



The trails, designed for all ability levels, wind through serene pine forests, which helps to protect the snow cover from the winter wind.



Nordic Skiing in Vermont

According to the Vermont Ski Areas Association, at least 2,000 years ago, Scandinavians first strapped thin strips of wood to their feet and took off through the snow. The descendants of those snow travelers emerged in Stowe in the early 1900s, establishing a new method of travel—it was a relatively easy way to get around on roads and pathways that were yet to be introduced to the modern plow. Little did they know that Nordic or cross-country skiing would someday become one of Vermont's most popular sports.

In 1968, the Trapp family opened the first commercial Nordic touring center in the United States. A few years later, Bill Koch of Brattleboro was the first American to seriously challenge the Scandinavians at their own game by winning a silver medal at the 1976 Winter Olympics. He is also credited with inventing the freestyle cross-country technique we now know as "skate-skiing."

Today, Vermont has 30 registered touring centers and nearly 900 miles of trails are maintained for both classical and skate skiing. Many are simple "Mom and Pop" ventures, managed out of love for the sport and not for money, because there are far easier ways to make a living. —D.B.

opened in February 1984. The lake formed by that dam spanned 60 acres. Lenord then cleared close to 15 kilometers of trails for his new cross-country center.

Whitney Kaulbach, now a Nordic coach at Lamoille Union High School, grew up skiing at Lenord's as a member of the Harwood team in the mid-1980s, when skate skiing was all the rage. The original lake center was the first of its kind in the Warren area and the best place to train. It was an immediate success and ahead of its time, according to Kaulbach.

"The place drew crowds right from the start—parents and kids, and teams training for meets. Lenord was pretty involved in the sport and in helping the community. He was the first one to groom his trails for skating; in the mid-80s, it was a new thing. He set up trails for beginners and advanced skiers and I just remember how you would come up through these woods and roll out into meadows and hills. The trails were nice and wide and you never had to ski the same trail twice," says Kaulbach.

Even then, Lenord Robinson was known as being slightly eccentric, in the uniquely Yankee way. According to Kaulbach, Lenord made his own wax, which was unheard of, and invented grooming equipment that bordered on the fantastic. "I remember this one thing that looked like a tank covered in Plexiglass," he says. "He would get out of it, hit something with a hammer, and then get back in and take off. It was like a prop in an Austin Powers movie."

She also recalls the intense competition between Lenord and his friend Ole. "They would hold these community races, but we all