

1973-2023 Wostawea Time Capsule Story

“Evolution of the Wostawea Loppet”

Story shared by David Cameron

Wostawea's first loppet, the 1975 Wostaweathon, was billed as New Brunswick's longest (and that year only) ski race. Fifty-two skiers took part and 11 finished the full 78 kms from Crabbe Mountain to Silverwood over two days, including current Wostaweans Steve Rosenfeld and Jim Wolstenholme. The 110 km Maritime Marathon, a two-day ski from Woodstock to New Maryland via Crabbe, was held from 1976 to 1986 and is the subject of an earlier Time Capsule.

Surprisingly, the club did not hold another loppet until 1993. Since the provincial calendar for loppets was full (hosting one was competitive back then), this was a club loppet. Another club loppet was held in 1994, and then in 1995 we were successful in hosting a provincial loppet, as well as a Fraser Cup race, the predecessor of NB Cup races, on the Saturday of the same weekend. All these events were held at Mactaquac Provincial Park, with grooming by their 1970s-vintage PistenBully groomer.

The RCMP's RV was used as the control centre for timing and results. This was parked adjacent to the finish line next to the lodge. The RCMP Rovers served as controllers and finish-line stewards, and Saint John Ambulance provided First Responders.

In the lodge, body and soul were restored for all participants with a tasty chicken stew and songs performed by King's Landing visitors “Bear” and Lorraine.

In the 1990s, Wostaweans frequently travelled to loppets around the province, especially as we had no well-groomed trails locally. Together with Fraser Cups, these events were held at St. Leonard, Campbellton, Charlo, Plaster Rock, Kouchibouguac, Fundy, Bathurst, Rivière du Portage, Saint-Quentin, Miramichi, and Caraquet.

For several years the club organized a bus trip to the Fundy loppet, stopping at the Gastof German Restaurant near Sussex for après ski, and enjoying a sing-song on the way home. One year, the weather changed dramatically, starting at – 5 degrees C overnight and rising to +20C while we were on the trail. You could virtually see the tracks disappearing in front of you! One skier, Peter Bance, wore shorts and a t-shirt.

In 1999, we had the hare-brained concept of an urban loppet along the green, using the walking bridge, with a start/finish at the Marysville Heritage Centre. The city was on board with grooming, but weather conditions unfortunately forced a cancellation.

Loppets continued regularly at Mactaquac from 2002 to 2009. In 2010 and 2011 we planned to hold them at Killarney, but both events were cancelled due to weather. In 2010, to compensate, the club held an event at the Woodlot called Definitely Not the Loppet, which drew 108 registrants and raised \$940 toward a new snowmobile. In 2012, the first loppet was finally held at Killarney Lake Park, where they have occurred annually ever since. The past two pandemic years they've been virtual, so we look forward to resuming an in-person event this year, when we will also have our first-ever 50 km distance in celebration of the club's anniversary.