



THE PENNSYLVANIA NORDIC SKIER

The Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers Association

October 2015

PACCSA Thanks Bruce Cox

Beginning in 2010, Bruce Cox took the reins as PACCSA's President. Over the next five years, Bruce's leadership ushered in an unprecedented period of expansion for PACCSA. To say the least, Bruce's focused dedication to PACCSA over the past several years has had an everlasting impact on the organization.

Bruce's very first duty was to oversee the formation of PACCSA's inaugural Board of Directors. From there, he focused on establishing Bylaws and obtaining 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit status for PACCSA. This opened doors which allowed PACCSA to apply for and receive various charitable grants to further its mission of promoting the sport of cross-country skiing.

The first major project that Bruce oversaw was the 2011-2012 facilities improvement at the Laurel Ridge Cross Country Ski Center. This \$125k project included the construction of the new Orange Trail connector and the expert-only Black Trail extension of the Red Loop. The project also expanded the parking lot at Laurel Ridge and paid for the purchase of a new "Gator" utility vehicle for trail maintenance. All of this work was made possible by a cooperative effort between DCNR, the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council, and PACCSA which supplied matching funds and countless volunteer hours for the project.

Bruce also spearheaded PACCSA's grooming efforts at the Laurel Mountain ski trails in Forbes State Forest. Known as the "Laurel Mountain Project," this program had humble beginnings in 2012 as a cooperative effort with the Laurel Mountain Ski Patrol. This pilot project involved using the Ski Patrol's snowmobile to pull PACCSA's grooming sled, allowing roughly 5k of trails to be groomed and tracked. Thereafter, an outpouring of positive feedback from the public encouraged PACCSA to obtain grants from the Richard King Mellon and Katherine Mabis McKenna foundations, the funds from which allowed the purchase of a new snowmobile and state-of-the-art snow grooming equipment in 2013. As a result of Bruce's leadership, PACCSA volunteers currently maintain over 10k of expertly groomed ski trails at Laurel Mountain which are enjoyed by the public free of charge.

Other major accomplishments during Bruce's tenure as PACCSA President included upgrades to the webcams at Laurel Ridge and Laurel Mountain, the construction of a storage shed at Laurel Mountain to store PACCSA's grooming equipment, and improvements to PACCSA's website and social media outreach. In addition to overseeing a 33% increase in PACCSA memberships, Bruce was always able to recruit the right people to ensure success.

None of the above accomplishments would have been possible without Bruce's vision and leadership. In January, Bruce decided to resign as PACCSA's president. In his resignation letter, Bruce wrote, "The Board has been a good team and we have accomplished a lot. I am proud of all of our accomplishments and happy that I could share them with such great people as yourselves. Thank you for all of your efforts and I hope PACCSA continues to grow and prosper."

Bruce remains an integral member of PACCSA and continues to act as our liaison at Laurel Mountain, working closely with DCNR, the Laurel Mountain Ski Patrol, and the Laurel Mountain Volunteer Group. With every "Letter from the President" that he'd author for PACCSA's Newsletter, Bruce would sign off with "See you on the trails." Don't be surprised to see him out skiing or running PACCSA's groomer at Laurel Mountain. If you do see him, don't hesitate to shake his hand and thank him for everything that he has done for PACCSA.



Long-time PACCSA member Jason Zimmerman winning the ACA Masters Criterion race series

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To view our Webcams and find information about skiing in our region, check out our website!

Letter from the President

This is all Brian Joly's fault. For those of you who don't know him, Brian absolutely loves Nordic skiing, has been a PACCSA member for decades, and joined PACCSA's Board of Directors when it was first established in 2010. I first met Brian at the 2008 Lake Placid Loppet, his iconic yellow and blue PACCSA jacket making him stick out from the crowd. I thought, "Look, another Pennsylvanian crazy enough to enter this torturous race!" From there a friendship was born, and before long, Brian persuaded me to attend a PACCSA meeting.

