

**2020-2021
American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation
Board Candidate Profile Information**

Candidate Name: Karen Manske

Address:

City: Stillwater State: MN Zip: 55082

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Email Address: karenmanske@gmail.com

Years of Membership in ABSF: Many years!

Occupation: Retired – Public School Administrator/Teacher

Signature:

ABSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE PROFILE

Please respond to the following question (feel free to use additional space).

Why are you interested in being a member of the ABSF Board of Directors and what knowledge and skills do you possess that can benefit the organization?

As I write this, we are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic as well as a period of civil unrest triggered again by the murder of George Floyd. I have been impressed by the responses of the American Birkebeiner. Birkie events are being adjusted to protect the health and safety of all participants. As well, the Birkie has shown support for BlackLivesMatter and disavowing racism in any form. My respect for the American Birkebeiner has grown following their responses to these world crises. More than ever before, it would be an honor to serve on the ABSF Board of Directors.

Throughout the past 20 years, I've been inspired by the growth and development of the American Birkebeiner as the ABSF and Birkie staff members pursue their mission, particularly the work "supporting healthy and active lifestyles among people of all ages and abilities". The inclusive work of the Birkie will no doubt continue to grow.

I've been involved with Nordic skiing over the past 40 years - beginning as a citizen skier and finding my way to opportunities serving in a variety of ski related positions. During the years my husband worked for Central Cross Country Skiing, I volunteered as a coach with CXC Igor Camps and Open Junior Camps, and also supported the Nordic Rocks for Schools program. In 2017, I completed the US Ski and Snowboard Level 200 Nordic coaching certification. In 2019, I was fortunate to be chosen as one of the coaches who attended the Canadian Ski Championships with 12 USA junior skiers.

In 2002, I skied my first American Birkebeiner 50k and have completed the race every year since. I even enjoyed the festivities of the canceled 2017 Birkie. The Birkebeiner ski marathon is certainly an addicting event!

For the past 6 years I've volunteered as co-chief for the Junior Birkie. It has been a pleasure to work with the talented Birkie staff and many volunteers who have helped the Junior Birkie events evolve and grow to best meet the needs of young ski athletes.

Nordic skiing has played a big role in our family. Four of our 5 children skied in high school and 3 of them skied in college. They all have participated in Birkie events. Our family is committed to an active lifestyle through skiing, biking, and running – lifelong sports.

As a runner, I've been pleased to see the expansion of the Birkie Trail Run - adding distances and events that appeal to a wide range of abilities and interests. It's been fun to participate in many of these race options - from the marathon to the relay events.

As a public school administrator, I was involved with leading projects, supervising staff, and gathering input from those people who best understood a situation. These skills seem essential for an ABSF Board member, as listening to ideas and needs is key to developing successful programming. While employed as a public school administrator in Minnesota, I was a member of Minnesota's Community Education Association Board for 10 years, as the secretary and a state regional representative. These positions taught me a great deal about the work of a Board, experiences that would benefit my work as a member of the ABSF Board.

On June 30, 2017, I retired from my career in public education, and am excited to now have increased time to commit to other interests in my life. I believe in the work of the ABSF and support the work and mission of the ABSF foundation, board and staff, and would love to spend some of my new "free time" serving as a member of the ABSF board of directors.

All nomination forms must be received in the ABSF office by no later than June 24, 2020.

Again, thank you for your interest, and we look forward to receiving your candidate profile and question responses.