

**Friends of Lapham Peak
Annual Meeting**

REPORT ON SNOWMAKING – 2017-2018

By: John McCarthy

The 2017-2018 season was the 13th for snowmaking at Lapham Peak. The snowmaking operations this past ski season were extended to provide a thick layer of manmade snow on about 1.7 kilometers of trail. The manmade snow loop at Lapham Peak has, on many occasions during the 13 years of operation, been the only skiable snow in southeast Wisconsin. This was especially true this season as sparse natural snow resulted in only nine days of groomed trail skiing on the balance of the Lapham Peak ski trails.

Snowmaking Operations – 2017-2018 Ski Season

Snowmaking in 2017 got off to a good start due to cooler weather during mid-December. Snowmaking operations were led by the FLP Snowmaking Volunteers, under the direction of Joe Stuber and Rich Marusinec. The new SMI Polecat snowguns resulted in more efficient snowmaking operations and a better quality of manmade snow. A new 'spur' of snowmaking trail on Magic Carpet Ride delighted skiers, who had many compliments for the work of the snowmaking volunteers. Several significant 'rain-thaw-freeze' cycles were endured and overcome by using the newly refurbished snowcat to break up the icy surface. About 80 days of grooming was provided on the manmade snow loops.

Snowmaking System Improvements

Major additions are being made to the snowmaking system in 2018. Another new SMI Polecat snowgun was purchased for use during the 2018-2019 season. This new snowgun, along with the two snowguns purchased in 2017 are able to deliver as much as four times the volume of manmade snow, compared to the older fleet of SMI 360 snowguns. The new snowgun cost about \$21,000, and was paid for with funds from the dedicated snowmaking account. We currently have six SMI Polecat snowguns, and have retired and sold the older SMI 360 snowguns.

An expansion of the snowmaking trails, called Phase 3B, was constructed in late October by the snowmaking volunteers. The expansion involves the installation of about 1400 feet of 6-inch diameter pipe and 1450 feet of 3-inch diameter 500 MCM cable to supply water and power to 6 new hydrants and power pedestals. The new snowmaking trail segment, extending south from Summerstage hill, through the crossover, and east to the intersection with Two Tier, will be in use this ski season.

The new snowmaking infrastructure installed this fall is estimated to cost around \$50,000, paid for from the dedicated snowmaking account. A further expansion, called Phase 3C and completing Phase 3 of the snowmaking project, is planned for spring of 2019.

Snowmaking Committee – Planning and Fundraising

The Snowmaking Committee continues to plan and implement fundraising campaigns to support the snowmaking project. These efforts included the Wednesday Night Ski League, the Lapham Loppet, the Summer Solstice concert, and the Bike Swap. Changes were made to the Bike Swap by adding a “Family Fun Day” component, with booths by local vendors and a program of kid’s activities, all held at the Homestead Hollow area in the park.

Implementation of the Penguin Pal Campaign in 2017 was a success, and included, for the first time, “sponsorships” by local businesses, acknowledged by penguin signs along the trail. A new campaign, entitled “Into the Woods” and touting the extension of the snowmaking on to the wooded trails east of Summerstage, is currently underway. The committee members continue to meet with elected officials to encourage State funding for snowmaking operations and maintenance.

The Snowmaking Committee developed a Strategic and Business Plan for Snowmaking, to complete the snowmaking system; establishing priorities for purchase and installation of the remaining components of the system, as funding allows. The remaining components, include Installation of Phase 3C piping and power; an additional PoleCat snowgun; providing a shelter to house the snowcat; and installation of Phase 4 piping and power to extend the system to the top of Two Tier Hill, providing a total snowmaking trail system of about 3 kilometers. The estimated cost for these improvements is about \$220,000, expended over five to seven years.

Land Use Agreement (LUA) [formerly the Memorandum of Understanding] with DNR for the Snowmaking Project

An LUA between the Friends and the DNR for the snowmaking system has been completed and signed by the Friends. The LUA defines the responsibilities for installation, operation, and, maintenance of the snowmaking system, and allows for the expansion of the system to move forward.

A donation by the Friends of \$116,000 in equipment and contracted labor was made to DNR and accepted by the DNR’s Natural Resources Board on October 24th. The donation covered the new snowgun and the Phases 3B and 3C snowmaking infrastructure.