



Belleayre Mountain Ski Center UMP-DEIS

Appendix K
Belleayre Mountain Historic Articles

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

10¢



\$1 a year

THE COUNTRY'S ONLY NATIONAL SKI NEWSPAPER WITH NATION-WIDE COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

Volume 2

Denver, Colorado, February 1, 1950

Number 7

Belleayre Opened At Formal Rites

PINE HILL, N. Y.—Despite the prevailing lack of snow throughout the eastern part of the United States, the \$250,000 Belleayre Mountain Ski Center in the Catskills was recently opened when Lt. Governor Joseph P. Hanley pressed the button that started operation of New York state's only chair lift.

400 Skiers Each Hour

Rising from the lower terminal elevation of 2,541 feet to the summit at 3,325 feet, the chair lift is very modern in design and provides a smooth ride to 400 skiers per hour. Intermediate stations enable the skiers to get off and on for the purpose of skiing either the gentle lower sections of the mountain or the more steeper upper sections.

**THE NATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF**

\$1.50 a year



Skining

AMERICA'S ONLY NATIONAL SKI NEWSPAPER WITH NATION-WIDE COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

The Country's Largest Ski Publication

Circulation This Issue: 30,000 Copies

Volume IV

Denver, Colorado, November 1, 1951

Number 1

Skiers to Find Many Changes At Belleayre

PINE HILL, N. Y.—Belleayre Mountain, located high in the snowbowl of New York State's Catskill Mountains, is entering its third season of operation after having received extensive improvements and slope-grooming during the summer months.

Wind Damage Repaired

Much of the work at the state-owned development, managed by Superintendent Art Draper, has been centered around repairing the damage wrought by the disastrous wind and rain storm of November 1950. Giant ash trees, beeches, birches and maples that were toppled across the trails into a snarled mass have been cut out and removed. Brush piles and stumps have been burned, and ditches have been dug to divert heavy rains and melting snow from washing out the trails. Grass seed has been planted to smooth out rough scars and then covered by truckloads of hay.

The summer improvements also included the enlarging of loading areas at both the rope tow and platter-pull lift, and the hourly capacity of the chairlift has been increased.

Novices Trail Cut

One new trail has been cut, and the former trails smoothed out in order to assure skiable conditions even after light snowfalls. The new trail is in the nature of a work road, but will provide a gentle downgrade of nearly a mile and a half for beginning skiers.

THE NATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF

\$1.50 a year



AMERICA'S ONLY NATIONAL SKI NEWSPAPER WITH NATION-WIDE COVERAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

America's Largest Skiing Publication

Circulation This Issue 34,000 Copies

Volume V

December 1, 1952

Number 3

Belleayre Mtn. Area Ready For Another Record Ski Season

PINE HILL, N. Y.—As soon as last winter's snows disappeared, state employees at the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center in the heart of New York's Catskill Mountains began preparing the major development for another record-breaking season. Last year, Belleayre recorded 94 days of skiing even though the winter was not marked by unusually heavy snows.

Truckload after truckload of dirt was hauled in to smooth the rope tow slopes, and a limited amount of sod was transported to the top of the mountain. Two freight car loads—about 90 tons—of lime were spread on the slopes, followed by nearly 11 tons of fertilizer and 1700 pounds of mixed grass seed.



SCATTER SHOTS



notes of general interest

WE'RE PLEASED TO NOTE:

(1) That the Andrew E. Zimmer Fish and Game Protective Association of Richmond County is in the process of conducting a conservation course for boys between the ages of 13 and 18. Instruction in various aspects of conservation is being given by experienced members of the club, and 120 boys are enrolled. Those receiving the highest marks in a written examination at the end of the course will be awarded a ten days' stay at our DeBruce Conservation Camp.

(2) The Lions Club of Fairborn, Ohio (which seems to be an organization of unusual imagination) has solicited other Lions Clubs throughout the nation for "small gifts for each lady who attends its Ladies' Night". By way of answer, the Albany Lions Club contributed a gift subscription to THE CONSERVATIONIST. We hope the proper Ohio Lioness gets it.

(3) The Carmen Fish and Game Club has given a subscription to THE CONSERVATIONIST to each and every one of its members.

(4) The Pawling Fish and Game Association (other clubs do this too) lists on its membership application blank a subscription (optional, of course) to THE CONSERVATIONIST, as well as an invitation to contribute to the fund to be used to send boys to our camp at DeBruce.

For all of which we are very grateful.

ALGAE-FREE WATER?

Now it's 2,3-dichloronaphtho-quinone. It's a chemical which *Science News Letter* of March 8 says will make for better lake swimming.

According to the story, small lakes may soon be made more pleasant for summer swimming through the use of a chemical that controls the bloom of blue-green algae. These algae are responsible for many of the unpleasant effects of heavy summer growth in

lakes. According to the report, extremely small doses of the chemical will kill the bloom-producing algae, but will not affect other plant growth in the lake. The compound was found by University of Wisconsin botanists when they tested more than 300 substances looking for a substitute for copper sulfate, commonly used as a lake algacide.

The chemical, *Science News Letter* says, is apparently harmless to fish and other organisms in the water. Additional tests, however, must be made to determine its effect on fish and aquatic plants after long exposure. Unlike copper sulfate, the quinone chemical will not form a permanent toxic deposit on the bottom mud of a lake.

BUSY BELLEAYRE

From opening of the season in late November to March 15 this year, Belleayre Mountain Ski Center in the Catskills (just off Route 28 near Pine Hills) had 85 days of good skiing. A record season.

