

For Immediate Release

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Fat Bike Birkie Rolls Out with Record Number of Riders

World's Largest Fat Bike Race Expands Participant Field

Hayward, WI (March 6, 2017) – On Saturday, March 11, 2017, the [American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation](#) (ABSF) will greet 1200 fat bikers to the [American Birkebeiner Trailhead](#), just east of Cable, Wisconsin. Riders will test their expertise and skill on the legendary hills of the [Birkie Trail](#) at the Fat Bike Birkie, the world's largest fat bike race. While normally groomed exclusively for cross-country skiers during the winter months, the Birkie Trail is open to fat bike riders for three days only during the 45NORTH [Fat Bike Birkie](#), presented by Freewheel Bike.

The American Birkebeiner (Birkie) Trail is an over 100-kilometer-long recreational trail extending through Bayfield and Sawyer counties in the forests of northwestern Wisconsin. Widely known as a destination for cross-country skiers, once per winter the iconic snow-covered trail plays host to fat bike riders from all points north, south, east, and west. The Fat Bike Birkie is the largest gathering of fat bike racers anywhere.

The Fat Bike Birkie offers both 47K (29.2 miles – The Big Fat) and 23K (14.2 miles – The Chico) [race options](#), a Friday evening [criterium course](#) for youth and adults, and a camaraderie filled festival atmosphere where riders of all levels of expertise adventure their way through the woods on their fat bikes.

“The race has grown steadily over the past five years and the excitement much the same! This year we capped the event at 20% more participants than last year’s race and there are still riders reaching out to us hoping to get in on the action,” said Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director. “Now in its fifth year, the Fat Bike Birkie has grown from fewer than 200 riders in 2013 to a field of 1200 today. In 2016 the race drew riders from 14 states and 3 countries!”

This year’s Fat Bike Birkie will be hosted at the festival grounds of the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. A fun-filled atmosphere will greet riders and spectators alike, as fat bike enthusiasts gather for the start and arrive at the finish of this year’s race. The festivities begin on Friday, March 10 and extend through Sunday, March 12, with three days of fun, food, demos, and riding.

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While race registration has already closed, there is still opportunity to register and ride in the criterium races, a short track, snow-covered, obstacle course of sorts. Interested riders can register on Friday, however, space is limited. A full [schedule of events](#) is available at [Birkie.com](#).

What was once thought of as a fad or craze is now the fastest growing bicycle sector. With fat bike sales of over \$50 million in 2015, up from \$6 million in 2013; fat bikes are here to stay. The beauty of a fat bike is that its over-sized tires allow riders to cruise in all types of conditions including groomed single-track trails, frozen lakes, firm trails, or fresh powder. Fat bikes have extended the biking season and added a whole new twist for winter adventurers. For anyone interested in trying out a fat bike, there will be on-snow demo rides on [Friday, Saturday, and Sunday](#) as part of Fat Bike Birkie festivities. The manufacturer demo rides provide everyone the opportunity to see what all the fat bike fuss is about.

“The beauty of fat bikes is that you can ride them in nearly any condition. In low snow years, like this one, it is another great option for folks to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors. Whether fat biking, skiing, or snowshoeing, we’re just happy that enthusiasts are getting out as part of a healthy, active lifestyle,” Popp continued.

Wisconsin consistently ranks as one of America's best places to bike and Northern Wisconsin is fast-becoming a destination hot spot for fat bike riders. It's no wonder as Wisconsin boasts more than one thousand miles of great off-road bicycling opportunities throughout the state, available by season, and offers riders a wide variety of experiences and terrains.

The [Fat Bike Birkie Expo](#) is open to the general public from 10:00am to 7:00pm on Friday, March 10 at the Great Hall and American Birkebeiner Trailhead grounds. Expo vendors include: 45NRTH (title sponsor); Freewheel Bike (presenting sponsor); Salsa; Surly, iSSi; Northern Lakes Co-Op Corner Deli; 9:ZERO:7; HED.; GU Energy; Borah Teamwear; Framed Bikes; Trek; Dirt Bicycle Components; WildCat Groomers; Hayward Coffee Company; BeFast Sportgear; MAXXIS; MAGURA; velofix; CAMBA; and BEMER Group.

The Fat Bike Birkie is sponsored by: Title Sponsor - 45NRTH, Presenting Sponsor – FreeWheel Bike; Salsa, Surly, 9:ZERO:7; HED.; iSSi; Northern Lakes Cooperative Corner Deli; Clif; GU; nuun hydration; Borah Teamwear; Framed Bikes; TREK; Wildcat Groomers; Hayward Coffee Co.; BeFast Sportgear; Dirt Bicycle Components; BEMER Group; MAXXIS; MAGURA; velofix;

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 100+ kilometers. Learn more at [www.birkie.com](#). BIRKIE Ski. Run. Bike. Live!

2017 Fat Bike Birkie - Riders to Watch

Women

April Morgan - Hopkins, MN

- Fat Bike Birkie, 2nd place 2015 & 2016
- Currently 1st Great Lakes Fat Bike Series

Ami Stuart - Park City, UT

- 2017 National Fat Bike Champion, Pivot Cycles

Amber Bethe – Anchorage, AK

- 9:ZERO:7 Factory Team

Kaitlin Antonneau - Colorado Springs, CO

- Pro-rider Cannondale

Rebecca Ireland – Minneapolis, MN

- 2016 Short and Fat Winner

Sheryl Loan - Eagle River, AK

- Fat Bike Birkie - 3rd place 2016

Christina Ross – Chaska, MN

- Fat Bike Birkie - 7th place 2016

Stacey Kolstad – Palmer, AK

- Fat Bike Birkie - 9th place 2016

Anna Zawadski - St. Paul, MN

- Fat Bike Birkie - 10th place 2016

Men

Will Ross – Anchorage, AK

- Fat Bike Birkie 2016 Champion

Luke Keough - Colorado Springs, CO

- Team United Healthcare

Tom Soladay - Minnetonka, MN

- Rally Pro Team

Bjorn Selander – Hudson, WI

- Pro-cyclist, Rally Cycling

Corey Stelljes – Madison, WI

- Chequamegon Fat Tire 2016 Champion

Jorden Wakeley – Grayling, MI

- Fat Bike Birkie – 2013 Champion

Brian Geshel - Marquette, MI

- Currently 1st place Great Lakes Fat Bike Series

Evan Simula – Marquette, MI

- Currently 2nd place Great Lakes Fat Bike Series

Adam Bergman - Lino Lakes, MN

- Fat Bike Birkie – 3rd place 2016

Matt Acker - Grand Rapids, MI

- Fat Bike Birkie – 4th place 2016

Cole House – Oneida, WI

- Fat Bike Birkie – 5th place 2016
- Currently 3rd place in the Great Lakes Fat Bike Series

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