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**Happy ski trails:  
Mother Nature Snows Down on Volks Ski 400**

*12 - 18 inches of new snow fell on the  
Nation's longest cross-country ski trail system in a single County*

**COOK COUNTY, MN** (Jan. 29, 2010) – Volks Ski 400 held on Saturday, January 23, 2010 was the kick-off event for a weeklong family-friendly celebration of winter and cross-country skiing on Lake Superior's North Shore and Gunflint Trail. The event drew intrepid skiers out on a precipitous day, you may recall the winter storm that blew into Minnesota that weekend. A non-competitive Nordic ski event designed with the goal of having a skier on every kilometer of the county's 400km of professionally groomed ski trails that day, the Volks Ski 400 had skiers on the Banadad, Central Gunflint, Sugarbush and Cascade trails. "Total tally of kilometers skied was 252.5 at an average speed of 8 minutes per kilometer. The Central Gunflint Trail team out of Bearskin Lodge skied 77K at a 7 minute per kilometer pace followed up by a Banadad Trail team out of Poplar Creek B&B skiing 29K at a 9.5 minute per kilometer pace," said Maggie Barnard, Events Director for the Volks Ski Fest. "The other teams out on the trails were a duo from Cascade Lodge on the Cascade Trail skiing 34K and the Sugarbush Trail team out of Lutsen Resort had the longest distance covered at 112.5K. All in all, a great effort in difficult weather conditions. We are very pleased for this inaugural event!" said Barnard.

Every trail is open and groomed for classic and skate skiing on the 400km system and the new snowfall of nearly 20 inches have provided very good to excellent system-wide trail conditions.

"With the new snow that fell over the weekend, the trails really are in excellent shape," said Barnard.

Hosted by The Cook County Events and Visitor Bureau, Volks Ski Fest takes place Jan. 23-31 in Cook County, Minnesota. Each day during the weeklong festival, venues throughout the county will offer guided cross-country ski tours and luminary skis on trails ranging from beginner-friendly to more advanced outings. Local cross-country ski experts will lead skijoring and waxing clinics and Andrew Slade, event spokesperson, local author and North Shore trail expert, will host a book signing and fireside chat. In addition to Nordic skiing events, the festival also features guided snowshoe hikes, horsedrawn sleigh rides, dog sledding, bonfires and s'more parties, and other winter-themed events will keep families entertained in true North Shore style.

More information on Volks Ski Fest and the Volks Ski 400, maps, a schedule of events and activity registration may be found

at <http://www.volksskifest.com>

Updated snow and trail conditions are available online at: <http://www.americasnorthcoast.org/trail-conditions/>;

<http://grandmarais.com/snow/>; <http://www.gunflint-trail.com/conditions/index.html>.

## **The Cook County Events & Visitors Bureau**

The Cook County Events & Visitors Bureau is a tourism organization dedicated to economic development and maintaining the vitality of The North Shore/Gunflint Trail by supporting events throughout the year. For more information, call 218.663.8058 or visit [www.cookcountymnevents.com](http://www.cookcountymnevents.com).

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