible by donors, will aid the Town of Boulder Junction in purchasing a Zamboni 200 pull-behind Ice-Surfacing Machine. This unique piece of equipment will also

improve the maintenance of Winter Park's existing skating rink.

A new ribbon course will utilize an existing hiking trail in a .8 mile loop, which will begin and end at Boulder Junction's Winter Park.

The park's warming hut also provides a limited selection of "borrow skates" for those who may not have skates of their own.

Join the foundation in congratulating the Boulder Junction Parks Board in bringing yet another great activity to the North Woods. ■



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- ❄️ Ice Skating
- ❄️ Downhill Sledding

December 30th
Sledding & Skating Party
Under the Lights, Town Park



NORTHWOODS BLIZZARD BLAST

- ❄️ Children's Carnival
- ❄️ Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides
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- ❄️ Ice Bowling
- ❄️ Slap Shot Hockey
- ❄️ Candy Flurry
- ❄️ Firefighter Challenge
- ❄️ Snow Bar
- ❄️ Artisan Bazaar

February 15th
Flurries of Fun for Everyone
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northwoodsblizzardblast.com

CONOVER SNO-BUDDIES SNOWMOBILE CLUB

- ❄️ **Dec 22-Mar 1 Poker Run**
Conover & surrounding area businesses
- ❄️ **Jan 11-Trailside Roast**
Int. of trails 8 & 6 near Blong Road, 10a-2p
- ❄️ **Mar 1-Poker Run Draw Party**
R & R Twin Lake Pub, 1p-4p
- ❄️ **Mar 15-Groom-to-Ride Party**
TrackSide
- ❄️ **Mar 17-St. Paddy's Dinner**
Club 45, 4p
- ❄️ **May 25-Trail Fundraiser**
Log Cabin, 3p-7p
conoversnobuddies.com

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ISSUED FOR SNOWMOBILERS



BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

VILAS AND ONEIDA county sheriff's offices alongside the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Oneida County Forestry Department and the Oneida County Snowmobile Council, remind local snowmobile enthusiasts and those visiting the area of precautions to adhere to before hitting the trails to ensure a safe and enjoyable snowmobile experience.

Officials warn that riders should take a snowmobile safety course ahead of hitting the trails, and never drink alcohol before operating a snowmobile or any other vehicle or machinery.

Speed limits of 55 mph should be adhered to, especially at night, and operators should always ride within their ability and experience. Snowmobilers must always stop at stop signs, especially when crossing roadways, stay to the right and only pass other sledders with appropriate and extreme caution.

Groomers are out to keep trails in good riding shape and should be

respected by riders when encountered. Any trail hazards should be reported to authorities immediately for the safety of others.

In case of emergency, snowmobilers should dial 911 and notify the operator of the nearest Trail Intersection Numbering System (TINS) — a three-digit number on the square brown sign located at most intersections and crossings. These TINS may help emergency personnel determine the exact location of the accident and respond more quickly.

The DNR urges all snowmobile operators to make safety the top priority for every ride.

"The loss of these lives is nothing short of tragic, and our condolences go out to the families. One fatality is one too many," said DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator Lt. Jacob Holsclaw.

Snowmobile operators need to be safe and responsible while on the trails, routes, and frozen bodies of water.

"We welcome all snowmobilers, resident and out-of-state visitors. We want everyone to enjoy the fun and to share the trails safely. We strongly urge snowmobilers to operate

within their abilities, keep their speed in check, and wait to enjoy adult beverages until they are home," Holsclaw added.

Intoxicated operation

According to data provided by the DNR, many of fatalities and other accidents are alcohol-related and preventable. Holsclaw reiterated that it is never okay to drink and operate a snowmobile.

"Impairment of any kind — drugs or alcohol — can have tragic consequences. Always operate within the limits of your skills, visibility and snowmobile," he said. "Alcohol affects your risk perception and reaction time. If you choose to consume alcohol, wait until after you've safely returned home — it could save your life."

Excessive speed, alcohol use and inexperience contribute to snowmobile crashes, and Holsclaw urges people to remember to ride responsibly and look out for themselves and others.

"Sober riding is always the best policy,"

he said. "Snowmobiles and drinking don't mix. Making the smart choice and abstaining from alcohol can save your life. Impairment of any kind, either by drugs or alcohol, can have tragic consequences."

In addition to safely operating recreational vehicles, riders also should practice some early season ice safety practices.

Holsclaw reminds those out on frozen lakes this season that ice is never completely safe under any conditions, although certain steps can be taken to prevent injury or death.

Those heading out should contact area sport shops to ask about ice conditions locally on the lake or river they want to cross, he said. In addition, proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or float coat, should always be worn in the event that an individual falls through the ice. These safety pieces can help retain body heat in frigid water temperatures.

Do not travel in

unfamiliar areas, slow down when traveling at night, and know if the lake has inlets, outlets, or narrows that have currents that can thin the ice, Holsclaw said. He also urges riders to watch for pressure ridges or ice buckling, which can be dangerous due to thin ice and open water.

For more information on snowmobile safety classes, regulations, safety tips and how to register a snowmobile, visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/snowmobile.

