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**MINNESOTA SET TO BRING THE WORLD TO WIRTH - HOSTING THE 2024 LOPPET CUP,
THE COOP FIS CROSS COUNTRY WORLD CUP IN MINNEAPOLIS**
*The Loppet Foundation will host the Loppet Cup over President's Day weekend in
February 2024 in Theodore Wirth Park*

MINNEAPOLIS, February 15, 2023 — The Loppet Foundation, Share Winter Foundation and U.S. Ski & Snowboard will welcome the best cross country ski racers in the world to Minneapolis, Minnesota's Wirth Park for the COOP FIS Cross Country World Cup over President's Day weekend, Feb. 17-19, 2024.* The Loppet Foundation and Share Winter will serve as hosts of the Loppet Cup, taking place on the Loppet's world class cross country ski trails - setting the stage for one of the only World Cups to be held in a major metropolitan area - and the first on U.S. soil in two decades.

The FIS Cross Country World Cup Tour is the annual global tour for elite athletes, comprised of a series of distance and sprint races over the course of each winter season. Expected to be present at the Loppet Cup is three-time Olympic medalist **Jessie Diggins**. Diggins is a native of nearby Afton, Minnesota and was the first American athlete to win a gold medal in Olympic cross country ski competition. She was key to securing this international competition for Minnesota. Other U.S. and Minnesota-local athletes will also be representing the U.S. Cross Country Ski Team in the Loppet Cup, a unique chance to ski in front of a hometown crowd.

"I'm excited to give ski fans from around the U.S. a chance to see the action up close for the first time in over 20 years," said Diggins. "I am so proud to represent Minnesota as one of the first American athletes to win Olympic gold in cross country, and now to bring the sport I love to the state I call home."

The Loppet Foundation was ready to host a World Cup in mid-March 2020. The event was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Loppet Foundation looks forward to hosting in 2024 while building on the preparation for the event in 2020.

The 2024 Loppet Cup, hosted by Share Winter Foundation, will be free and open to the public, with races held on Saturday, February 17 and Sunday, February 18 and a free community ski day on President's Day, Monday, February 19.

"The Loppet is thrilled to bring the world to Wirth Park and to showcase on an international stage the work this organization is doing to expand access to the sport of cross country skiing and the outdoors," said **Claire Wilson**, executive director of the Loppet. "While it is unusual for



an event of this size and scope to be hosted by a small nonprofit, we believe it is important to shine a light on our unique venue in the heart of a city where the wellbeing of all is promoted through outdoor adventure. We look forward to sharing our vision for a just and equitable winter sport environment with the world - while also cheering on our favorite athletes on the same trails where hundreds of Minnesotans have learned to love cross country skiing.”

“We are thrilled to work with the Loppet Foundation and Share Winter Foundation to bring back a cross country World Cup to the states,” said President and CEO of **U.S. Ski & Snowboard Sophie Goldschmidt**. “We know that this event will be a huge success and allow our athletes to showcase their incredible talent in front of a community that has always supported this sport.”

“Share Winter is excited to partner with the Loppet Foundation to bring this spectacular event to the community and we hope it will inspire the next generation of skiers,” said **Constance Beverley, CEO of the Share Winter Foundation**.

“The Loppet Cup is yet another in a string of world-class sporting events Minnesota is hosting,” said Executive Director for **Explore Minnesota Lauren Bennett McGinty**. “We are proud to be a four season destination for sports enthusiasts from all over the world, and no one does winter quite like Minnesota. With more than 2,000 miles of groomed cross country ski trails, skiing is a highly accessible sport which can be done in every corner of the state. Winter sports and related businesses are integral to driving and sustaining Minnesota’s tourism economy, and we cannot wait to share our great state with the world. We encourage residents and visitors alike to start planning their 2024 President’s Day Weekend now!”

Preceding their arrival in Minneapolis, World Cup athletes will descend on Alberta, Canada to complete two sprint races and two distance races from February 9-13 as part of their North American visit. “We are thrilled to collaborate with the Minneapolis organization in helping raise the profile of cross country skiing as we get set to host two North American stops for the COOP FIS Cross Country World Cups.” said **Norbert Meier, Events Chair, Alberta World Cup Society**.

Come learn more and see some of the nation’s top racers on the course at the announcement celebration event on Saturday, February 18 at The Trailhead (1221 Theodore Wirth Parkway, Minneapolis) at 11am. Remarks will be made by former Minneapolis mayor RT Rybak, Share Winter Foundation, the Loppet Foundation, and Explore MN. More information on the World Cup event will be available on the event’s official website, www.loppetcup.com, or on Facebook and Instagram @loppetcup.

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ABOUT THE LOPPET FOUNDATION

The Loppet Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that connects people to the outdoors through experiences that grow community. Since 2002, the Loppet Foundation has worked to create high-quality public events, youth education, and outdoor recreation programs for the local community. Learn more at loppet.org.



ABOUT SHARE WINTER:

Share Winter Foundation (Share Winter) is a non-profit grantmaking organization working to improve the lives, health, and fitness of youth through winter sports, and create a more diverse, inclusive, and welcoming winter sports community. Share Winter works closely with carefully selected grantees to build efficient, effective, sustainable winter sports programs and pipelines to ongoing winter sports participation. Through our partnerships, we strive to make winter sports accessible to a broader, more diverse community and share winter with 100,000 youth by 2028. Learn more at www.sharewinterfoundation.org.

ABOUT U.S. SKI & SNOWBOARD:

U.S. Ski & Snowboard is the Olympic National Governing Body (NGB) of ski and snowboard sports in the USA, based in Park City, Utah. Tracing its roots directly back to 1905, the organization represents nearly 200 elite skiers and snowboarders in 2022, competing in seven teams; alpine, cross country, freeski, freestyle, snowboard, nordic combined, and ski jumping. In addition to fully funding the elite teams, U.S. Ski & Snowboard also provides leadership and direction for tens of thousands of young skiers and snowboarders across the USA, encouraging and supporting them in achieving excellence. By empowering national teams, clubs, coaches, parents, officials, volunteers, and fans, U.S. Ski & Snowboard is committed to the progression of its sports, athlete success, and the value of team. For more information, visit www.usskiandsnowboard.org.

*Pending final date confirmation by the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS).