

City of Madison: Finalizes plans for upcoming winter recreation at Elver Park

Posted on Tuesday, Nov 9, 2021

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Since late 2017, through the partnership of Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC), Madison Nordic Ski Club (MadNorSki) members and the City of Madison Parks Division, cross-country skiing in South Central Wisconsin saw an extended season, beyond what Mother Nature offered. The team provided the first and last opportunities to cross-country ski in the area each season, thanks to machine-made snow at Elver Park. First introduced at the park in December 2017, the machine-made snow groomed trail was often referred to as the “snow loop.”

No matter how much or little natural snow, for four winter seasons the community enjoyed the end result of a freshly groomed trail at Elver Park. The team process to create the snow loop is a combined effort of extensive equipment with limiting infrastructure, club and City operating funds and many volunteer and City staff hours. Throughout 2021, the team regularly met to discuss how to provide a more reliable, safe and sustainable snowmaking infrastructure, which includes improved electrical and water infrastructure. After thoughtful planning and conversation, the team agreed to focus their attention on improving the trail system for the natural snow trails for 2021-22 season, without the machine-made snow loop and continue working on the longer-term plan.

“Madnorski appreciates this team approach with Madison Parks and CXC in considering new ideas as well as taking a longer view perspective on winter recreation in Madison,” shared MadNorSki Director, Tamara Bryant. “The collaboration on the new Elver snowshoe trail and the [natural snow] ski trail improvements just this fall attests to the close relationship we have with the City. We will continue to work together to look at what might be possible in the coming

years.”

Beginning this fall, notable improvements were made to the natural snow trails at Elver Park, including adding filling and widening in areas where trails are often congested during peak use. While we cannot predict what Mother Nature will have in store, the team is prepared to provide outstanding and consistent grooming similar to the 2020-21 season. Additionally, the plan is to provide machine-made snow, if needed, on the popular sledding hill, in time for the MMSD winter break. We are also working to map a snowshoeing trail through the park and of course, Madison Parks will offer ice skating on the two rinks and well as equipment rentals at Elver Park, Madison’s winter recreation destination.

“The last four years showed how effectively we can work together as a team and snowmaking loop got better and better each year since we started in 2017,” said Yuriy Gusev, Central Cross County Skiing’s Executive Director. “We have learned a lot during this time, and temporary infrastructure was a key element as it provided us great flexibility to adjust year after year.

Gusev added, “As we are working on the next phase to develop permanent snowmaking infrastructure, we are committed to continuing our partnership assisting with trail maintenance, grooming, and snowmaking so Elver Park continues to serve as the community’s winter wonderland.”

Thanks to the continued partnership, you can find updates on in the [Winter Fun section](#) of the Madison Parks website.

About Madison Parks

The vision of Madison Parks is to provide the ideal system of parks, natural resources and recreational opportunities for everyone. Madison Parks offers both active and passive, year-round recreation in more than 275 parks throughout the city of Madison. For more information, visit cityofmadison.com/parks

About Madison Nordic Ski Club

Formed in 1981, the Madison Nordic Ski Club is a membership-based, 501 (c)(3) organization, for all levels of cross-country skiers. Each winter the club organizes monthly meetings, day and weekend tours, lessons, an evening race series, social events, and special activities for youth. For more information, visit MadNorSki.org

About Central Cross Country Skiing

The Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC) is a member service organization that creates opportunities for athletes of all ages and abilities to participate and advance in Nordic skiing through sport specific programs, events and education. For more information, visit www.cxcskiing.org

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