Anyone with information regarding natural resource violations, including unsafe snowmobile operation, may confidentially report by calling or texting the Violation Hotline at 1-800-TIP-WDNR (800-847-9367).

The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff relay the information to conservation wardens. Reports can also be filed online at dnr.wisconsin.gov/contact/hotline.html. ■

THREE EAGLE, TARA LILA TRAILS PROVIDE VARIETY OF OUTDOOR FUN

WINTER WEATHER ENTHUSIASTS can take advantage of two unique trail systems in the North Woods for outdoor recreation activities.

Founded in 2008, The Three Eagle Trail Foundation created a cross-country ski trail between Eagle River and Three Lakes.

Volunteers soon after took a stab at combing out a skate lane and setting classic tracks on a portion of the already established

Three Eagle Trail.

The results were a trail system that has, for the last 14 years, generated a blizzard of smiles from appreciative skiers enjoying winter while improving their health as a bonus.

Not long after the Three Eagle Trail was developed, the neighboring Tara Lila snowshoe trails were developed. These trails have been expanded several times over the past few winters, including the addition of some groomed

fat tire bike trails.

Three Eagle Ski Trail

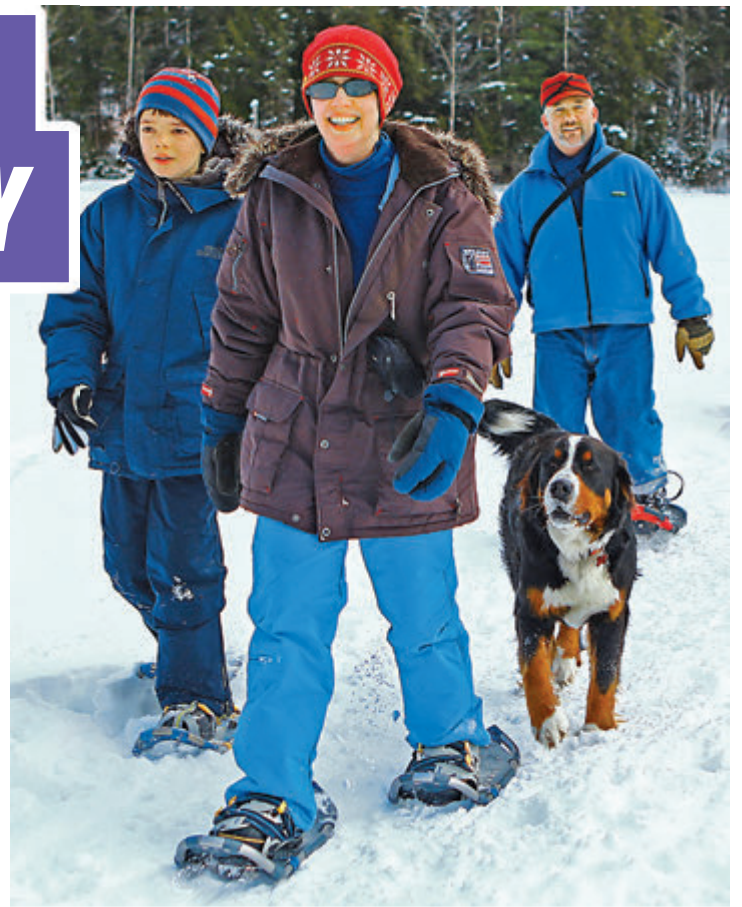
The groomed ski trail follows the familiar biking and walking trail across five miles of scenic, tranquil forestland on terrain that is generally flat. The northern two-mile stretch from Sundstein Road to the Mud Creek Bridge has a few gentle, rolling hills that novice skiers can handle with ease.

More advanced skiers intent on getting a workout appreciate the distance markers posted every half-mile, making it easy to judge pace and mileage. Skiing end to end and back can be an invigorating 10-mile outing.

A pair of boardwalks and an arched bridge provide some destination landmarks along the way. Wildlife sightings are not unusual. Deciphering their tracks in the snow can be quite entertaining.

Trail conditions are naturally weather-dependent throughout the season. Trail reports can be found at skinnyski.com.

Two access points are available, either from the Sundstein Road trailhead about four miles south of the Vilas County Fairgrounds in Eagle River or from the Highway 45 parking lot three miles north of the Three Lakes business district.



There is no fee to use the trail, but donations made in the trailhead donation boxes help with the cost of maintaining the trail.

Tara Lila Trails

Tara Lila Trails offers three separate trail networks available for snowshoeing or winter walking. All feature easy access to beautiful winter landscapes of sheltered woodlands and peaceful wetlands.

There is a parking area for a newly expanded network of snowshoe trails off the far south end of Sundstein Road. Another attractive network of snowshoe trails can be accessed from the Section 9 Road Unit trailhead about three miles south of the fairgrounds on Sundstein Road and then one-quarter mile east on Section 9 Road.

Maps are available at the trailhead kiosks.

The Ripco Road Unit Trail in the town of Sugar Camp is the newest snowshoe trail network, and it also includes trails for fat-tire bikes.