Nearly 10,000 automobiles and buses brought 31,662 individuals to Belleayre. The ski school operated by the Department and the cafeterias and ski shop did a good business. All weekends were crowded and on the biggest day, February 23d, over 500 autos were reported turned back by the State Police at the main highway. Skiers were lined up every weekend awaiting their turn on the chairlift which hoisted them to the top of Belleayre Mountain for a

run down the trails. Well maintained trails and an efficient ski patrol kept serious accidents to a minimum, and those that did come a-cropper received prompt and skillful first aid.

In late March the snow was still deep on Belleayre, and Superintendent Arthur Draper believed conditions would continue good for several more weeks of operation.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

Two interesting bits of information have come to us from David L. Wood of Syracuse. One concerns a large bobcat killed by a member of the Fayetteville-Manlius Rod and Gun Club, shot in the vicinity of the Club. (Mr. Wood says this information is given solely in the interest of acquainting readers with the fact that these animals are to be found in central New York.) The other is this:

"Grandpa admits that chewing tobacco is a filthy habit, but defies anyone to prove that it ever started a forest fire."

LEECHES FOR BAIT

If you want some new bait, try leeches. Our Ontario-St. Lawrence Fisheries District biologists base this counsel on findings while working on the experimental northern pike tagging program during the pike spawning period in North Sandy Pond.

A trap net was set in a South Sandy Pond marsh area where much northern pike spawning activity had been taking place. It was necessary to find, if possible, to what extent other species of fish were feeding on northern pike eggs. A number of bullheads, crappies and some sunfish and suckers were caught and examined. Nearly every fish checked had been feeding heavily on leeches and insect larvae; only one bullhead had eaten any pike eggs.

Our fisheries men feel that leeches ought to be equally appetizing to the trout family.

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BELLEAYRE PACKER MAY PROVE BOON TO OTHER AREAS

By ARTHUR G. DRAPER

"Suicide" was the early morning snow report for Saturday, January 10, 1953, at the Belleayre Mt. Ski Center in the heart of New York's Catskill Mountains. A quarter-inch of glazed, unbreakable crust defied the sharpest of steel edges and the ability of the slickest skiers. Skiing on such a hard surface was an impossibility.

Ski boots couldn't break through that crust. A sledge hammer might have made an impression, but there weren't enough sledge hammers in the entire county to do a job on even one of the many crusted trails.

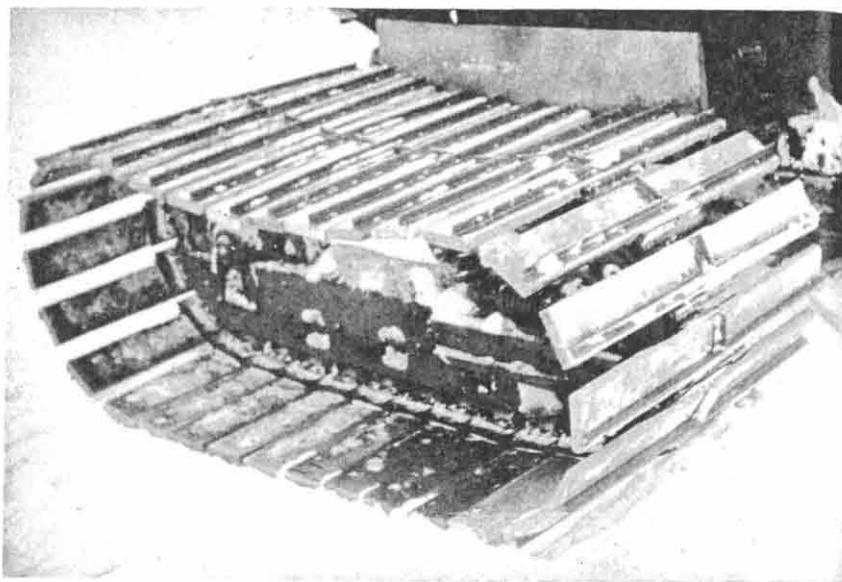
To make matters worse, the area was crowded with skiers who looked more and more woebegone as they watched a couple of instructors slither most ungracefully down a fairly gentle slope. The day before, a snowstorm had raised expectations high and then overnight came the freezing rain that turned the top layer of new snow into a solid, solid crust.

And yet, about two hours after that first report of "suicide" had gone out, one of the trails was opened and the public was merrily riding the chair lift and skiing down the mountain. Belleayre was one of very few areas in the entire East that day to offer skiing.

This seeming miracle was brought about by the so-called Belleayre Snow Packer. The packer is, in effect, a wide-gauge, Oliver crawler tractor, known as an OC-3. Long wooden slats attached to each of the tractor pads give stability and buoyancy on the snow and an extensive packing surface. The weight and power of the little tractor broke up and chewed that miserable crust better than 10,000 sledge hammers. Throughout the winter the packer performed yeoman service for the betterment of skiing. After each snowfall, the tractor snorted up and down the trails leaving in its wake beautifully packed strips that



CHET ACKERLEY, WITH HIS BELLEAYRE SNOW PACKER, DOES THE WORK OF AN ARMY OF SNOWSHOERS IN AN HOUR ON THE PEEKAMOOSE TRAIL AT THE BELLEAYRE MOUNTAIN SKI CENTER.



