

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

# You don't have to be an Olympian to enjoy outdoor winter activities

By the Ozaukee County Tourism Council

Every four years, the thrill of watching the Winter Olympics puts a shiny new lens on our view of the Wisconsin winter wonderland. It inspires us to bundle up and embrace the arctic temperatures. We happily drink in the invigoratingly cool air and take pride in our frozen red cheeks as we seek to emulate our favorite Olympians through participation in winter sports.

Cross country skiers can rejoice — Ozaukee boasts hundreds of miles of gorgeous trails that can be used for not only skiing, but snowshoeing and hiking, depending on what the weather serves up that

day. The Ozaukee Interurban Trail, while plowed for running and winter biking from Mequon to Highland Drive in Port Washington, takes a more rugged approach north of Port Washington through Belgium, where enthusiasts can blaze their own trails for skiing and snowshoeing.

While in Belgium, you won't regret exploring the trails meandering through the 700+ acres that make up Harrington Beach State Park. Blue Heron Wildlife Sanctuary in Saukville hosts picture-perfect trails along the banks of the Milwaukee River. Sauk Creek Nature Preserve in Port Washington may make you forget to try for Olympic record ski times as you take in its serene beauty and abun-

dant wild life.

For groomed ski trails, make sure to try Mee-Kwon Park Golf Course in Mequon or Tendick Park in Saukville. Check out treasure-sofoz.org or www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/540/plannngparks for more details on the stunning ski experiences throughout Ozaukee Parks.

When the kids challenge you to take them on in an Ozaukee-version of the skeleton, there are plenty of places for sledding fun. Mee-Kwon Park Golf Course in Mequon, Hawthorne Hills in Saukville, Lime Kiln Park in Grafton and Whitefish Park in Port Washington all offer family-friendly hills for luge-lovers of all ages.

If you're pining to skate like Erin Jackson, you can find practice grounds throughout Ozaukee County. For outdoor rinks (which are, of course, weather dependent), you can visit Mee-Kwon Park in Mequon, Veteran's Park in Port Washington, Veteran's or Lion's parks in Grafton, Kyotes Bar & Grill in Belgium, or Cedar Creek Park in Cedarburg, to name a few.

One thing you can always count on in Wisconsin that you won't find in the Olympics is wacky ways to keep winter interesting. Ozaukee's winter festival season kicks off Saturday with the Winter Frolic at the Mequon Nature Preserve. This family-friendly day includes tractor rides, horse sleigh rides, take-home crafts, yard games, bonfires, hot chocolate, and, with any help from Mother Nature, snowman building, snowshoe rentals, and ice fishing.

On Sunday, Port Washington hosts its first-ever WinterFest, in conjunction with the Kiwanis Chili Bowl. Veteran's Park will be packed with games, vendors and more. Inventors Brewpub is even



News Graphic file photo

Guests at a past Winter Frolic enjoy a sleigh ride around the Mequon Nature Preserve grounds, courtesy of Kettle Moraine Carriages of Kewaskum.



Submitted photos

Above and left, the Williams family of Belgium enjoys all that Harrington Beach State Park has to offer.



brewing up a special Hot Cocoa Blonde Stout for the occasion!

And of course, you haven't truly lived until you've seen a Cedarburg Winter Festival bed race. Mark your calendar for Feb. 19-20 for this year's Seuss-themed Cedarburg festival, which also includes the Ice-burg Golf Open, dog weight-pull contests, ice sculpting and more entertaining winter fun.

With all that said, we Ozaukees do like to come inside and cozy up at some point. It's safe to assume many will take a break from the outdoors to rally around the largest screen we can find as NFL football celebrates its championship game Sunday, Feb. 13. Skippy's Burger Bar in Mequon invites football fans to join them for giveaways and drink specials. Port Washington's Inventors Brewpub will also be welcoming guests for an evening for sports fan camaradery, specials and a good time to be had by all. Belgium area fans can take in the game at Lake Church Inn and Kyotes Bar &

Grill. In Grafton, John's Pizzeria, Juice's Ghost Town and Sahale Ale Works all make great spots to watch the big game on the big screen. Cedarburg fans are invited to come watch at Rebellion Brewery and The Fermentorium Brewery and Tasting Room.

The Scandinavians have a term, friluftsliv, which means to purposefully enjoy your time outside no matter what the weather, for a healthier, happier lifestyle. In winter, they simply say "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." This season, we challenge you to embrace friluftsliv. We hope you'll take the time to go outdoors, explore our communities, and thoroughly enjoy the beauty of Ozaukee County winters.

For more information on winter Ozaukee fun or anything listed above, call us at Ozaukee County Tourism at 262-284-9288, visit our website, ozaukeetourism.com, or follow us at Facebook and Instagram.