To find the Tara Lila Ripco Road trailhead, from Eagle River, follow Highway 17 south for 2.7 miles; turn left (east) onto Ripco Road; and follow Ripco Road 2.9 miles south to 7550 Ripco Road.

Coming in February 2025, organizers will host a Himanaji Winter Challenge, which is a 5K snowshoe race held at the Ripco Road Park location.

More information about the winter recreation trails near Eagle River and Three Lakes, including maps and photos, or the events taking place can be found at 3eagletrail.com and at taralila.org, or by calling Mike Robillard or Chris Nafziger at 715-544-5353. ■

SNOWMOBILE HEADQUARTERS SHOWCASES VARIETY OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

THE WORLD SNOWMOBILE HEADQUARTERS, located in Eagle River, is a must-see destination for recreational snowmobile enthusiasts and those who follow the history of racing.

With more than 70 snowmobiles on display at the museum, the machines preserve and showcase the rich history of the sport. Some snowmobiles on display are original while other machines have many hours of restoration.

Visitors will see a variety of snowmobiles, from antique rear-engine machines to vintage race sleds and many iconic trail snowmobiles.

For racing fans, there is the World Championship Snowmobile Derby Hall of Fame area of the museum. The racing section includes dramatic



race photography and honors the legends of past Derbies.

There is a large selection of racing snowmobiles from the past, including World Championship-winning snowmobiles raced by P.J. Wanderscheid, Dale Loritz, Chuck Decker, Matt Schultz, Al Fenhaus, Cardell Potter, Nick Van Strydonk and Matt Goede. Yuji Nakazawa's world championship snowcross snowmobile is also featured.

The museum features the largest photo collection of past Derby racing action with more than 250 photos, starting from the first Derby in 1964 up to the present. The Eugene Radloff Photo Gallery showcases the people of the Derby, such as fans, racers, pit crews, workers, etc. who made the Derby the success it has become.

The World Snowmobile Headquarters also showcases many different snowmobile organizations.

Representing the recreational side of the sport is the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame (ISHOF) which honors leaders, pioneers, innovators, program developers, journalists and volunteers who have dedicated a large portion of their lives to snowmobiling. New



members are inducted each fall and have their induction photos and plaques lining several walls. To view the full ISHOF history, visit ishof.com.

The International Groomer Operator of the Year Award honors people who dedicate their time to making snowmobile trails smooth. The International Snowmobile Club of the Year recognizes one club that stands out with community service and dedication to providing a snowmobile experience for other snowmobilers. The International Dealer of the Year award honors an outstanding snowmobile dealership on an annual basis. The Edgar Hetteen Memorial Award of Merit has a special place inside the museum.

Also on display in the history of the Iron Dog Brigade, an "honorary society dedicated to the fun of snowmobiling" that was started in 1976 to unite and promote the sport. A pure fun group,

the Thirsty Dogs, founded in 1985, is also showcased. This charity group has raised more than \$60,000 for snowmobile causes. The unique Thirsty Dog group has only one rule: "There are no rules."

The museum has a Women on Snow exhibit, which tells the story of how a group of local women snowmobilers formed the Flying Femmes in the 1970s. It became known as Women on Snow in 1986. The group is returning to Eagle River this January for its 38th year.

The World Snowmobile Headquarters also recognizes more than 1,000 local snowmobile clubs from across the country, with a large display of patches, pins and decals on several walls.

There are many items to view in the museum, including a visit to the video room. Visitors may sit and watch videos of past Derby races, Vintage races and Vintage snowmobile rides.

Topping all of this off is the large Snowmobiler's Gift Shop with scores of history books, clothing, DVDs, jewelry, mugs, toys and many gifts.

All of this is packaged together in the red, 7,500-square-foot building located at 1521 Highway 45 on the north end of the famous World Championship Snowmobile Derby Track, now known as the World Championship Derby Complex. Visitors can come by car or snowmobile, as there are groomed trails leading to the museum from trails, 3, 10, 13 and 17. Parking and admission are free with donations accepted.

The World Snowmobile Headquarters is open year-round, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The museum is closed Sundays, Mondays and holidays. Additional tour times are available by appointment at 715-479-2186. For more information, visit worldsnowmobilehq.com. ■

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WINTER CONTESTS AND FESTIVITIES SCHEDULED IN CONOVER

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

CONOVER FEATURES

miles of scenic snowmobile trails, entertaining pit stops, and lodging facilities that offer snowmobiling right outside the front door, various groomed ski trails and plenty of lakes for those interested in ice fishing for walleye, northern pike and panfish.

Some of the top fishing lakes in the Conover area include Pioneer, Hunter, North and South Twin, and Upper and Lower Buckatabon.

Just a short drive from the surrounding communities is Conover's expanded Pioneer Creek Cross-Country Ski Trail, a joint effort by the town and Vilas County. Beginning in the Conover Town Park, located just east of Highway 45 on Highway K, the trail offers more than 15 miles (24 kilometers) of groomed trails. The trail consists of six loops ranging from one and a-half to seven miles.

For nonskiers, the town park offers one of the most popular sledding hills in the area, an open pavilion, ice skating rink, heated restrooms and ample parking with room for tailgating.