WOODEN SLATS ARE BOLTED TO REGULAR PADS OF OLIVER CRAWLER TRACTOR. ANGLE IRON PROVIDES TRACTION IN SNOW AND PREVENTS SIDE-SLIPPING.

could not have been duplicated by an army of side-stepping skiers or two armies of waddling snowshoers.

What's more, skiers enjoyed these packed trails. Rather than follow each other like a lot of sheep down a narrow rut in the middle of the trail, they skied over the whole trail, thereby preserving the snow and keeping it in good shape. The packing paid dividends without question; for, despite skimpy snow conditions last winter, Belleayre ended the season with some 76 days of skiing.

The Belleayre Snow Packer was originally conceived in March, 1952. Three employees at the ski center went to a Conservation Department Automotive Maintenance School and there had an informal discussion with Clyde Tinklepaugh of John R. Tinklepaugh, Inc., about the need for a tractor that could be used the year around on a moderately steep mountain. Clyde Tinklepaugh enthusiastically agreed to let the boys experiment with one of his wide-gauge, Oliver crawler tractors. During the summer it was used for mowing the

trails and performed an outstanding job, crawling up and down all but the very steepest slopes. In the fall, it dragged sizeable logs and stumps through the woods. And then, in winter, with less than \$100.00 spent for slats, bolts and angle iron cleats, the tractor had its real test.

Chet Ackerley, general mechanic at Belleayre, had dreamed up most of the details for conversion of the tractor into a snow packer. As a skier himself he was a bit jittery about the initial attempt to pack snow. The first couple of minutes proved indisputably that it worked and worked well.

From then on, it was merely a question of adding refinements to the packer. However, as a result of its success as a packer, Chet didn't ski as much as usual last winter. The boys at Belleayre are only too conscious of how the packer improved skiing and lengthened the season, and now their hope is that the Albany powers-that-be will approve purchase of two or three packers. Maybe then they'll get in more skiing themselves.

BELLEAYRE MT. SKI CENTER OPENS IN RECORD TIME

By ARTHUR G. DRAPER

In the heart of the Catskills, the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center was officially opened with free rides on Saturday, January 21, by New York State's Lieutenant Governor Joseph R. Hanley. A light covering of snow hopefully reminded visitors that Belleayre has an Eastern reputation as a snow hole.

Almost exactly seven months before the dedication, a laborer had sunk his axe into a tree, felled it and started construction work on the mammoth \$250,000 project. A Catskill dream that went back some twenty years ago to the days when Maitby Shipp and Park Carpenter first tackled Belleayre on skis began to come true.

Lieutenant Governor Hanley, who is a beloved elder statesman in New York, waxed eloquent about the possibilities of Belleayre as a tremendous recreational development. He pressed the button that started New York State's only chair lift and then, with a big grin, proceeded to board a chair and head for the summit of the mountain.

Conservation Commissioner Perry B. Duryea, under whose jurisdiction the development is administered, joyfully declared a moratorium for the day on all ski lift tickets. Only the descent of darkness prevented the whole 2,500 persons who attended the dedication from riding the lift.

The lift is the focal point of the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center. It starts at an elevation of 2,541 feet above sea level and, in a distance of slightly more than 3,000 feet, rises to 3,325 feet. With such a base elevation Belleayre has the distinction of starting off higher than any other development in the East.

This meant little to Lieutenant Governor Hanley. He was more concerned with its being within 130-odd miles of the New York City throngs and of its being used both summer and winter for, respectively, picnicking and skiing.

"The mountains," said the Lieutenant Governor, "make neighbors of us all."

Standing bare-headed on the speaker's platform, though the temperature was well below freezing, the grey-haired statesman added, "This mountain air blows the cobwebs out of your head and the sin out of your heart."

The Belleayre Mountain Ski Center is largely the result of area-wide enterprise, headed by the Central Catskill Association, in pushing through (in 1947) a constitutional amendment that permitted construction of the development within the sacred confines of New York State's forest preserve.

The present development is complete in itself, but is in line for much greater expansion once public use has demonstrated additional appropriations are warranted. By and large, Belleayre is a ski center for skiers rather than fashion-wise snowbunnies.

Its major trails average about three-quarters of a mile in length. They have a maximum width of 80 feet. Rocks and stumps have been grubbed and blasted to ground level. They have maximum grades on the upper sections that range in degrees up into the twenties. Elsewhere there are trails much steeper, longer and more difficult; but for the average recreational skier who knows control these trails will provide fun along with a good challenge of ability.

Even the 800-foot rope tow, with its slope-like trails, is no paradise for a sleepy snowbunny. He's got to stay awake and practice his side-slipping or snowplows—preferably christies—for otherwise he'll suddenly think he's playing baseball and sliding to first base.

New York State is pretty proud of its new development. Up to now it has been rather quiet about Belleayre. It was afraid the ski center was made of dream-like substance. But Lieutenant Governor Joe Hanley pushed the button that started the lift and the wheels are rolling. The dream is a reality.



*The main lodge
at the foot of the mountain*



*Who says it shouldn't happen
to a dog?*

Belleayre the Year 'Round

*The chair lift operates
Summer and Winter*

MOUNTAIN climbing is made easy the year around at our Belleayre Mountain Ski Center. In Winter skiers are whisked uphill by rope tows, a T-bar lift and New York's only chair lift. After the snow has gone, the tows and T-bar are put in mothballs, but the chair lift continues through the Summer months and early Fall to carry sight-seeing passengers up and down the mountain. In the last twelve months some 100,000 persons have taken advantage of these facilities.

