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Maine Skiing Highlights for the 2019/20 winter season

Ski Country – Maine: Snow has fallen several times and the ski season is underway. Sunday River and Sugarloaf are off to a fantastic start with natural snowfall and excellent snowmaking temperatures. Fort Kent Outdoor Center and Quarry Road Trails are open for Nordic skiing.

Sunday River Resort - Newry is installing four new surface lifts in preparation for winter 2019/20. These surface lifts will include three covered conveyor lifts to access the learning terrain on South Ridge, as well as a T-bar on Locke Mountain for alpine race and boardercross training and competitions. The T-bar is a partnership with Gould Academy.

With the new and beginner skier in mind, the resort replaced the existing surface lift on the Sundance trail in South Ridge with three new covered conveyors, which will allow for easier access to the learning terrain, and the ability to implement more progressive steps to the learning process with terrain-based learning elements from *SNOW Operating*.

Sunday River installed four new 500-horsepower pumps at the resort's water source, which will add another 10 percent of water capacity with an extra 1,000 gallons per minute for snowmaking. To build on this progress, Sunday River installed HKD Snowmakers KLIK hydrants to increase snowmaking automation.

The Mountain Room at North Peak will be completed in time for ski season, and includes expanding the bar seating, and debuting Chef Harding's specialty pizzas in the Peak Lodge Food Court, made with Maine Beer Company dough.

The Shipyard Brew Haus, located in the White Cap Lodge, is under new management. Joe Christopher of Three Rivers Whitewater Rafting, Jump and Raft, Three Dollar Deweys, and the Shipyard Brew Haus at Sugarloaf will take on the restaurant and has plans for a new menu and upgrades to the space.

The Nitro New England Pass is a new season pass product with families and young adults in mind. The pass is for ages 6-29 and offers access to Sunday River and Sugarloaf in Maine, and Loon Mountain in New Hampshire seven days a week all winter except for 12 blackout dates.

Another way to score early lifts at Sunday River is to take part in the First Tracks Breakfast. Skiers and snowboarders will meet at the Discovery Center at South Ridge Lodge at 6:45AM on Saturdays and Sundays from January 4 through March 19. Sunday River guests will be able to work where they play with the resort's new co-working space located in the White Cap Lodge.

Sugarloaf - Carrabassett Valley had a complete, floor-to-ceiling renovation of the Widowmaker bar and restaurant. This project headlined the list of offseason improvements for the 2019-20 ski season.

Elsewhere on the mountain, considerable improvements were again made to the snowmaking system, including a new, larger air and water line on Narrow Gauge, which will allow snow to be made from top to bottom at one time. Snowmakers also installed 50 new HKD Klik Hydrants – a new hydrant technology that dramatically increases the speed at which guns can be turned on. Additional Klik Hydrants are planned in coming years.

The grooming department added a new Prinoth Bison X park cat to its fleet this summer, which is specially designed to allow operators to better build and shape terrain park features.

Sugarloaf also began the first phase of a larger snowmaking project, which will include the construction of a new dam on Caribou Pond. This will allow snowmakers to control the flow of water on the West Branch of the Carrabassett River, provide a steady and reliable flow of water to supply the snowmaking pumphouse. Construction of the dam is scheduled to begin in summer 2020.

Off the hill, Sugarloaf will launch a new app for the 2019-20 season, which will provide visitors with quicker and easier access to more reliable conditions information, including lift status, grooming lists, and trail openings and closings. The app will feature an interactive trail map and GPS tracking that will allow users to track their runs throughout the day. The app will be available on both iOS and Android.

In-season Excitement

Last winter saw a packed event lineup, with record breaking attendance at some longtime Sugarloaf classics, including Reggae Fest and the Sugarloaf Marathon. Sugarloaf will look to continue that momentum this winter. In December, Sugarloaf will host the New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA) Eastern Cup – a premier Nordic ski racing event that is expected to draw as many as 500 racers from throughout the region. This will be the first NENSA event held at Sugarloaf in more than 25 years.

Shawnee Peak - Bridgton continues its focus on major capital improvements each summer.

The snowmaking upgrades continue to add efficiency and increased output to make more snow, on more trails, in less time. The biggest boost was the new feed line connecting the two pumphouses, which were automated last year. Additional snow guns purchased and semi-automation on one trail will be a big step in the automation of the snowmaking process.

Shawnee Peak will be the first in Maine to install RFID technology at their lifts and point of sale. Upgrades to e-commerce and website, base lodge improvements and a new ski rental fleet round out the new look at Shawnee Peak.

Lost Valley - Auburn has completed the “Lift 2 Overhaul” which included a variable speed drive, re-galvanized chairs, new safety communications and newly painted towers. Night skiing lights were upgraded and expanded with LED lighting. Snowmaking upgrades doubled the capacity on their ‘learn to ski’ area and added nearly a dozen new hydrants. The Possum Park trail was widened to double its size and accommodate additional features. Nine new glade areas have been created across the mountain. Over the summer they have also added a brand-new outdoor patio with fire pit and fire ring and rebuilt their outdoor deck space as well. Their rental fleet has been outfitted with all new Junior boots and Adult bindings and their Nordic trails have been improved and expanded.

Mt. Abram - Greenwood Summer projects kept crews busy at the ski area. The primary focus was upgrade and maintenance this past off season with investments topping \$500,000. A new drive and brake system on the Wayback Machine, the variable drive on Skyline lift, plus building upgrades which include roofs, new kitchen equipment, and new paint. Snowmaking upgrades are in place to making the system more productive and efficient. And finally, a second groomer was added to the fleet.

The All New Mountain Bike Park will be opening in the spring of 2020. Mt Abram’s Bike park will be featuring lift serviced bike terrain for all abilities. The Skyline Chair will provide lift access, made possible by the new variable speed drive motor that was installed this fall, along with bike carriers for the chair. The lodge will offer bike rentals, a small retail/repair component, as well as a café serving food and beverages.

Bigrock, Big Squaw, Camden, Hermon, and Titcomb ski areas focused on regular summer trail maintenance and tuning up snowmaking systems to continue their focus on great snow.

Maine has a very strong network of community ski areas with **Baker Mountain, Bingham, Spruce Mountain, Jay, and Powderhouse, South Berwick, Lonesome Pine Trails, Fort Kent and Quoggy Jo, Presque Isle.**

Maine Nordic Centers groom hundreds of miles of trails throughout the State like the Alpine areas, offer a full range of opportunities from community skiing to World Class Centers.

Compete information for all Maine Alpine and Nordic Centers available at www.skimaine.com

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