There are plenty of winter activities planned in Conover, including the Northwoods Blizzard Blast, Great Northern Jerk Off, Twin Lake Pub Ice Fishing

Jamboree and various snowmobile events.

The Conover Sno-Buddies start the 4th annual Poker Run on Dec. 22. Get your game card at local area businesses. Ride the incredible trails and collect your stamps. Cards will be available until the draw party scheduled for March 1, 2025.

The Town of Conover Park Committee will be sponsoring the nighttime sledding party on Dec. 30, from 4 to 7 p.m., at the Conover Town Park Sledding Hill, located at 4697 Park Circle. Hot dogs, hot cocoa and more will be served.

During the event, the Conover Sno-Buddies Snowmobile Club will provide children with rides up the hill in a sleigh pulled by their Tucker Sno-Cat. Participants can enjoy a night of sledding, making s'mores, and staying warm by the bonfire. Donations are appreciated for park improvements.

The Conover Sno-Buddies and the Phelps Snowmobile Club will team up Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025, for a nostalgic trip down memory lane. Vintage snowmobile enthusiasts are invited to participate in group rides from each club's groomer barn and arrive at the Trailside Roast featuring hot dogs, brats, s'mores, hot cocoa and more. The 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. trailside roast is held

at the intersection of trails 8 and 6 near Blong Road. For more information, visit conoversnobuddies.com.

Twin Lake Pub will host the 6th annual Ice Fishing Jamboree on North and South Twin Lakes, Jan. 18. Enjoy ice fishing with contests for fish caught and raffles held at the Pub, 3894 Twin Lake Road in Conover.

New last year to Conover will be the Wisconsin Kids Snowmobile Race set for Feb. 22, 2025. Attendees can watch youth snowmobilers race in a safe, controlled and competitive environment during this event. The Wisconsin Kids Snowmobile Racing Association (wksra) is sanctioned by the International Snowmobile Racing guidelines and is one of many races scheduled for the season. Food and beverages will be available. Races will be held at Conover Town Park, 4697 Park Circle. For more information, check wksra.com or email wksra.secretary@gmail.com.

The annual Northwoods Blizzard Blast will be held at the Conover Town Park on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring activities for winter enthusiasts of all ages.

Cold weather enthusiasts of all ages will enjoy Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides, Giant Ski Races, Recliner Races, Ice



Bowling, Slap Shot Hockey, Firefighter Competitions, and the Artisan Bazaar. Kids will revel in the Chilly Charlie's Challenge, Pin the Nose on the Snowman, Ring Toss, Snowman Pong and Mosaic Snow Art.

Demonstrations in archery, snowshoeing and winter survival will be held throughout the day. Food and refreshments are available all day, as well as beer at the popular Snow Bar. Warming bonfires and heated restrooms are on-site.

Basket raffles, as well as a silent auction, will also help raise funds. Proceeds raised at the event go to area fire and emergency medical service departments.

Preceding the main event, the Land O' Lakes Fire Department and Ambulance Service will host the 6th Annual Flapjack Blast on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Gateway Lodge, 4103 County Rd. B, Land O' Lakes.

Enjoy pancakes, sausage, and your choice of beverage. There will also be a bake sale and raffles. Proceeds will go to support local Fire and EMS departments. For more information, visit northwoodsblizzardblast.com or email northwoodsblizzardblast@gmail.com.

Additionally, the Phelps Fire Department and Phelps Area Emergency Medical Services will host a Spaghetti Dinner on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Phelps Fire Station, 4499 Town Hall Rd, Phelps.

Dinners will include spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, and beverages. Desserts and other beverages will be available for purchase. Proceeds from this event will also benefit the Northwoods Blizzard Blast. For more details, contact 715-617-0313 or visit northwoodsblizzardblast.com.

WINTER PANFISHING IN VILAS, ONEIDA COUNTIES OFFERS ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES



BY DOUG ETTEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

THERE MAY BE no other place in the world quite like the Wisconsin North Woods when it comes to public fishing opportunities, especially in winter.

Hard water in Vilas and Oneida County offers anglers endless possibilities when it comes to finding a spot to catch fish.

And there is no better opportunity for table fare than panfish which, if you are tooled with just a few pieces of proper equipment, can be easy for even the average angler to catch and cook.

When speaking of panfish, there may be no more attractive winter species than the black crappie.

The population in many lakes rates from anywhere to present to abundant, meaning most bodies of water, regardless of size, will hold a sustainable population.

So many times I have gotten lost in exploration, trying to find high-density species, and until I discovered crappie fishing I was more times than not left disappointed. I got started, as many do,

through family.

My father, who worked mainly as a mason, had winters off and time for us to explore, while also providing food for the household and dinner table of seven.

Things were more complicated, yet simpler, back then.

There weren't all the high-priced electronics, gadgets and gizmos.

Instead, it was a lot of trial and error based on what the local sports shop owner recommended, and where you saw the flood of fishermen when you got to the boat landing.

No more do I have to rely on such intel to put fish on the ice — especially crappies.

It's easier now with sonar, lake maps and being more mobile.