During Summer months, the chair lift operates at a leisurely pace. Its riders include visitors from every state, organized camp groups, infants who ride in parent's arms, an occasional nonagenarian, crippled persons and even a few blind people. They all seem to derive pleasure from standing on the mountain top feeling the cool, fresh breezes blow away city stuffiness, and merely gazing out on the forest covered mountains.

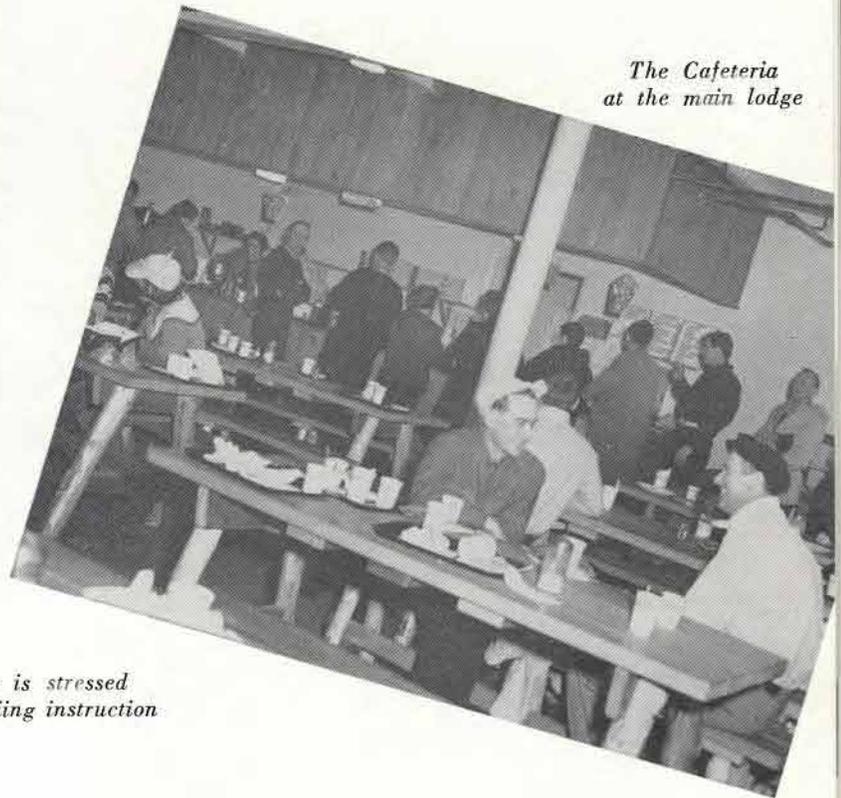
Operated by the Conservation Department, Belleayre is located in the Catskill Park of the Forest Preserve. By New York State Thruway to Kingston or Saugerties it is a mere three hours from New York City and only a couple



*The Summit Shelter
at the terminus of the chair lift*



*Safety is stressed
in all skiing instruction*



*The Cafeteria
at the main lodge*

of hours from the Capital District. Pinpricking its location, Belleayre is off Route 28 at Highmount, between Pine Hill and Fleischmanns.

Belleayre was opened to the public in January, 1950. It came into existence as a result of a State constitutional amendment permitting the cutting on Belleayre Mountain of 20 miles of ski trails and the development of "necessary appurtenances." Prior to the amendment, there was considerable worryment about desecration and despoliation of the Forest Preserve. Nevertheless, even with its paved access road, parking area, rustic shelters, lifts and sweeping trails, Belleayre still fits harmoniously into the Forest Preserve. In fact, with 2,000 and 3,000 persons besieging the mountain in a single day, the most vocal cry presently is for further expansion of facilities.

Belleayre is a development to which people return time and again. Skiers in particular have a proprietary interest in the ski center and are forever offering their free services for all kinds of off-season and on-season tasks. Summer visitors, especially those with a European background, exclaim about the beauty of the Catskills and how the mountains

remind them of the Black Forest in Germany. Late Summer brings in large groups of hay fever sufferers, whose sniffles disappear and rheumy eyes clear. Toward the end of September, when Fall foliage is approaching a fantastic, effulgent beauty, a new group of visitors arrives to ride the chair lift to the summit and hike across neighboring mountains. And along in November the cars of brightly clad hunters dot the parking lot, but the chair lift is then (fortunately for the deer population) closed.

These last few years it has been interesting to note a definite increase in the wildlife population at Belleayre. Openings made in the hardwood forest for the now grass-covered ski trails have undoubtedly served the wildlife as a super-market. Deer are a common sight. Bear tracks are seen occasionally. Raccoon, woodchucks, gray squirrels, rabbits, weasels and ruffed grouse are fairly abundant. Porcupines are too plentiful; believe it or not, they'll climb the steel chair lift towers and chew the rubber sheave liners. Why, no one knows. (Incidentally, although Belleayre has not been set aside as a game refuge, Department rules prohibit shooting within 1,000 feet of the lifts or other facilities.)

Belleayre has the distinction of having the highest base elevation of any ski center in the East—2,500 feet above sea level. From this point the chair lift rises almost 800 feet. With such an elevation, snow is reliable. Last Winter produced 112 days of skiing—with a couple of weeks of unrecorded skiing in November.

In its few short years of operation, Belleayre has helped change the economic life of many surrounding communities. Where formerly hotels and boarding houses closed their shutters upon the arrival of Winter, they now remain open and do a thriving business; in fact, the Winter season is now as long or longer than the Summer season, and from a business viewpoint is not discounted. It follows that snow reports have become a lively topic of conversation.

