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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2018 - Cook County, Minn. This is the perfect time to cross-country ski in Cook County! We recently received 14 inches of new snow (with more in the forecast), making conditions ideal for getting on one of our beautiful trails. Be sure to check out trail conditions [here](#) and download the cross country ski map [here](#).

Every February, Visit Cook County looks forward to welcoming visitors from around the world to the northland for [the Birkie](#) – a fun-filled weekend (February 23-25, 2018) of cross-country ski racing in northern Wisconsin. To keep the cross-country ski adventures going, we invite you to extend your weekend and head even further north. Cook County, Minnesota is one of the nation's top cross-country ski destinations – and February is the perfect time of year to get out on your skis.

Gunflint Lodge on the Gunflint Trail is reporting the following:

- 48.7 inches of snow for the season
- 10-12 inch base on the ski trails
- 22-28 inches of snow off trail

Cook County is home to over 400km of beautiful cross-country ski trails through some of Minnesota's most rugged and diverse terrain. With an average of 120 inches of annual snowfall in the stunning Superior National Forest, the opportunities for adventure are endless.

[View the Visit Cook County website for trails, trail conditions and information on planning the perfect cross-country ski getaway.](#)

Top 5 Reasons Why You Should Cross Country Ski this Winter

1. **Affordable and fun**

Pick up a Minnesota Ski Pass for as little as \$6/day or \$20/year or try one of the privately maintained trails on the Gunflint Trail. You'll be gliding through the forest in no time. No gear? No problem! You can rent equipment from many local resorts and outfitters for under \$40/day. Some resorts even offer complimentary rentals with your stay.

2. **View wildlife and nature up close**

They call it a "Silent Sport" for a reason. Traveling by cross-country ski through the Superior National Forest is akin to being a cat on the prowl. As you move quickly and quietly through the pristine forest, keep your eyes open for wildlife like moose, deer, owls, and other boreal forest creatures. Make sure you bring your camera.



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3. **Endless adventure opportunities**

With over 400km of groomed trails, you can ski to your heart's content. You can also venture off-trail into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Remember to bring a map and a compass if you decide to venture off-trail.

4. **Full-body workout**

Tone both your upper and lower body while having fun. What could be better than cruising along snow covered trails while gabbing with fellow skiers and taking in the spectacular scenery? If you really want to break a sweat, lead the pack by breaking trail.

5. **Après ski**

Last but most certainly not least, enjoy your post-ski happy hour guilt-free after burning around 500 calories an hour. Top that off with a nice soak in the hot tub, a massage and a great meal and you'll know you are doing vacation right.

Upcoming Cook County Events You Won't Want to Miss

Cook County Fireplace Tour – Various Locations Throughout Cook County

February 1-28, 2018

Enjoy the fine art of [Hygge](#) at its finest. Through the month of February, you can cozy up by a roaring fire with your nearest and dearest at some of the most spectacular fireplaces in the region. There's no better way to relax after a day of cross-country skiing than warming up by a beautiful fireplace. Take the Cook County Fireplace Tour this February and discover why a winter vacation in Cook County is naturally unforgettable. [Read the blog post to learn more.](#)

Gunflint Lake Cabin Fever Festival – Gunflint Lodge

Saturday, February 24, 2018, 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM

This is the perfect opportunity to get outside and celebrate all the things we love about winter. There'll be outdoor games—like Snowshoe Obstacle Course and Stamping Scavenger Hunt. Feats of skill and chance include sled races and a Fat Trout fishing contest. Then make a Run for the Border on our International Fat Bike Course (bring your own bike or rent one of ours). There will be bonfires and marshmallow toasting and s'more! Then end the evening with a Wintry Mix social in Justine's at Gunflint Lodge. [View the Visit Cook County website to learn more.](#)

The Sugar Tour – Tofte, MN

Saturday, March 3, 2018, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Have fun and continue your ski season by coming to the fabulous Sugarbush trails. The days are warmer and the trails are in prime condition to take a sweet challenge. Children and adults can choose 5k, 8k or an 18k loop, with activities on the shorter loops or the personal challenge of skiing the long loop with treats and hot chocolate when you finish at Oberg Trailhead. [View the Visit Cook County website to learn more.](#)

Après l'Adventure at the Winery – North Shore Winery



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Saturday, March 3, 2018, 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

After a full day of cross-country skiing, what's better than warming up with music, drinks and camaraderie? Join us for music, warm up with a mulled wine or Winter's Spirit, and enjoy warm soup from D&D Catering at North Shore Winery after your snow adventure. Listen to the musical stylings of the Gordon Thorne and Chris Gilles combo. Great solo, but when these two get together with their friends the music is amazing. Don't miss this fun party to warm up after a great day on the North Shore! [View the Visit Cook County website to learn more.](#)

Dog Days of Winter – Gunflint Trail

Sunday, March 11, 2018

[Dog Days of Winter](#) is a dog sledding theme event hosted by Trail Center Lodge on the Gunflint Trail. The event includes a snowman competition, skijoring races and dog sled derbies.

DuLutsen – North of North Music and Ski Festival – Lutsen

Saturday, March 17, 2018

When you move North of North, there is mostly woods, and sky, and wilderness until you arrive in Lutsen where an entertainment outpost surrounded by millions of acres of Superior National Forest hosts live music 7 days a week in winter and more than 200 shows per year. [DuLutsen](#) is the confluence of this northern music scene with Duluth's top artists converging on this outpost known as Papa Charlie's in a weekend ski and music festival. What better way to celebrate North!

The team at Visit Cook County looks forward to welcoming you to our region for a weekend full of cross-country skiing, outdoor adventures and more. Plan your weekend getaway and find a complete list of area trails and maps at [VisitCookCounty.com/xc](#).

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About Visit Cook County

Visit Cook County encompasses the northeastern Minnesota communities of Lutsen, Tofte, Schroeder, Grand Marais, the Gunflint Trail and Grand Portage, commonly referred to as "the Arrowhead" and the "North Shore of Lake Superior." Grand Marais, Minn., has earned several national accolades — most recently it was named USA Today's [Best Midwestern Small Town](#), Outside Magazine's [The 16 Best Places to Live in the U.S. 2016](#), and Budget Travel's 2015 [Coolest Small Town in America](#). Rekindle your sense of adventure by exploring the Superior National Forest or paddling through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Discover what makes the communities of Cook County, Minn. "Naturally Unforgettable." Connect on social media using #visitcc, Twitter [@CookCoVisitors](#), [Facebook](#), or Instagram [@donorthmn](#). Learn more at [VisitCookCounty.com](#).