At my first meeting, then-President Bruce Cox seemed skeptical at first, but after learning that I was a lawyer, he asked if I could help PACCSA obtain its 501(c)(3) non-profit status. Before long, I was drafting bylaws and filing documents with the IRS, working closely with both Bruce and Rick Garstka (the long-time "face" of PACCSA who continues to serve as its Treasurer). I can't express how rewarding it was to establish strong friendships with these gentlemen and learn about PACCSA's accomplishments since its formation in 1983.

I managed to secure PACCSA's 501(c)(3) status in 2012, and after that, things really took off. PACCSA was now able to accept tax deductible donations and seek out charitable grants to fund worthy projects. In less than a year, PACCSA secured funding to purchase modern grooming equipment for the Laurel Mountain Project. Needless to say, I am very proud to have had a role in PACCSA's effort to bring free, expertly tracked cross-country skiing to Laurel Mountain.

I figured that my duties with PACCSA would lighten up after that, but Bruce had other plans for me. Soon, I was organizing trail clears and maintaining the PACCSA webcam at the Laurel Ridge Cross-Country Ski Center. The next thing I knew, I was coaching PACCSA's Yellowjackets kids and editing the Newsletter. In 2014, Bruce Cox nominated me to be PACCSA's Vice-President, and upon his recent resignation, the Board of Directors elected me to the Presidency of this fine organization.

I would like to thank Brian Joly for bringing me to my first PACCSA meeting, as well as the entire Board of Directors for their trust and confidence. It is my every intention to continue the progress that was gained during the Rick Garstka and Bruce Cox eras, and to work tirelessly to advance the sport of Nordic skiing in our region. And to the hundreds of dedicated PACCSA members and volunteers who make this organization possible, I am grateful for your continued support of PACCSA programs! Let's have some snow!

Jim South



Meeting Scheduled for October 28th on DCNR's Forest Plan

A draft copy of DCNR's 2015 State Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP) was recently released for public comment. The Bureau of Forestry develops this document as the primary reference governing how Pennsylvania's numerous state forests may be used.

The SFRMP is of particular significance to skiers since the majority of Pennsylvania's cross-country ski trails are located on land managed by DCNR's Bureau of Forestry. In fact, the trails that PACCSA grooms and maintains at Laurel Mountain are located in DCNR's Forbes State Forest. As a result, PACCSA regularly pays close attention to the SFRMP and its various rules pertaining to recreational uses of the state forests.

PACCSA encourages all of its members to review the proposed SFRMP. Please pay particular attention to the "recreation" sections, pages 166 through 183. The Forest Plan is located on DCNR's website at the following internet address:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20031287.pdf

In addition, DCNR has scheduled a series of 12 public meetings across the state to allow citizens to comment on the draft SFRMP. For the Pittsburgh region, the public meeting will take place at the **Double Tree Hotel in Monroeville on October 28th beginning at 6:30 PM**. PACCSA Board members will attend this meeting, and we encourage our members to be there as well.

Please do your part to ensure that DCNR's state forests remain a great place for cross-country skiing!

Teach Your Kid How to Ski with the Yellowjackets!

Are you tired of the sound of video games playing all winter long? We think kids should be playing in the snow! Get them outdoors and let them learn how to ski with PACCSA's Yellowjackets youth development program! Registration is NOW OPEN for 2016!

The program fee is only \$40 for kids ages 5-6, and \$50 for kids ages 7-13. Not only do children learn the sport of cross-country skiing, but they'll also get a Yellowjackets team hat, an instructional workbook with stickers, and delicious hot cocoa after each session. Also, for the second year in a row, we are able to subsidize the cost of seasonal ski rentals for every kid that joins the Yellowjackets, thanks to a generous grant from the Birkie Foundation. Don't miss out on this opportunity to introduce your children to the joys of cross-country skiing!



Since 2010, the Yellowjackets have taught children between the ages of 5 and 15 skiing skills through fun activities and games. Sessions are held on most Saturdays in January and February at the Laurel Ridge State Park XC Skiing Center. Experienced coaches guide beginners through basic skills such as falling and rising, diagonal stride skiing, turning, and hill-climbing techniques. As children progress through the program, they will learn more advanced skills, including the skating technique. Fun competition opportunities are also available with neighboring youth programs in Erie and Cleveland.

For more information, visit www.pacssa.org/yellowjackets. Also, you can send inquiries to Coach Naomi Jarvis or Coach Jim South via the contact page on the PACCSA website (www.pacssa.org/contact/yellowjackets).



Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers “MeetUp” Group Celebrates First Anniversary!

The Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers “Meetup” group was a huge success last year with 159 registered members. This is a great way to find other people to ski and carpool within the Pittsburgh region. Go to Meetup.com to join the group and receive notifications of new get-togethers. There is no cost to join! Joanna Margaret, PACCSA’s Special Activities Coordinator, has been maintaining this “MeetUp” group for many years. For the second year in a row, PACCSA is sponsoring the group.

For more information, go to the Pittsburgh Cross Country Skiers “MeetUp” page, or contact Joanna Margaret through the contact page on PACCSA’s website (www.paccca.org).

Summer Training in the UK

By Naomi Jarvis

I don't do a great deal of summer training because I don't handle heat and humidity well. Mostly I just cycle to work in the mornings and do some trail running on cooler days.

However, my son James & I visited relatives in the UK for 3 weeks in July and took advantage of the beautiful (dry, sunny and 70F) weather to get some training in. We did trail running in the hills, cycle-camping, and we joined the local rollerski clubs a few times. We did an agility session with the Thames Valley group, which was fun and challenging. We also tried out race rollerskis, which have a lightweight short frame and fast wheels. I found them to be much too scary, but James loved them. The coach brings the club van, full of rollerski equipment, to the session, and we were able to use their gear. We also spent a most enjoyable morning in Hyde Park with the London Cross Country Ski Club. There were about 30 rollerskiers there, and we divided into 3 groups. James disappeared with the race group, and I was planning to go with the intermediates until I heard that they were headed for the 'big hill.' That's when I decided to go with the 'confidence-building' group instead, which was headed for the 'little hill.' We practiced snowplowing and stopping on the steep part of the hill, slaloming and U-turns, and emergency exits (running off the hill onto the grass), all while avoiding the other park users. It was really nice to be able to practice all this without having to worry about cars, although I did have to do a sudden slalom to avoid a cyclist.



PACCSA Yellowjackets



**Ski where the action is...
Join the swarm!**

Cross country skiing for kids 5 to 15
Skiing Saturdays Jan and Feb in Laurel Highlands, PA

Lessons with games, obstacle courses, and cocoa
Develop skill, speed, agility, and teamwork
Races and ski-fests with neighboring teams

www.paccca.org



Fundraising Update

Your memberships, contributions and volunteerism have allowed PACCSA to continue numerous valuable programs that are important to Pennsylvania's Nordic skiers. Your support has enabled PACCSA to maintain its informative website, the Laurel Ridge webcam, and the Laurel Mountain webcam. It also allows us to offer the Yellowjackets youth skiing program. In addition, PACCSA has been able to purchase and operate grooming equipment which is being used as part of the Laurel Mountain Project. Thanks to the hard work of PACCSA volunteers, the public continues to enjoy free access to expertly groomed and tracked cross country trails within Forbes State Forest.

Capital investments of this nature create certain financial obligations. There are maintenance costs for the snowmobile and grooming sled, insurance premiums for the Yellowjackets, expenses for webcam internet access, and from time to time, equipment just seems to break. This unfortunate fact of life recently became a reality when we discovered that PACCSA's snowmobile sustained some unexpected wear-and-tear last season in the form of some cracked control arms. Though we budget for contingencies like this, the fact remains that at least \$700 will be required to make sure our grooming equipment is ready for this season's first snowfall.

PACCSA is also looking for individuals and businesses interested in sponsoring the 2016 Pennsylvania Nordic Championships, which will be held at Wilderness Lodge on February 7th. There is no better avenue than PACCSA to help a brand tell their story of wellness, community stewardship, and excellence to a tuned-in segment of the market. If you have a connection with a brand you think has potential to partner with PACCSA, please let us know through the contact page on the PACCSA website (www.paccca.org/contact).

PACCSA thanks you for your continued support. Please don't forget to renew your membership before the snow flies!



Save the Date for PACCSA Trail Clears!

For the second year in a row, PACCSA is teaming up with the Laurel Ridge Ski Concession for the pre-season trail clear. The Laurel Ridge trail clear is scheduled for **November 15th from 10 AM until 3 PM**. The Ski Concession is giving everyone who participates one **free trail ticket** for use during the 2015/2016 season. In addition, since trail clearing tends to work up a hearty appetite, **lunch** is being provided for everyone by the Lucky Dog Cafe! There will also be a prize drawing for everyone that shows up!

There will also be a trail clear at Laurel Mountain on **November 7th from 10 AM until 12 PM**. PACCSA will be providing a picnic lunch for everyone who helps out. In addition, we'll be giving tours of our grooming equipment, and you can attend the PACCSA Board meeting which will be taking place immediately after lunch.

For all trail clears, please bring work gloves and hand tools such as loppers, clippers, bow saws, and rakes. If you don't have any of these tools, don't worry! We'll have plenty of extras. Also, since it will be hunting season, DCNR asks that everyone please wear bright, visible clothing.

If you plan to attend, please send an e-mail to Jim South at south2027@hotmail.com indicating the number of people in your party. This will allow us to know how much food to prepare.

With everyone's help, we'll have all of the trails clean and clear for the season's first big snowfall!

PACCSA Championship Race Returns To Wilderness Lodge for 2016!

For 2016, the Pennsylvania Nordic Championships are returning to **Wilderness Lodge** in Wattsburg, PA for the third straight year. Originally, the decision to have this event at Wilderness Lodge was predicated upon the consistent snow that the area receives, as well as the interesting trail system. Roger and Ryan Janes have been such awesome hosts that the decision to return to Wilderness Lodge was an easy one.

This year we have two sponsors, **Fischer Sports** and **GoPro!** Fischer we know and love because of their great skis! GoPro is the leading brand of helmet cameras! We are honored that both of these “action-packed” companies are joining us.

In addition, all race participants are encouraged to stay at the **Baymont Inn & Suites**, conveniently located on I-90 in Erie. The Baymont is a brand new hotel, offers a free continental breakfast, and is just 18 miles west of Wilderness Lodge. Every skier that stays at the Baymont during the weekend of the race will receive a discounted room rate of only \$79.00 per night (\$30 off the standard rate). The Erie Baymont will also give PACCSA a donation for each room reserved by race participants. To take advantage of this great offer, call the Erie Baymont at 814-866-8808 to make reservations. Make sure to mention the special rate for folks attending the Pennsylvania Nordic Championship races.



My New Fav

By Brian Joly

Skiers, like kayakers, pride themselves in finding new trails, new areas and new friends. Being both skier and kayaker, I find myself always looking for a new twist on an old place. But you can teach an old dog new tricks, and you can find a new dog as well.

This past winter as “Co-Race Director” of PACCSA’s Nordic Championship races, I spent a lot of time going between Pittsburgh and Wattsburg, home of Wilderness Lodge. While I love the Wilderness trail system, I knew there was another ski area nearby that I had not visited; Oil Creek State Park. I subsequently visited, no, explored Oil Creek, not once, but three times. And they were quite some trips.

Time and space will not allow me to go into the detail that I might if plied with some malt, but suffice it to say there was tons of fun to be had. Highlights included the Moon-lit night of Ground Hog stew (in which 35 people skied and then ate late into the night), the excellent glades perfect for telemarking in the steep northeast section of the Red Trail, and a chance encounter with Denny and Patty McDonough, enjoying an outing on their anniversary (Did you know that Denny ran cross-country and track at Slippery Rock College with Oil Creek’s resident Groomer, Peggy Sims?).