BELLEAYRE has not only helped its neighboring communities, but, with its year 'round operation as a recreational and scenic attraction, has managed to operate at a profit to the State.

—ARTHUR G. DRAPER,
Principal Park Superintendent



the back of the book

Conservation camp fees up

Having held the line since the late "Forties," the Department now must raise the Boys' Conservation Education Camp sponsorship fee. Where \$25 used to cover a boy for a week, the cost will now be \$35 per boy per week—beginning with the 1963 season.

In an attempt to improve the quality of the camp program, it is planned to hold the weekly enrollments at each camp (there are four of them) to not more than forty boys. Thanks to enthusiastic response to the program, weekly enrollments have been approaching the sixty mark, but this is just too many to do a good job with available camp personnel and facilities. So, get your bids in early with the Regional Supervisors to insure a spot for the boy or boys you want to sponsor.

A word or two about the boys of your choice, too. Please, for the boy's sake especially, be sure that he knows what sort of camp it is; that he is interested in learning about the wise use of our natural resources; and really wants to attend a school type camp. For our sake, pick a boy of good character who is going to behave himself and get along with the others.

If you are not familiar with the Boys' Conservation Education Camp program, please get in touch with your nearest Conservation Regional Fish and Game office or write a note to the Division of Conservation Education, N.Y.S. Conservation Department, State Campus, Albany.—ROY IRVING

New oceanographic vessel

The Fish and Wildlife Service's new vessel, "The Albatross IV," signals an increasing effort to help this nation's commercial fisheries and to accelerate oceanographic research. Also, two large naval tugs, converted into seagoing laboratories, will be added to the fleet.

Fisheries research laboratories at La Jolla, Calif., Ann Arbor, Mich., Beaufort, N.C., and Seattle, Wash., too, are nearly completed.

Until a few years ago, the United States was second only to Japan in world fish production. Today it has dropped to fifth place—topped by Japan, the U.S.S.R., Red China and Peru.

Designed as a base for fisheries and oceanographic research in the northwest Atlantic "The Albatross IV" will chart the distribution and abundance of groundfish and scallops; study the environmental factors which cause seasonal and long-term changes in fish stocks; collect data on the bottom organisms which form the food supply of groundfish; investigate plankton populations and oceanographic conditions generally.

Complete research facilities provide wet and dry laboratories, photographic and electronic laboratories, an open deck laboratory for examining fish immediately upon catch, and a variety of electronic equipment such as underwater sonar, underwater television, closed-circuit aboard-ship television and an underwater electromagnetic log. Scientists can work in this safe and stable laboratory as it ploughs across the surface of the sea and at the same time be able to study ocean life and conditions several hundred feet below them, relayed to their viewing screens from a cable-suspended underwater television camera.

Ausable Point beach

The new Ausable Point beach near Plattsburgh will include a bathing beach, day-use area and public campsite. When completed, the 125-acre development on Lake Champlain will accommodate 5,000 picnickers and more than 1,000 campers.

With more than 800 feet of natural white sand beach front, the proposed development will be one of the finest public recreation areas on the western shore of Lake Champlain.

Belleayre skiing expanded

A new novice area, constructed at a cost of nearly a half million dollars, was opened to the public this winter at Belleayre Ski Center and is the first major expansion of this popular winter recreation complex since it opened in 1950. The new facilities include a double chair lift, lodge and cafeteria, three new ski trails and additional parking locations. The double chair lift is approximately 3,200 feet long with a 414-foot vertical drop and a capacity of about 800 skiers per hour. The three new trails run the entire length of the slope and are cleared to a maximum width of 80 feet.

The base lodge contains a cafeteria with a seating capacity of 200 persons, first aid room, ski school office and ski shop.

In addition to the new novice development, Belleayre Ski Center has 15 ski trails, two rope tows, two T-bar lifts, a 2,950-foot double chair lift with a vertical drop of 784 feet, a ski lodge and maintenance buildings. The entire skiing complex can accommodate up to 10,000 skiers a day.

Located in the Catskill State Park, Belleayre is a popular recreation spot for both winter and summer tourists. With 72 days of skiing in 1961-62, nearly 130,000 skiers used the Center's facilities. Last summer, 25,000 persons rode the main chair lift to the summit picnicking area.

Deer, next year

The following was received with deer "Party Permit" returns from a party with a sense of humor and good sportsmanship:

Saw no deer
Far or near
Better luck —
Next Year!

Yours truly
"Our Party"

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Skiing New York

From border to border, New York State has more and better downhill skiing areas than any other state.

by Philip C. Johnson



F. McKeen

The sun is shining and the winter air is crystal clear. To the north you can pick out Mt. Royal in Montreal; to the east is Mt. Mansfield and the Green Mountains, Mt. Washington if you look real hard; and spread out before you clearly visible are 39 of the 46 Adirondack High Peaks, snow covered and

(Above) A beginning skier's class at Bristol Mountain, Canandaigua

(Left) Racing downhill at Ski Windham in the Catskills

(Facing page) It's never too early to start.



Courtesy Olympic Reg. Dev. Auth.



Courtesy ORDA

majestic. On days like this there is no better activity for the average outdoor enthusiast than downhill skiing and no better place to appreciate the surroundings than from the peak of Whiteface Mountain outside Lake Placid where just 12 years ago the world's best racers competed for Winter Olympic honors.