Slowly but surely, panfishing in particular has taken over my interest and for many good reasons. Whether it's the head chugs of 14-inch black crappies, or the exciting runs of an 8-inch bluegill, each get the blood going.

But for now, let's concentrate on crappies.

And don't worry, if you find them there is a good chance a few bluegills or

even perch may be mixed in, which keeps fishermen on their toes when it comes to presentation and lure selection.

Between late fall and mid- to late winter there is not a better time to crappie fish.

Granted, while most anglers agree that a crappie out of cold water just tastes better, I simply find a lot more enjoyment in finding and catching them this time of year than at any other, mainly because you can plop on a spot for days and move in and around structure in a much more pinpoint fashion, all the while still catching the same quality of fish.

Each year I seem to learn a little more about where to look for crappies, but there are a few tried-and-true methods that just always seem to work when the water gets cold.

Believing in these methods and upgrading

some equipment is key.

As the water cools and ice forms, crappies often group up, don't move much, and they are somewhat predictable as to when, where, how and if they will bite. While they may not appear quite as active as they are in the spring or fall, it's hard to keep up when they turn on and the pieces come together. There really is not a more efficient fish to catch in the winter than crappie.

One tip I've found to be consistent each winter is that crappie like low-light feeding windows, and anytime you can fish at a specific time or in an area that offers lower light, the more your odds improve. This doesn't necessarily just mean fishing sunup and sundown, but also goes for areas that feature a stained-water profile which oftentimes will lend itself to a longer or extended bite window.

Every year I start to look for crappies in some of my regular shallow brushy areas. If green weeds are present, many times crappies won't move from that area simply because oxygen levels stay high enough.

In my experience though, weed-edge crappies in the winter can be more finicky, and sometimes tougher to catch.

Moving out to deeper water I target basin areas, or old river channels if fishing in a flowage system. These areas can be found using a lake map function on a smartphone, or simply by utilizing some of your open-water data and hot spots.

I am surprised every year how much time I spend drilling holes above a mark I may have made in mid-June when I was simply out either

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Panfishing from page 38

recreational boating or fishing.

Again, time is of the essence here. If you don't find what you're looking for, move on until you find your schools of fish. Once you've marked fish, the battle is half over. Getting them to bite as they're suspended or cruising along tight breaks on channel edges

is sometimes the easiest task of all, but personally I enjoy a small tungsten jig with a light plastic, a tinger spoon tipped with spikes or, when the action calls for spreading out, the bobber and minnow, or the even more efficient tip-down system works great.

When fishing tip-downs I've found that either a No. 12- or 14-sized gold treble hook is the best. A split

shot should be located about 18 inches up from the hook, and don't be afraid to use a 3-pound test. I prefer something that's not clear, just on top of the ice it makes a huge difference in seeing where the line is dispersed.

Start with a smaller crappie minnow hooked through the dorsal fin on the top of the back. You want there to be some

natural action to the bait, so make sure not to puncture so far down on the back that it kills the minnow.

Tip-downs come in many shapes and sizes, but finding one that can be set on either snow or bare ice that can withstand a 20-mph spring wind out of the south will keep you fishing more and dealing with problems less.

A good auger is key. And,

with the revolution in electrics, it's hard to beat a 40-volt StrikeMaster or battery-powered Ion.

When you get to a spot you think fits all the criteria, drill 15 to 20 holes and use your flasher to try and mark fish. There is no doubt that crappie fishing is a lot more enjoyable with company. When the bite is good, all can reap the reward. ■

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For further event information, visit northwoodsblizzardblast.com or call 715-891-6254.

Also taking place Feb. 16 is the 30th annual Great Northern Jerk Off, a jerky-making competition hosted by Club 45 Bar & Grill, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., with proceeds going to the Warm the Children program. Club 45

is located at 4800 Old 45 Road in Conover. For more information, call Kathy Johnson at 715-477-0575.

The 8th annual Snowmobile Obstacle Course will be held on Saturday, February 22, benefiting the Jacob Sieg Memorial Scholarship Fund. The event includes competitors riding for the best combined times on a quarter-mile drag and

obstacle course on North Twin Lake. Tons of raffles, trophies, and the drawing for this year's snowmobile, a 2013 Arctic Cat 1100 Turbo, will be held at Dublin Sports Bar and Grill, 4394 Twin Overlook.

The Conover Sno-Buddies Snowmobile Club holds fundraising events each winter to benefit the Conover snowmobile trail system. Two fundraisers to

wrap up the club's 2022-2023 sledding season include the following:

The annual Sno-Buddies Poker Run draw party will be held Saturday, March 1, 2025, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Twin Lake Pub, 3894 Twin Lake Road. The annual St. Paddy's Day corned beef and cabbage dinner will be held Monday, March 17, 2025, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Club 45 Bar &

Grill, 4800 Old 45 Road. Regular menu options are available. A portion of proceeds go toward area trail maintenance. Additional information is available online at conoversnobuddies.com.

