



For Immediate Release

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ABSF Announces Cancellation of Races and Introduces Birkie Celebration 2017!

Live Music, Birkie Brew-Ski, and Camaraderie Awaits!

Hayward, WI (February 24, 2017) – After days of unseasonable weather, rain, and a predicted snow storm front missing the Hayward and Cable areas, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation regrettably announces the cancellation of the 2017 American Birkebeiner, Kortelopet, and Prince Haakon cross-country ski races.

The American Birkebeiner is North America's largest cross-country ski race which runs from Cable to Hayward, Wisconsin, finishing on the snow-covered Main Street of Hayward. After record high temperatures and over 1.5 inches of rain, race officials closed the Birkie Trail from Cable to Hayward 8-days ago to preserve the trail for this week's originally planned races. Shortly thereafter, Lake Hayward was deemed unsafe for use in the ski-race which caused race officials to focus contingency plans on the Birkie Trail from the American Birkebeiner Trailhead, east of Cable, WI, to the OO Trailhead, east of Seeley, WI.

After discussion with a wide constituency of key stakeholders including emergency and medical officials, trail crew, and others, the ABSF board determined the greater ski course was unsafe for a timed race. Areas of the Birkie Trail were lacking snow, icy, or simply unsuitable for use. As always, the safety of event participants is first and foremost in the minds of ABSF officials, followed by a goal of creating the best possible participant experience for all. Both things are weighed and considered with each and every decision the ABSF makes.

"While we know Birkie, Korte, and Prince Haakon skiers are disappointed with this announcement, I am confident that the ABSF staff did everything within their power to preserve the trail for a safe race," said Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director. "We know that the Birkie is so much more than a race to so many. Birkie skiers are passionate about the overall experience. It is in that Birkie Fever spirit that we're excited to celebrate the love of Nordic sports with skiers and spectators alike at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. It'll be a Birkie celebration like none-other!"

In lieu of the annual iconic ski race, the ABSF looks forward to celebrating the inaugural use of the American Birkebeiner Trailhead and start area with BirkieStock 2017 – a Birkie celebration unlike any other!

Skiers, spectators, friends, and the general public are invited! Beginning at 9:30am on Saturday, February 25, 2017, buses will begin transporting riders from the Como Parking Lot, off of Highway 63 and south of Cable, WI, to the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. For those anxious to get some time on their skis, the trail crew is creating an estimated 5K loop for skiers to ski once, twice or as many times as they'd like! Live music begins at 11:45am and plays to 5:00pm. Festival goers can visit the Birkie soup tent, try a Birkie Brew-ski, watch the Nordic World Championships on the jumbo screen, grab a brat, visit the Birkie Store, and more! Plus, we've moved the On Snow Ski & Bike Demo from Sunday, February 26, to Saturday, February 25, so guests can try out the latest ski gear and fat bikes!

More details will be announced on www.Birkie.com at 1:00pm today

About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation and Birkie® Events: Located near Hayward and Cable, Wisconsin, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), a 501(c)(3) organization, is known for its signature American Birkebeiner Ski Marathon held each February. Today, the Birkie has grown to encompass a variety of year-round, silent sport events that promote a healthy, active lifestyle for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts. The ABSF also acts as steward of the legendary Birkie Trail, providing year-round grooming, mowing and maintenance to all 107 kilometers. From the iconic American Birkebeiner ski race, to the Birkie Trail Run & Trek, and Fat Bike Birkie, the ABSF and the Birkie Trail attract skiers, runners, bikers, trekkers, and hikers, from casual day-trippers to elite athletes. Learn more at www.birkie.com. *BIRKIE Ski. Run. Bike. Live!*

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