Everyday is not like that, unfortunately, and even when it is, everyone can't be there of course. For the million plus New Yorkers who ski at least sometimes, however, the sport doesn't need perfection to be appealing. You can have all the fun you can handle at small metropolitan areas like Sterling Forest near Yonkers or enjoy a family gathering western New York style at clubs like the Buffalo Sitzmarkers which operates its own facility just 20 minutes from pro football's Rich Stadium in suburban Orchard Park.

There are more than 55 alpine ski areas in New York State; more places to downhill ski than in Colorado; in Utah or in Vermont and New Hampshire combined. These areas totaled more than three million skier visits last year, a remarkable count given the regional recession, the Persian Gulf War and a weather whammy that included little natural snowfall and lots of warm, rainy, snow-eating days.

As a widespread recreational activity, skiing is a recent phenomenon luring only a few hearty back country hikers until the early thirties when the first ski lifts were developed. That was the heyday of the Adirondack ski train which sometimes hauled more than 1,000 people to the village of North Creek for a winter weekend on the slopes. The first real burst of popularity came after World War II when returning troops from the U.S. 10th Mountain Division looked to develop

D. Parise



A cloudy day at DEC's Belleayre Mountain

(Facing page) Riding the lift at Gore Mountain

Kicking up some snow at Whiteface Mountain

Courtesy ORDA





The ability to make snow has been a lifesaver for many ski lodges in New York.



Downhill racing competition at DEC's Belleayre Mountain

Let's get these bindings right!



their sport, and the State of New York became involved when legislation passed in 1947 led to the opening of Belleayre Mountain on state forest preserve land in the Catskills in 1950.

A year later a modest experiment on the 10th hole of the golf course at the Concord Resort first demonstrated what would ultimately become the backbone of the sport a generation later. Water and air were mixed under pressure one evening and people made snow. A novelty at first, some like the Slutsky brothers at Hunter Mountain took the growth of the ski industry in the fifties and sixties as an opportunity to expand snowmaking beyond the curiosity stage and as a result effectively weatherproof the sport and make it economically viable with or without the full cooperation of nature. Today, modern computer driven snowmaking technology and snow farming and grooming techniques have combined to expand the ski season from early November through April so long as temperatures fall below freezing at least some of the time which is a sure bet in these parts.

Skiing is a border to border activity in New York from Catamount in Hillsdale which straddles the Massachusetts state line to Peak 'n Peak at Clymer just over the border from western Pennsylvania. What characterizes most skiing in the state is access. A lot of people can get to the slopes without a major commitment of time and effort. Excepting Whiteface and Hunter, most areas in the state draw mainly a local or regional clientele, many of whom come from home and return there the same day. As a result one thing that has characterized skiing in the state from day one has been a nearby population base to draw on and as a result, a commitment

D. Purise

D. Purise

J. Vestal

to teaching. At big volume mountains like the 47 trail layout at Holiday Valley south of Buffalo, Bristol Mountain near Rochester, Gore in the Central Adirondacks, Ski Windham in the Catskills and the central New York cluster of Song, Greek Peak, Labrador and Toggenburg, instruction is emphasized. But the tiny places do a solid job in that area too; like Schenectady's Maple Ridge where ski school director Freddie Anderson has specialized in working with "never evers" for the past 35 years to tiny Brantling near Sodus on Lake Ontario that produced world champion and current U.S. ski team racer Diane Roffe.

Ski racing was not a part of the 1932 winter Olympic games at Lake Placid but when it was added to the list of events four years later at Garmisch Germany, New Yorker Dot Hoyt who later went on to help design the ski trails at Belleayre and become the area's ski school director was among the leading competitors. But the early development of skiing was promoted mainly by Europeans. Among the early transplants who adopted New York skiing was Toni Matt whose schuss of Tuckerman's Ravine in 1939 remains an enduring legend in the sport. He became the director of the ski schools at Catsamount in the seventies through the 1980 winter Olympics at Whiteface. Also in the Whiteface area for many years was the famous Swiss ski champion later college coach Walter Prager and German contemporary Otto Schneibs who on regular forays to the Rockies was one of the original Aspen, Colorado skiers. The best known New Yorker among male alpine competitors in the modern era is Hank Kashiwa who grew up on the slopes of McCauley Mountain at Old Forge. Corning's Cathy Bruce

and her brother Geoff were top racers in the seventies along with Vicki Fleckstein from Syracuse and Billy Taylor from Buffalo. Television viewers will recognize Saranac Lake's Lisa Feinberg from her programs on ESPN. New Yorkers have also played a major role in the development of freestyle skiing with Tom LeRoy from Albany one of the pioneers of on-slope gymnastics and the Post sisters from Averill Park as women's freestyle champions in the seventies.

Although not a champion competitor, Averell Harriman who was the founder of the Sun Valley Resort was a major backer of the sport as governor of the state in the fifties. He rode the first chairlift up Whiteface Mountain as part of the dedication ceremonies there in 1958. The lift broke down leaving the governor stranded in mid-air for 90 minutes.

Recent years haven't been especially kind to alpine skiing in the state. Economic, demographic and meteorological trends have meant tough times.

But on the positive side, developments in three areas give promise for a brighter future.

The first is the remarkable evolution in ski gear from snow-making and grooming which have made the trail conditions more controllable and hospitable to lifts which are faster and more efficient. Breakthroughs in clothing design and materials not only make ski fashions more colorful these days but warmer and more comfortable.