The Oil Creek trail system is maintained by John and Peggy Sims, so when you get your trail pass, remember to thank them for their efforts. Trail passes are \$5 dollars per day or \$40 for a season pass. The ski area is approximately 2 hours from Pittsburgh proper.

“Local” Ski Events

Laurel Mountain Trail Clear	10am to 2pm	Sat Nov 7
Oil Creek Trail Clear #1	1pm	Sun Nov 8
Laurel Ridge Trail Clear	10am to 3pm	Sun Nov 15
Oil Creek Trail Clear #2	1pm	Sun Nov 22
Oil Creek Ski Swap and Waxing Clinic	12 noon	Sun Dec 6
Jack Frost Party @ Whitegrass, WV		Sat Dec 5/6
Mountain State Marathon @ Whitegrass,WV		Sun Jan 24
Erie Highmark Quad 5 miler@ Wilderness Lodge, Pa		Sun Jan 24
Ohio Nordic Ski Championship @ Willoughby Hills,OH		Sat Jan 30
Pennsylvania Nordic Championship @ Wilderness Lodge, PA		Sun Feb 7
North American Vasa/Gran Travers @ Traverse City, MI		Sat Feb 13
Art Roscoe Loppet @ Salamance, NY		Sun Feb 14
Swix American Birkebeiner @ Hayward, WI		Sat Feb 20
Lake Placid Loppet@ Mt. Van Hoevenberg, NY		Sun Feb 21
Gatineau Loppet @ Gatineau Parc, Hull, Canada		Sat/Sun Feb 27–28

Membership Has Its Rewards!

Thank you again for your continued support of PACCSA. Your generous donations give PACCSA the tools necessary to enhance the cross-country skiing experience throughout our region. As a PACCSA member, make sure you are taking advantage of the benefits available to you. Members receive nice discounts on daily trail fees at top touring centers in the region, including **Whitegrass** (\$5) and **Wilderness Lodge** (20%). Members also receive 10% discounts at **Cycle Sport & Ski** in Greensburg, **Ski Den Sports** in Johnstown, and **Top Gear Bicycle Shop** in Wexford. Other benefits include 15% discounts at **Green Gables Restaurant** and **Huddleston Court** in Jennerstown. Make sure you show them your PACCSA card!

As a PACCSA member, you are an integral part of the local ski community. Your membership dues, donations and volunteerism provide an opportunity to give back to your sport and community. Visit www.paccca.org for the latest news and opportunities to participate in trail work, outreach, and other PACCSA activities. PACCSA is a charitable non-profit corporation organized under Chapter 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All donations are tax deductible.



Pennsylvania Cross Country Skiers Association

PACCSA
309 W. Marion St
Munhall, PA 15120

Find us on



Search "PACCSA"



@PACCSA

Member Name(s):

[Empty dashed box for member name entry]

PACCSA Board of Directors

- James South** - President
- Mike Blessington** - Vice President
- Rick Garstka** - Treasurer
- Sally Smales** - Secretary
- Bob Mazur** - Volunteer Coordinator
- Naomi Jarvis** - Yellowjackets, Webmaster
- Brian Joly** - Newsletter Editor, Co-race director
- Dave Jenkins** - Co-race Director
- Joanna Margaret** - Social Director
- Sheila Confer** - Board Member

General comments and inquiries can be sent to PACCSA via the contact page on our website (www.PACCSA.org/contact)

PACCSA Membership Form

You can also renew your membership online! Visit www.paccca.org

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Date _____

Membership Information

_____ Single \$6/yr _____ Family \$9/yr _____ Donation Only

Number of Adults: _____ Number of Children : _____

Please indicate if you are interested in volunteering any of your skills:

- Mail Newsletters (they will be sent via e-mail unless this box is checked).
- Please add me to PACCSA's e-mail chat group!

Make checks payable to PACCSA