

## **History of the Rib Mountain Ski Club**

I began skiing at a very young age at Mount Ashwabay, a small ski hill in northern Wisconsin. My grandpa along with my parents helped me grow my love for the sport throughout the years. I started to become more serious about downhill skiing when my parents joined the Rib Mountain Ski Club nine years ago.

The Rib Mountain Ski Club started out as the Wausau Ski Club in the fall of 1927. The club was created for the purpose of trying to get more people involved in winter sports, skiing being the main attraction. During the first few years of the club, they were already putting on ski tournaments for all ages. With the help of some local businessmen, the club was able to purchase forty acres of land. On this land, two toboggan slides were erected, each a half-mile long. These events helped jump start the beginning of the club. With the continuing expansion of the Rib Mountain Ski Area the club proceeded to expand. The opening of more hills allowed for more activities which led to more members. Eventually the club would go on to travel to other ski hills in the area. The more diversity the club had the more people wanted to join. This allowed for many different opportunities for the club and it is how they have managed to accumulate the number of members that they have today.

I spoke with my uncle Ken Heinzen, who has been a member of the Rib Mountain Ski Club for many years. Ken has held three different board positions over his years as a member including; President, vice president, and trip coordinator. When he first joined the club there were around fifty to seventy members. There was also less of a variety of the amount of ski hills that the club visited. Today there are over one-hundred people in the Rib Mountain Ski Club,

and it continues to grow with the additions of new members and new families. Ken says that one of the most important things that the club is doing is seeking new ski hills to visit. With the diversity of areas to ski, trips become more exciting. The trips don't just consist of hills in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The club has made trips all over the Midwest, including around ten different ski areas. The addition of overnight trips has also brought the members of the club closer together making trips even more enjoyable. The price of the trips have also been able to stay cheap with the implementation of the annual ski swap which helps with funding the club.

The Rib Mountain Ski Club has come a long way since its origin in 1927. With the addition of new hills to visit, bussing, overnight trips, and much more behind the scenes work, our club has more members than ever. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the club. It has helped me grow as a skier and has given me time to spend with my family, visit new ski hills, and meet lots of interesting people along the way. With all the changes the club has changed one thing hasn't changed. It has always been a club where families can enjoy the beauty of the Midwest in the winter.

## References

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Interview with Ken Heinzen on 3 February 2020.