The second important step is the industry's embrace of snowboarding, a development that doesn't please everyone but gets almost universal high marks from younger patrons who are now enthusiastic about coming along with their families to the mountains. It has been an important step in maintaining the popularity

of the ski slopes for the 14-to 24-year-old crowd.

The third major development has been the deliberate effort to cater to the needs of special audiences. At one time a fire in the lodge and an accent in the ski school was about all the special features an area felt obliged to supply. Today nurseries at ski areas are commonplace and there are superb instruction programs for youngsters only. In some places such as Ski Windham in the Catskills there are programs for senior citizens and for people with physical disabilities. Fun racing programs such as NASTAR are commonplace today and there are special events from winter carnivals to Easter Parades at just about every area.

Special activities aren't the only indication of a more skier-friendly business. Officials in the sport are much more attuned these days to special pricing arrangements like the cooperative sponsorship arrangement with the Byrne Dairy cooperative and several areas in Central New York and discounted packaging of mid-week and multi-day ski packages that are now offered by just about everyone. It doesn't make downhill skiing cheap but it does help.

And people are smiling. Ski areas are stressing courtesy and cooperation. It is apparent from the friendly greetings in the service lines to the helping hand patrols on most mountains today that areas are stressing customer services and value to the customer.

It is not only clean air and great scenery that counts these days. But it sure is nice that New York has plenty of that to go around too.

Philip C. Johnson, a Clifton Park based financial planner, has written numerous magazine articles on outdoor topics over the past 20 years.

I♥NY. GET-AWAY WEEKEND

The Haunting Catskills—Haven for Hikers, Hunters and Skiers

by Maria Harding

Less than three hours from the hustle of downtown Manhattan, the lofty Catskill Mountains, which have been extolled in painting and in verse, offer untouched forest preserves, ridge top views, and a multitude of year-round activities.

Whether for a day trip, weekend or for longer visits, the Catskills, with their soft evening shadows, tree contoured hillsides, magnificent fall foliage and clear flowing streams, are a celebration of nature meant to be enjoyed by those weary from their daily routines.

Hiking trails, cross-country or downhill ski resorts, fishing in trout-filled streams, music under the stars, gourmet restaurants and welcoming inns nestled in woodland valleys make a visit to this land, well, magic.

Take for instance Frost Valley, a handy 15-minute ride from Route 28 in Olivera, Ulster County, where visitors come to enjoy the outdoors and educational programs at the YMCA camp. Tucked away in a valley surrounded by Slide, Double Top and Wildcat mountains, this 4,900-acre preserve of meandering streams, waterfalls, wooded thickets and open fields provides an out-of-doors utopia for families and friends, many of whom come back year after year.

Frost Valley has it all. Winter enthusiasts will find premier cross-country trails, fine ice skating on the 16-acre lake, and the thrill of a toboggan ride or the fun of snowshoeing in the winter.

In the spring, summer and fall, visitors camp out, cook over an open flame, hike the quiet trails where wildlife abound, view the stars at night, learn how to rock climb or participate in one of the many programs led by Frost Valley environmental educators. And, of course, there are

the evening hayride and 1960s style folk singing hootenannies in front of the huge hearths in the several lodges on the property which offer a variety of accommodations, including those for large groups.

Nearby, Belleayre Mountain is bright with color, and in the summer, its renowned "Music and the Mountain Sky" series brings name performers from around the world.



Empire State Development

Belleayre Mountain

And there is nothing like the green of spring as the trees renew themselves, or a leisurely walk down the mountainside. Also offered during the snowless months, environmental programs, guided walks, eagle watches, and flora and fauna expeditions are great learning experiences for children of all ages. In addition, day use areas are open for swimming, fishing and boating.

During the winter, downhill skiers at Belleayre will revel in a different kind of ski experience here. Located in the heart of the Catskill Forest Preserve on "forever wild" land, the mountain and its 33 trails are expertly maintained by DEC and a haven, unblemished by over-commercialization, for parents and children, singles, teens, octogenarians

and everyone else who wants to put on a pair of skis. Cross-country skiing is another option for enthusiasts.

Crisscross the trails that descend through the silent, pristine woodlands reminiscent of the forests that grew 200 years ago. Then relax in the rustic lodges close to the roaring fires or enjoy an outdoor barbecue on the patio.

When the day is done, there's still more to be enjoyed. At the nearby Alpine Inn, visitors will partake of a distinctly European experience. Perched on the side of a hill overlooking the Big Indian Valley, only 15 minutes from Belleayre, two large chalets, each with 10 rooms, and one tiny Ski Hut with two rooms, add up to the charm of the Alpine Inn. In the main lodge, a giant living room and large fireplace allow time to stretch out, watch the embers and rest after the days activities that may include hunting, hiking and fishing.

Innkeepers Erich and Edna Griesser are the second generation of the family that has owned the Swiss inn for 60 years. Their attention to detail and their culinary skills are well-documented.

As wonderful as nature is, the Catskill region is also a place of varied attractions. And what could be more unique than a trip to the latest wonder of the world, the World's Largest Kaleidoscope, which somehow seems to fit right in next to the mountain skyscape. Located east of Olivera, in the town of Shandaken at the Catskill Corners, is this 60-foot tower, constructed by local entrepreneur Dean Gitter.

For more information about attractions in the Catskills, call: 1-800-NYSCATS.

