



# BIRCHLEGGINGS CLUB

*Rewarding skiers who have completed  
twenty or more American Birkebeiner races*

*Supporting the Birkebeiner Foundation  
[www.birchleggings.com](http://www.birchleggings.com)*



Jason Laumann, Deputy Director  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
1400 South River Street  
Spooner, WI 54801

September 2, 2020

Dear Mr. Laumann:

The Birchleggings Club supports the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's (NWRPC) and American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation's (ABSF) application for a \$250,000 Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge Grant.

The Birchleggings Club Inc. (BLC), a 503c3 non-profit organization, was formed in 1992. Its membership is open to all "Birchleggers," American Birkebeiner skiers who have completed 20 or more races. There are 950 active Birkie skiers that have attained Birchleggers status. 300 skiers are dues-paying Birchleggings Club members.

The mission of our organization is to support the American Birkebeiner and Birkebeiner Trail, recognize veteran Birkebeiner skiers, and promote skiing and healthy lifestyle activities. We present special awards to 20, 30 and 40-year Birkie skiers. The Tony Wise Award, which recognizes individuals for significant contributions to the growth and success of the Birkebeiner, is presented annually by the BLC. Our major effort has been funding the warming hut at Mosquito Brook on the Birkie trail (\$31,500). The BLC played a significant role in the funding of the Tony Wise Museum of the American Birkebeiner (\$4500).

The club promotes the participation of youth in skiing and encourages healthy lifestyle activities for all persons. The BLC has provided Korteloppet entry-fee scholarships for high school skiers through the Wisconsin Nordic Network. The club also contributed to the "Nordic Rocks for Schools" program of the Central Cross-Country Ski Association (CXC). This program assists elementary and middle schools in obtaining Nordic ski equipment for their physical education classes. Other worthwhile projects that the BLC has supported recently are the Becker Bridge and the newly-installed Birchleggings Club Bell near the Birkie start line.

The Birchleggings Club gives its enthusiastic endorsement of the rebirth of the Telemark property and creation of a model and master plan for recreation-oriented sustainable development at the site. While the ABSF, BLC, and other Birkie-related entities have been successful individually to promote the race and year-round use of the Birkie trail, a community-wide master plan for Telemark will provide a more-inclusive road map for appropriate and sustainable development of the site that will benefit the entire region. Past stand-alone development attempts for Telemark have failed. A coordinated wide-ranging master plan will create a well thought out custom-made blueprint for long-term success.

The BLC is very excited about the prospect of participating in the development of a master plan. A vibrant Telemark property hosting world-class events fits extremely well with our club mission. The NWRPC and ABSF are solid stakeholders who are dedicated to benefitting the region. The members of the BLC, via planning sessions, member surveys on our social media sites, and other potential involvement with the project, would bring years of Birkie-trail and Telemark-Resort experience to the table and be a valuable resource to the development initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

*Gale R. Otterholt*

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