For more information and the latest updates on Conover area events, call the Conover Chamber of Commerce at 715-479-4928 or visit conover.org. ■



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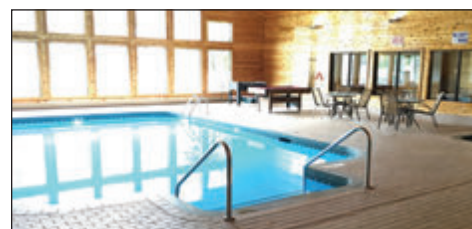
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WINTERTIME POLISH REGATTA RETURNS TO PITLIK'S RESORT FOR THIRD YEAR



FOR THE THIRD YEAR in a row, Pitlik's Resort in Eagle River will put on its wintertime Polish regatta in January.

The main events, pond hockey and cornhole tournaments, will offer attendees and participants two days of competitive fun.

The pond hockey tournament will feature teams from throughout the Midwest beginning Friday, Jan. 24, at 5 p.m.

There will be a fish fry event on the ice until 11 p.m. featuring live musical entertainment in a heated tent.

Saturday's events will kick off at 11 a.m. with food and refreshments. According to Gary Pitlik, general manager for the resort and one of the event organizers, the highlight of the regatta will be the cornhole tournament.

"It's the largest

outdoor winter cornhole tournament in the North Woods," said Pitlik.

The tournament will begin at 11 a.m. and consist of 64 two-person teams with a double elimination bracket. Participants for the tournament must be age 14 and older.

The regatta will have similar games as in the

past summertime regattas, and will continue to focus on family fun. There will be games for children and adults of all ages including ice bowling, ice golf, ice pong and a ring toss challenge.

Regatta-style games will be brought back for adults inside the heated tent Saturday evening, along

with live entertainment. The awards from the weekend festivities will be handed out Saturday evening.

Last year, Pitlik's Resort raised enough money to donate \$10,000 to the Sugar Camp Snowmobile Club.

For more information, visit pitlikresort.com. ■

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LOCATED CENTRALLY

between Vilas County with Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Land O' Lakes is a gateway community that has become a popular destination for snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, ice fishermen and winter sightseers.

Many winter recreationists travel to Land O' Lakes for cross-country skiing, as the popular Sylvania Trails are located nearby in Watersmeet, Mich.

Land O' Lakes offers its own 7.5-mile cross-country ski trail, groomed and maintained by the Land O' Lakes Fish and Game Club. To get to the trail, take Highway B west to East Duck Lake Road, turn north and continue past North Moon Lake Road to a parking area on the east side of the road.

Heading east from the parking lot, the east trails travel through a lovely section of pines and

connect to a forested 3-mile loop. A 1-mile extra loop at the northeast end offers the thrill and challenge of some steep hills and a vista at the top.

Entrance to the west trails is across East Duck Lake Road from the parking lot. Skiers immediately glide into a beautiful low canopy of forest and enter into a winter wonderland.

The Land O' Lakes area offers "The top trails at the top of Wisconsin," with snowmobile trails connecting Wisconsin trails with those in Michigan to the north, Boulder Junction to the west, Eagle River to the south, and Phelps to the east. The Frosty Snowmobile Club is in charge of grooming the Land O' Lakes trails.

An activity that should not be overlooked in Land O' Lakes is ice fishing. Some of the popular lakes in the area include Lac Vieux Desert, Forest and Black Oak.



Kicking off the holiday season is the Breakfast with Santa event on Nov. 30 at Gateway Lodge. The morning offers breakfast along with a visit from Santa Claus from 8 to 11 a.m. Three different breakfast seatings are available and reservations are required. All presents for children are supplied by Gateway Lodge. To reserve a spot, call the the Lodge at 715-547-3321.

On Sunday, Dec. 8, Seniors for Kids will hold their 3rd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting with Santa and Mrs. Claus. There will be presents for all kids,

hot chocolate and cookies, horse and wagon rides, photo opportunities, carol singing, warming fire pits and a tree lighting at 5 p.m. followed by a musical fireworks display.

On Feb. 1-2, the Three Bear Sled Dog Races in Land O' Lakes will feature races and winter games that showcase the best of the best professional sled dog racing teams from throughout the U.S. and Canada. For more information, call the chamber.

The Frosty Snowmobile Club Radar Run will take place Saturday, Feb. 15,

on Mamie Lake at Bent's Camp Resort to see how fast a snowmobile can go over ice. The radar run begins at 11 a.m. and ends with a bikini run.

Bent's Camp is located at 6882 S. Helen Creek Road in Land O' Lakes. For more information, visit frostysnoclub.org.

The snowmobile club hosts other events all winter long. For the most up-to-date scheduling information, visit frostysnoclub.com. For other community events and information, call the chamber at 715-547-3432. ■


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at the Whitetail Inn with Yamaha guest speaker.

MINOCQUA AREA HOME FOR AN ARRAY OF WINTERTIME ACTIVITIES



HOME TO A VARIETY of wintertime activities and events, the towns of Minocqua, Arbor Vitae and Woodruff draw in families and vacationers year after year to visit.

Each area boasts a charming, hometown environment, is home to various outdoor activities, offers distinctive shopping opportunities and unique attractions.

Although a popular summertime destination when visitors travel up North, these towns offer a unique variety of winter season activities to take part in as well.