Maria Harding is a free-lance writer from Kingston, Ulster County.



file photo



photos by Jin Clayton, except where noted

New Belleayre Mountain Towers above the Catskills

By Tony Lanza

It's a brand new look for the oldest operating ski center in the Catskills. Belleayre Mountain has undergone dramatic improvements over the past year in time for the 1999-2000 ski season. Belleayre Mountain's 51st consecutive season

will showcase a new bigger and better Belleayre. Two new quad lifts, a new lodge, upgraded snowmaking and the development of new and extended trails will result in a 20 percent increase in skiable terrain. If that is not enough, a tracked vehicle dubbed the "Beast of Belleayre" now provides the more adventurous skiers and snowboarders access to the remote areas of the mountain.

The upgrades and additions are financed through the commitment made by Governor George E. Pataki to provide \$5 million in capital improvements for Belleayre. Operated by the Department of Environmental Conservation in the beautiful Catskill Forest Preserve, Belleayre, not just a winter resort, provides year-round recreational opportunities and serves as an economic linchpin

for the central high peaks of the Catskills.

Governor Pataki also directed that \$1.5 million from the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act of 1996 be used to improve sewage collection and treatment programs at the

state-operated facility as part of the long-term program to improve water quality in the region.



Improvements at Belleayre amount to complete redesign of the mountain that entirely transforms the skiing and snowboarding experience at the oldest active ski area in the Catskills.

The improvements amount to a complete redesign of the mountain that entirely transforms the skiing and snowboarding experience at the oldest active ski area in the Catskills. "Belleayre is now not only the oldest operating ski area in the Catskills," said superintendent Richard Clark, "it's also the newest. Skiers familiar with Belleayre will be amazed at the difference."

The new quad, Tomahawk, will provide better access to the highest skiable peak in the Catskills. The new 5,000-foot Superchief quad makes the long awaited connection of the upper and lower mountain a reality. Roaring Brook, Belleayre Mountain's most popular run, now rides and skis an incredible 2.27 miles, the longest trail in the Catskills. The new configuration at Belleayre will promote better traffic flow for the users and provides better connections to various sections of the facility.

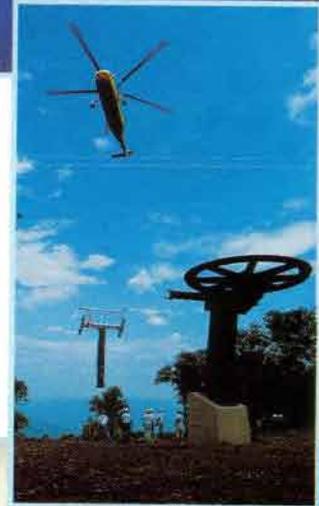
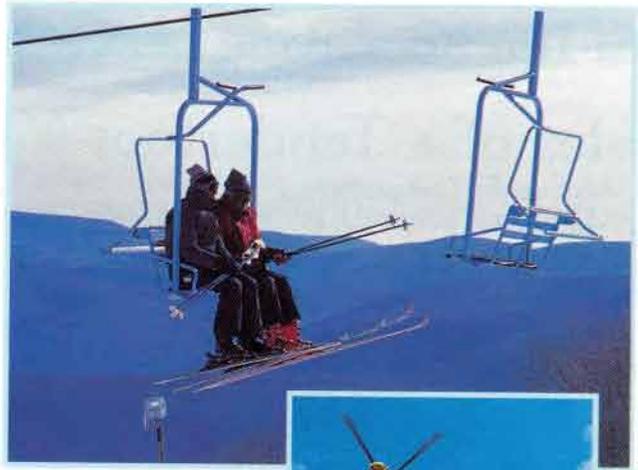
The most dramatic moment of the new expansion had to be the sounds of the powerful Sikorski helicopter hoisting the 51, 40-foot-tall, three-ton towers into place on the mountainside. The dramatic flying of the towers is the most emblematic event of the most aggressive, ambitious expansion in the resort's 50-year history.

Mother Nature can sometimes be unpredictable and uncooperative, but two new 400-horsepower vertical pumps producing an additional 2,000 gallons per minute and 31,000 feet of new snowmaking pipe increase the mountain's snowmaking capacity to 92 percent of the trails.

Improvements were not just limited to the outdoors. The new Longhouse Lodge is a multi-purpose building designed to relieve the pressure and congestion of the Overlook Lodge. The contemporary longhouse structure is thought to be the symbol of a new beginning for the Iroquois people. How fitting it is that the new lodge, a building that will serve families, ski clubs, and groups is named the Longhouse Lodge. The new building brings the number to four day-use lodges at Belleayre.

More improvements are scheduled for the next season. A new, expert-level trail will be opened in the name of Belleayre's own Olympic ski coach, Dot Nevel, and expansion of the parking facility is planned.

Design and construction management services for these projects are being provided by DEC's Division of Operations with Belleayre's own staff constructing the new trails and installing the snowmaking pipes.



New and expanded trails and lifts will challenge skiers and snowboarders at Belleayre.



Belleayre Mountain, on Route 28 in Ulster County, was opened as a ski center in 1949 with five trails and an electrically-powered rope tow. Belleayre made the news when they installed New York's first chair lift, a single chair rising 3,000 feet to the summit lodge. Residents recall how skiers would pitch tents outside the lodge so that they could be first in line for the lift. Bigger and better, Belleayre Mountain continues to rank as one of the finest winter recreational facilities in the Northeast.

For more information:
(914) 354-5600
www.belleayre.com

Tony Lanza is the assistant superintendent and director of skier services at Belleayre Mountain Ski Center, operated by the Department of Environmental Conservation.