

Cross Country Skiers Unite to Save the Season We Love

Cross country skiers and outdoor enthusiasts alike share a deep-seated appreciation and respect for the weather and its fickle nature. As cross-country skiers, we are reliant on the vagaries of a changing climate from season to season; our tenuous snow reserves limit us to man-made snow one season, and the next our groomers sit overwhelmed by blizzards. This variability is natural in the context of global climate dynamics to some extent, but it is indisputably changing from what science knows as the status quo. Unpredictability and unreliability of snowpack is a product of a warming Earth. According to U.S. EPA, the average global temperature has risen by 1.4°F over the last hundred years, and will likely rise another 2 to 11.5°F over the next hundred years.¹ Climate change will have wide-ranging effects on global climate patterns and weather; and, in turn, will affect human society, wealth, health and security. As winter sports athletes, we are tightly tied to nature's cyclical affronts and returns of snowfall over the course of a ski season. In this regard, we are all consciously affected by climate patterns and will be affected increasingly by climate issues in the future.

The Climate Reality Project, founded by former Vice President and Chairman Al Gore, is a new Bronze Level Sponsor at this year's *American Birkebeiner Cross Country Ski Marathon* Feb 20-23, 2014. Cool Planet Skiers, a program of Edina based Cool Planet, is partnering with the Climate Reality Project to provide educational resources, concrete steps to action, and awareness surrounding the changes and challenges global warming will bring to the ski community in the future. As mission-driven organizations, The Climate Reality Project and Cool Planet intend to connect skiers with the concept of engaged and intentional utilization of the natural spaces and global climate dynamics, which ultimately support and sustain our sport.



The theme of the two climate organization's partnership revolves around the "I Am Pro Snow" campaign of the Climate Reality Project. The goal of "I Am Pro Snow" is to unite people who live for winter and depend on snow for recreation, business, and their quality of life. Together, we're telling the story of what climate change means for the season we love and building momentum to protect it. The longitudinal development of environmental ethics and responsible use of green (and white) spaces globally is vitally linked to the future of cross-country skiing and the actions we as skiers take towards environmental issues. We hope to gain your support as a Birkie skier to promote, support, and advocate for climate issues locally, nationally, and globally through the work of Climate Reality Project and Cool Planet Skiers.



COOL PLANET SKIERS

Simple Action Steps You Can Take towards becoming a more Sustainable Ski Racer:

1. Make your home, business and transportation systems as energy efficient as possible. We are continually forced to chase the snow and rely on weather patterns, which cruelly dictate where we are able to train and race. In instances where traveling is not plausible, many skiers are forced to use man-made snow. The production of man-made snow is enormously inefficient and certainly not sustainable in terms of energy consumption. Minimize impact from travel by consciously choosing local races or carpooling to events when possible. Use resources like the Green Building Council, community solar projects, and LEED certification to provide your home or business with an action plan to make its operation more sustainable.

2. Join [Cool Planet Skiers](#) and the Climate Reality Project's campaign [I Am Pro Snow](#) and make your skiing count for preserving the season we love.

3. Support local food and local energy initiatives in your community ([ideas here.](#)) and purchase environmentally sustainable and socially responsible ski equipment and apparel. Placing conscious limitations on the purchase of new equipment and clothing, and utilizing ski swaps or other exchange and reuse programs limits the environmental costs of production of new goods.

4. Join or start a [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) chapter in your community and work for national legislation to put a price on carbon pollution and return the collected fees to American households.

5. Develop green initiatives in your local community or ski community. For instance, the development of "Community Solar" projects focused on local use of renewable energy. [Here's an example in Minnesota.](#)

For more ideas on these and other projects contact Cool Planet [here.](#)

Environmental issues such as the conservation of wild places, the reduction of personal impact on the planet, and, more generally, the large-scale reversal of climate change and its effects on our fragile planet are values which are deeply ingrained in the culture surrounding endurance sports. As we depend on snowfall for the enjoyment and pursuit of our sport, we must remember to understand the origins and ultimate sources of our frustrations with waxing, weather, travel conditions, and season length. We are stubborn and tough individualist, forging our own path through wind and snow to exert our bodies in a delicate dance over the surface of winter's bounty. We as skiers are tasked with saving the very thing we rely on for our continued enjoyment and love of our sport of cross-country skiing.

This Climate Action partnership (of Cool Planet Skiers and Climate Reality Project) will be hosting a public presentation with keynote speaker Dr. Jonathan Patz at 7:00pm on Thursday February 20 at the Park Theater in Hayward, WI. Dr. Patz is Professor & Director of the Global Health Institute at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and was a lead author on the United Nations IPCC team that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. Local live music and poetry. Reception to follow. Suggested donation \$10 - \$25 payable at the door.

Skiers and community members are invited to join Cool Planet Skiers by skiing, fundraising, and organizing their communities to advocate for sustainable policies and legislation.

For more information and to help build this movement (and to enter our drawing for eco-friendly ski prizes) visit: www.coolplanetskiers.org

email skiers@coolplanetmn.org or call 952-920-1547

References:

1) <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/>