

# Let It Snow!

In 1955 College trustees approved the purchase of 648 acres from four private land-owners around Holt's Ledge in Lyme, New Hampshire. Following a \$125,000 fund-raising campaign, workers spent the next year clearing four trails and an open slope area, installing a lift and rope tow and constructing a base lodge. The Dartmouth Skiway opened to the public on December 14, 1956, and closed the following March after only 42 days of operation during its first season. Six decades later, the Skiway remains one of only two college-owned ski areas in the eastern United States.

by JAMES NAPOLI and MINAE SEOG '14



## FREE STYLE

The children of Lyme ride for free at the Skiway, thanks to an agreement between the College and the town. Dartmouth made the offer partly as a concession for taking several hundred acres off the town's tax rolls when it purchased the property in 1955. The town-gown arrangement was eventually formalized in 2002, and today roughly 300 skiers sign up for a free season pass each year.

## SKIING FOR CREDIT

During winter term undergraduates can register for adaptive, alpine and telemark skiing and snowboarding courses to fulfill part of their physical education requirement. To pass, students must attend seven classes throughout the term. Helmets are mandatory.

## CLOSE CALL

Budget constraints threatened to shut down the Skiway in the early 1990s. An advisory committee chaired by Henry Nachman '51, Tu'55, led a successful campaign to raise \$4.5 million to replace snow-making equipment and build the McLane Family Lodge.

1,100

Orders of churros consumed at the McLane Family Lodge during the 2013-14 ski season



## LEGEND OF THE LEDGE

According to the late Everett Wood '38, author of *Skiway: A Dartmouth Winter Tale*, John Meck '33, Walter Prager, Harry Sanborn and John Rand '38 stumbled upon the future Skiway site by accident when their jeep got stuck in the snow at the foot of Holt's Ledge on March 24, 1955. David Hooke '84, author of *Reaching that Peak: 75 Years of the Dartmouth Outing Club*, shares a different version of the story as recalled by Rand. He attributes the discovery of Holt's Ledge to Meck's bladder: Meck stopped the jeep below the ledge only because that was where nature called. As he relieved himself in the snow, Meck looked up at Holt's Ledge and declared it to be the perfect location for Dartmouth's new ski area.

## WHITE STUFF

Following the winter of 1984-85, which saw a mere 32 days of skiing, the Skiway added seven miles of pipeline and installed 15 snowguns to increase the skiable terrain and ensure longer seasons of operation. The snowguns turn 35 million gallons of water into 146,000 tons of snow each year.



80

Approximate number of alumni, undergrads and locals who volunteer to serve on the ski patrol each year

\$3.50

Cost of a full-day pass for the Skiway during the 1957-58 season. Students and Outing Club members paid a discounted rate of \$3.



## PASS AND PRESENT

Today, a full-day adult pass for a weekend or holiday costs \$47 for the general public and \$20 for Dartmouth students. Until 1971 skiers could purchase single rides on the lift for less than a dollar. Passes are still available for 99 cents, but only on the Friday of Winter Carnival.



6,028

Total cups of hot chocolate served last season at the McLane Family Lodge



AVERAGE

## POLLY'S LEGACY

After purchasing the land, Dartmouth held a contest to find a name for its new ski area. Two hundred names were submitted, including the runners-up Indian Hill and Wheelock Wonderland. Polly Case (above), assistant to the secretary of the College, took first prize. Described as "an expert and enthusiastic skier" in the May 1956 issue of *DAM*, she was awarded a lifetime pass to the Skiway and became the first patron to ride the Poma Lift.

## ON DUTY

Five full-time employees work year-round at the Skiway. During the winter 100 seasonal employees join the crew, including ski instructors, ski patrolers, snow-makers, groomers and lift operators.

## UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE

Four lifts currently run at the Skiway: Winslow Mountain Quad Chairlift, Holt's Ledge Double Chairlift, J-Bar Beginner Lift and the Conveyor Lift. Combined, these lifts provide an uphill capacity of 3,300 skiers per hour. The original 3,700-foot Poma Lift, manufactured in France and installed on Holt's Ledge in 1956, was removed in 1976.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Summit Elevation:	1,943 feet
Base Elevation:	975 feet
Vertical Drop:	968 feet
Number of Trails:	31
Skiable Terrain:	104 acres
Annual Visitors:	40,000
Annual Snowfall:	100 inches
High Temperature:	29.3 degrees
Low Temperature:	10 degrees