

Got Snow? Lapham Peak Snowmaking Report 2010

-Ed Muzik, Lapham Peak property manager

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The overriding goal of the snowmaking project has been to make Lapham Peak a premier Nordic skiing center. The park already has most of the attributes: challenging terrain, lighted ski trails, and dedicated grooming. With our up and down winters, snowmaking provides a means to offer a consistent and reliable skiing opportunity.

Last season we were able to make snow on a 1.5 kilometer course.

So far, the Friends of Lapham Peak have raised \$205,000 in private donations. Each year we try to make further improvements to the system. This fall, we added 1300' of pipe for snowmaking and a buried pipe connection between the well and the pond. This improvement should serve to speed up snowmaking and reduce the amount of labor. We have also done extensive repair to the ski trails following this past summer's heavy rains.

We should now have enough critical mass to continue to grow the project. Current infrastructure:

- 1 million gal pond.
- 100 gpm well
- 8 snow guns
- 3600' of buried pipe
- 18 electrical 480-volt pedestals and water hydrants

The park has experienced a dramatic and somewhat unexpected growth in organized skiing activities--Peak Nordic Kids program, Peak Nordic Ski Team for high school and middle kids, Peak Nordic Seniors, Free Tuesday Night ski lessons, the Wed. Night Ski races, and the Lapham Ladies. Some of this is due to the big winters we have the past two years, but snowmaking is also responsible for adding a new dynamic to the mix and giving people the confidence to put energy into these activities, since the park is now able to offer a reliable and consistent skiing opportunity.

Future needs include a bigger and more powerful distribution pump (our piping system is designed for 600 gpm at 300 psi; the present pump provides 300 gpm at 200 psi), newer snow guns, and a newer more dependable snow cat. Future expansion would also likely add at least another kilometer of snowmaking capability. This would grow the snowmaking capability to the same level as Elm Creek Park near Minneapolis, and Kincaid Park in Anchorage.

A project request was also submitted last spring to double the size of the Evergreen Shelter, the main warming hut at Lapham, since we've outgrown it during the ski season.

Last year, Lapham Peak had revenues of over \$370,000 making it one of the few parks to bring in more revenue than its operating costs, and making it one of the top ten busiest parks in the WI State Park System. During winter, based on revenue, it is the busiest state park.



Snow guns operating at Lapham Peak on December 5, 2009. A goal of the project is early season skiing opportunities.



October 2010 In the foreground, are two of the new water hydrants installed this fall. In the background, snow guns await the advent of cold weather.