



URBAN SLIDE? THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF MEDLOCK, GRAHAM AND RIZZO DENVERITES WON'T HAVE TO DRIVE I-70 TO SKI.

COURTESY RUSSELL RIZZO

■ Ski Denver!

The city finally gets its first official groomed Nordic trail.

Poor Denverites have to drive an hour and 15 minutes to Frisco to reach the closest Nordic skiing trails. Here in Boulder it takes only 35 minutes to reach Eldora, and we can even take the RTD. Plus we've got a sweet little 1-kilometer track in North Boulder Park maintained by the Boulder Nordic Club, when there's enough snow. But thanks to the new Denver Nordic Ski Association (Ski Denver), the situation in the Mile High City is about to get better, much better.

The Denver Nordic Ski Association, previously known as the Denver Nordic Club, was officially born this summer. The nonprofit is the brainchild of Denver residents Miles Graham and Russ Rizzo, skate and classic skiers, respectively, and co-workers at a communications consulting firm in the city. They joined forces with Denverite Matt Medlock, a mechanical engineer and 20-plus-year Nordic skier originally from Alaska, who was looking to start a local club and had been laying his own classic tracks at the Cherry Creek Reservoir with a homemade tracksetting polk.

The trio, along with a Board of Directors that includes Dave Stewart, the Nordic Skiing Head Coach at the University of Denver who helped coach the Pioneers to three consecutive NCAA Championships from 2008 to 2010, is working on a pilot program this season to bring groomed trails to a public golf course in Denver. "It's a sustainable way to use these public spaces when they're not in operation," says Graham.

The city identified Wellshire Golf Course, south of the DU campus at Colorado Blvd. and

Hampden Ave. as its preferred location for the pilot. The course retains the most snow of any of the city's public courses, which means the least number of days golfers can use it, and therefore the most days it would be available for cross-country skiing. Graham says that Wellshire has rolling terrain, ideal for Nordic skiing, and would support a 3-kilometer trail, triple the size of the one in North Boulder Park. At press time, a formal agreement with the City of Denver was not in place yet, but Graham expects things to become official in the coming weeks.

Coach Stewart is particularly excited about the prospect of developing advanced training areas in and around Denver in the future. "The opportunity to ski somewhere right in Denver, it would be a game changer for us," he says. "It'd be something that would allow us to attract an even higher caliber of athlete, and let us just completely dominate."

The Denver Nordic Association is currently open for membership, with an annual individual membership costing \$50, and a family membership \$75. Members will enjoy up to 30-percent discounts at Frisco Nordic Center, Breckenridge Nordic Center and Devil's Thumb Ranch, as well as 10 percent off gear, accessories and apparel at Boulder Nordic Sport. Membership proceeds will go toward trail creation and maintenance in Denver, as well as education programs aimed at encouraging healthy outdoor winter activity. The trails will be free and open to the public. "We're really looking to build the sport, to get new people involved who otherwise may never have tried Nordic skiing, and to get people out and active in the winter," says Graham.

skidenver.org

—Jayme Moye

■ Colorado's Big Christmas Tree

Since 1970, the Capitol Christmas Tree, which must be at least 65 feet tall, has been sourced from a different national forest. This year, it will come from the White River National Forest in northwest Colorado. The decision was made, in part, to celebrate the resiliency of the Centennial State's woodlands in the midst of a harsh wildfire season. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, former Colorado Senator and member of the council of chiefs for the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe, will drive the tree on a custom designed, high efficiency diesel, SmartWay-certified Pinnacle Axle Back Mack Truck. Submit an ornament to be hung on the tree and track its progress:

capitolchristmastree2012.com

—Cameron Martindell

COURTESY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



BRANCHING OUT: THE CAPITOL WILL GET SOME COLORADO HOMETOWN—TREES THAT IS.

3:18:10

The time in which Lance Armstrong won the inaugural Steamboat Stinger trail marathon on August 12th in Steamboat Springs, beating the second place finisher by nearly eight minutes. It may have been his last pro race.