



**P.O. Box 541
33 Paradis Circle
Fort Kent, ME 04743**

Press Release

FORT KENT OUTDOOR CENTER TO HOST FIRST NENSA EASTERN CUP

FKOC will host our first ever New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA) Eastern Cup Nordic Ski race on Saturday and Sunday December 16-17, 2017. NENSA is the New England based organization responsible for developing the sport of Cross-Country (XC) Skiing through organizing youth programs, U16 and Eastern High School Championships, a Marathon Series, Four annual Eastern Cup Events, and a team of young athletes to represent New England at the Junior Olympics every March to compete against other teams from region in the US.

The Eastern Cup series has participants from early childhood all the way up to over 30 masters skiers. The series is sanctioned by USSA and the four races in the series are used for athletes between the ages of 14-23 to qualify for the Junior Olympics held in March. The participants are the very best skiers in New England together with novice racers trying their hand at XC ski racing.

The field at past races has been as large as 400 skiers! This would be the largest race we have hosted based on the number of entries, so hotels, restaurants and gas stations get ready! Many racers will travel far from Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and New York so it is anticipated that the field might be a little smaller, realistically 300-350 racers plus accompanying families. They are coming to Fort Kent this early because we have the most reliable snow in New England, but we all know how fickle mother nature can be in mid-December, so we are developing a snowmaking backup plan in conjunction with Lonesome Pine Trails ski area to guarantee that we can host the event. Fort Kent has never had to cancel an event due to snow conditions, and we don't want to this time! The other three races in the series are Jan 13-14 in Middlebury Vt., Feb 3-4 in Stowe Vt., and the last Feb10-11 in Hanover NH, all historic Nordic ski centers in New England.

The schedule for our weekend will be as follows;

Saturday Dec 16	Sprint 1.4km Freestyle Event
	9:00-12am Sprint Qualifiers
	12:00-1:25pm Senior Heats Women & Men
	1:30-2:00 U18/U20 Heats Women & Men
	2:15-2:50 U16 Heats Girls & Boys
	3:15 Awards Sprint Races

Sunday Dec 17	Classic Distance Mass Start Races
	9:00am U16 Boys 5km
	9:30 U16 Girls 5km
	10:30 Women & U18/20 5km
	12:00 Men & U18/20 10km
	1:00pm Awards





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The freestyle sprint races on Saturday are the most exciting Nordic races, with 6 racers going out head to head in the heats! This format makes for some very competitive races with the results frequently determined by photo finishes. Sunday's Classic mid-distance race will then test the endurance of the best skiers in New England.

Securing this event is in part a result of the strategy and hard work that has been put together at the FKOC over the past few years that will have us hosting more Cross Country (XC) events in addition to Biathlon events in the future. The widening of the trails over the last year, and the FIS (Federation du Ski) certification have allowed us to bid on such prestigious regional events. FKOC will also be hosting the New Year's Nordic Festival for the fourth year with a lot of down-state teams traveling north for early snow, and the MPA State class B&C Nordic Championships February 21&22.

Next year we will host the Eastern High School Nordic Championships in March, another NENSA event that will bring the top 48 athletes from each New England state plus New York (about 300 total racers) to Fort Kent for 3 days of racing.

So get ready St John Valley.... We are about to get invaded by some of the best and nicest XC skiers from throughout New England that are looking to the North for great Snow, Food and Hospitality that we can serve up! We know we will roll out the white carpet and keep them coming back for more great skiing!

We will be looking for multiple volunteers to host this event!! Please contact Carl Theriault at theriaultcarl@hotmail.com if you are interested in helping out in any way.