During the cold winter months, visitors can keep warm in the local shops and restaurants, bundle up to go ice fishing on the many frozen lakes and



utilize the immense trail systems for snowmobiling, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing.

Snowmobiling remains one of the top-rated winter sports in the area.

Thanks to the hard work of area snowmobile clubs and volunteers, an extensive network of professionally groomed trails — more than 1,700 miles — are maintained in the Minocqua area.

These trails traverse a magnificent natural environment that includes 1,300 glacial lakes and 233,000 acres of public forestland. This, combined with the area's 65-inch annual average snowfall, makes for some of the Midwest's best sledding.

Sledders can take off in any direction on spacious and well-marked routes through forests and across frozen lakes. The locale also features a number of trail-side pit stops at watering holes, where riders can warm up with a hot beverage or a quick bite to eat. Area trail maps are available at the Let's Minocqua Visitors Bureau or can be mailed to visitors upon request.

Those who enjoy a more peaceful outing can take advantage of Minocqua Winter Park, which is recognized as one of the

top cross-country ski areas in the Midwest.

The park provides a full range of services for the cross-country skier, including 86 km of groomed ski trails, fifteen of which are single-track classic trails, and two km of lighted trails also are offered. In addition to cross-country skiing, the park also provides designated areas and times to take part in skijoring, fat tire biking, ice skating, snowshoeing, or sledding down the tubing hill. Break areas providing picnic tables, fire pits, and seating are located around the park as well.

Also available on the grounds are the Chalet, which houses a café, day lodge and heated waxing room, and a ski shop which offers retail, rentals, a certified ski school and more.

For rates, directions, and information call 715-356-3309 or visit minocquawinterpark.org.

Another spot for the silent sports fans to visit is North Lakeland Discovery Center which maintains a 20 km trail system for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The gentle terrain winds through the woods and along the lake, a bog, and the nearby Manitowish River, allowing outdoor enthusiasts to explore a variety of habitats, each with unique plants and animals. The trails are groomed and tracked for classic skiing. The center also offers a full calendar of programs, including guided ski trips, snowshoe outings, and interpretive hikes.

More than 10 additional cross-country ski trails are available in the area,

many of which are in the 236,000-acre Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest. These trails range in length, may be groomed or ungroomed, and encompass a range of difficulties.

A map of the forest managed for recreation, timber, wildlife and more, can be found at minocqua.org/listing/northern-highland-american-legion-state-forest/261.

Fat tire biking has become a popular winter activity in the North Woods, and can be done on trails such as the Zip Trail, Raven Trail and Shannon Lake Trail. Those who would like some company, or to learn from experienced riders, can join the Lakeland Area Mountain Biking Organization for group rides throughout the winter. ■

ICE FISHING TOURNAMENTS PLANNED

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

PLENTY OF ICE-FISHING tournaments are put on throughout the North Woods each winter by different area communities and organizations that continue to host these competitions as a testament to area tradition and Wisconsin's reputation for year-round outdoor recreation.

Most of the ice fishing derbies are family-oriented events, offering prizes for the largest fish, as well as door prizes. Each year many area residents and seasonal visitors frequent area lakes to take place in these tournaments that stimulate the local economy and get people outdoors during the

long winter.

Wittig's Point Resort and Tavern in Boulder Junction will host its annual ice fishing tournament on Fishtrap Lake Jan. 18, 2025. Prizes feature a 100% payout of registration fees for the three biggest bluegill, walleye, and northern pike, and one payout for biggest perch.

The cost to preregister is \$25. For more information, call 715-892-1544 or visit wittigspoint.com.

The annual Twin Lake Pub Fishing Jamboree will take place on North and South Twin lakes Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025. Prizes will be awarded at the Pub following fishing for first, second, and third place for walleye, northern, perch,

bluegill, crappie and bass divisions.

The entry cost is \$20 per person and includes two drink tickets and one door prize ticket, with raffle tickets available as well. For more information, call 715-479-6224.

Sand Lake Pub in Phelps will hold its ice fishing tournament Feb. 15, 2025, on Big Sand Lake. Prizes will be awarded after the tournament. For more information call 715-545-3200, email mprimich@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/SandLakePub.

The Winter Fest and Ice Fishing Jamboree will take place Feb. 22, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Lynx Lake Lodge in Presque Isle. Fun for the

entire family begins at noon with winter games, activities and live music.

For more information visit presqueisle.com. ■



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ROCKING W STABLES TO CONTINUE HORSEDRAWN SLEIGH RIDES



NORTH WOODS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

will have the opportunity to participate in a unique tradition this holiday season when Rocking W Stables in Eagle River will again offer its horse-drawn sleigh rides.

A team of draft horses will take groups and families through scenic wooded trails located north of Eagle River, according to stable owner Dean Nolan.

"The 3-mile trail provides a chance to enjoy the North Woods during the winter months,"

said Nolan. "Halfway through the ride, visitors stop, gather around a bonfire, and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate or other refreshments."

Rocking W Stable owns a variety of sleighs, including sleighs that hold 20 to 25 people.

Sleigh ride participants have the opportunity to join a group sleigh individually or receive a group rate for up to 10 people.

"We have a vis-à-vis sleigh that holds four

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SNOWMOBILE TRAIL PASSES NOW AVAILABLE

WITH SNOWMOBILE SEASON right around the corner, the DNR reminds snowmobilers to ensure their registration is current and to order new annual Wisconsin snowmobile passes before hitting the trails.

Information on upcoming snowmobile safety education courses, safety tips, and snowmobile regulations can be found on the DNR webpage at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Snowmobile>.

For snowmobile trail conditions, visit Travel Wisconsin's Snow Report webpage at <https://www.travelwisconsin.com/snowreport/snowmobile>.

Trail passes

There are three types of snowmobile trail passes available for public snowmobile trails. Be sure to select carefully as snowmobile trail passes are not refundable:

- Wisconsin Snowmobile Trail Pass For Club Members (\$10) – For a snowmobile registered in Wisconsin and owned by a person who is a current member of a

Wisconsin snowmobile club affiliated with the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC). To order this option, visit www.awsc.org.

- Wisconsin Snowmobile Trail Pass (\$30) – For a snowmobile registered in Wisconsin. Passes may be ordered at GoWild.wi.gov or at participating sales agents.

- Nonresident Snowmobile Trail Pass (\$50) – For a snowmobile registered in (or in the process of being registered in) another state, province or country. Passes may be ordered at GoWild.wi.gov or at participating sales agents.

When ordering a snowmobile trail pass, make sure mailing addresses are current and complete.

All snowmobile trail passes are delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Passes are typically delivered within two weeks of order placement. A temporary receipt may be used until pass materials arrive.

If a snowmobile trail pass has already been purchased, no action is required. ■

Stables from page 45

people. The driver sits up front and the four passengers, two in a seat, face each other," said Nolan. "We also have two sleighs that hold 10 people each."

Rides cost \$15 per person, and children age 5 and younger ride free.

Nolan said riders should dress appropriately for winter weather.

"One thing that is different is that we ask visitors to bring their own blankets," said Nolan. "In the past, we would supply

them on the sleigh, but they would get wet after a long, snowy day and be uncomfortable. This way, people can have their own dry blanket to sit on."

The sleigh rides start mid-December and will run through the holiday season, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Rocking W Stable is located near the intersection of Highway 45 North and Pleasure Island Road on the city's north side.

For more information, or to make a reservation, call 715617-6779. ■

'RIDE RIGHT!' PROMOTES TRAIL SAFETY

**THE SNO-EAGLES**

Snowmobile Club is committed to promoting safety on the trails.

In the interest of doing so, the club is offering riders a chance to help make a difference and sponsor a brand-new sign that will be placed directly on the trail system this season to enhance safety and remind riders to "Ride Right!"

"Not only does that mean staying to the right on the trail, but riding safely and respectfully," said club officials. "Your sponsorship of \$15 per sign covers manufacturing, delivery, and placement of the sign on the trails."

Snowmobile enthusiasts are encouraged to sponsor as many signs as they would like.

"Our goal is to cover the trail system with these new safety reminders, while raising funds to support the proud groomers of the Snowmobile Capital of the World," officials added.

To join the safety campaign and sponsor one or more signs, visit snoeagles.org/product/ride-right-sign.

The Sno-Eagles remind buyers that these signs will not be shipped to them, but will instead be placed on their behalf by club volunteers on the Sno-Eagles trail system.

ADVERTISE HERE
Call 715-479-4421 TODAY!

12TH ANNUAL SNOWSHOE CELEBRATION & HIMANAJI 5K SNOWSHOE RACE SET TO TAKE OFF FEB. 1

JOIN THE TARA LILA CONSERVATION PROJECT this February as they return to celebrate the bounty of snowfall here in the North Woods.

There are beautiful forests surrounding North Woods communities, and to understand it better, a free guided naturalist tour will depart from the Tara Lila Ripco Road Park Unit at 1 p.m.

The trails will be groomed and open for snowshoeing all evening, with a campfire treating adventurers with free hot cocoa and smores.

The evening will conclude with the beloved luminary walk along the Kushmanda Trail. All ages and skill levels are welcome!

The Himanji snowshoe race will begin at 10 a.m. with all other activities beginning at 3

p.m. The cost to register for the race is \$20. All proceeds will be donated to Trees for Tomorrow and the Three Eagle Trail Foundation.

More information can be found by visiting <https://www.taralila.org/events>.



SNO EAGLES TO OFFER WEEKLY TRAIL RIDES

STARTING JAN. 1, 2025 the Sno-Eagles Snowmobile Club will be offering weekly trail rides every Wednesday and Thursday.

Rides start at 10 a.m. at the Eagle River Depot Museum with Wednesday rides ranging from 100-125 miles and Thursday rides being shorter at 60-70 miles.

The group picks the destination on the day of the ride, lunch will be had at a location on the route.

Rides are contingent on trail conditions, so check the trail report at <https://snoeagles.org/trails/trail-report/> for updates and cancellations.

For more information, contact Cindy at 920-213-3921.

More information about the Sno-Eagles Snowmobile Club can be found by visiting <https://snoeagles.org/>.



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