

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WI State Legislature Declares February 19th – 25th American Birkebeiner Week in Wisconsin

HAYWARD, WI (February 18, 2024) – Last week the WI State Senate adopted [Assembly Joint Resolution 104](#), officially declaring February 19th - 25th American Birkebeiner Week in Wisconsin.

American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation Executive Director Ben Popp commented, “we are honored to be recognized state-wide as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of this globally renowned race. Every year, we look forward to showing off our corner of Wisconsin to the world, and even more so this year. In this challenging winter, our crews have worked tirelessly making snow and creating a 10km looped course that will challenge Olympians and citizen racers alike.”

Assembly Joint Resolution 104 states:

Whereas, the American Birkebeiner has grown from humble beginnings in 1973 to the largest cross-country ski race in North America and is currently the only race representing the United States of America within the Worldloppet Ski Federation; and

Whereas, the American Birkebeiner is a uniquely American tradition that brings in over 15,000 cross-country skiers and an estimated 35,000 spectators each February to race between Cable and Hayward, Wisconsin, as well as celebrate and participate in the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation's annual Birkie Week of cross-country skiing festivities, which includes events for all ages and abilities; and

Whereas, over 360,000 skiers have participated in American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation races since 1973; and

Whereas, Hayward and the surrounding communities will host participants from at least 25 countries, 49 states, and the District of Columbia (in 2024) to join in Birkie Week festivities; and

Whereas, 2,500 volunteers from all points north, south, east, and west volunteer at Birkie Week events in support of the 15,000 competitors; and

Whereas, the American Birkebeiner is celebrating its 50th year in 2024; and

Whereas, the over 100 kilometer American Birkebeiner recreational trail was ranked the number one cross-country ski destination in the United States in 2016. This recreational corridor is utilized by an estimated 100,000 visitors annually and draws tourists to the northwestern Wisconsin region; and

Whereas, Birkie Week events and year-round users of the Birkie trail contribute significantly to the economy in Sawyer and Bayfield Counties; and

Whereas, the mission of the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, is to conduct the finest international cross-country ski competitions, to serve as good stewards of the American Birkebeiner trail system, and to support a healthy and active lifestyle among people of all ages and abilities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the legislature, in recognition of the importance of the American Birkebeiner and its contribution to the state of Wisconsin and its citizens, celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the American Birkebeiner and does hereby proclaim February 19 to 25, 2024, to be American Birkebeiner Week in Wisconsin

One of the highlights of this year's Birkie Week is the participation of esteemed World Cup Athletes, including Minnesota's own Jessie Diggins. Diggins, known for winning the United States' first-ever cross-country skiing gold medal at the Winter Olympics in the team sprint in 2018, will grace the event on Saturday. Diggins' teammate in the 2018 Winter Olympics, Kikkan Randall, will also be in attendance.

In addition to welcoming world-class athletes, the ABSF is introducing some notable changes to the course and schedule this year. [An Alternative Event Day event has been added on Thursday.](#) This addition provides an opportunity for participants to race on Thursday instead of the Friday, Saturday, or Sunday events, accommodating a wider range of preferences, safety, and schedules.

One of the most significant updates to the event week is the introduction of a lapped course located at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead in Cable, WI. "While lack of snow on the traditional Cable to Hayward course necessitated this change, this race format will enhance the spectator experience by allowing them to see athletes multiple times throughout the race," said Event Director, Kristy Maki. "It also adds an element of strategy and excitement for competitors as they navigate the course."

For more information about Birkie Week 2024, including race schedules, registration details, and special events, please visit birkie.com/, or contact the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation's Marketing and Communications Department via email media@birkie.com

###

