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## Pokagon State Park Wins Fame As Ideal Spot For Winter Sports



**SNOW MANUFACTURED AT MOUNT WAWASEE, IF NATURE FAILS SKIERS**  
Snow Machine Provides Snow For Seven Slopes At Resort

By PHILIP F. CLIFFORD  
Pokagon State Park, in the far northeastern corner of Indiana, has been accepted for more than four decades as one of the state's leading summer resorts.

Recently, it has gained equal fame as an ideal spot for winter sports.

WITH THE FIRST heavy snowfall, its scenic summer beauty is transformed into a winter fantasyland. Its 1,000 acres of twisting hills and pine-dotted countryside, bordered on the east by the broad sweep of Lake James, then belong to those who like to romp and whiz around in the frigid white stuff.

Although the park sits on the state's most northern tier and has a longer winter season than any other state park, Dame Nature has been known to get a touch confused as to just what season is in force.

GLOOMILY, Raymond A. Fisher, park superintendent, can recall several successive days in winters past, when the sun refused to duck behind a cloud bank.

"A dry, un-iced toboggan run doesn't afford much of a thrill to our visitors," Fisher said.

The number of persons coming to the park on any given day or weekend, Fisher said, depends strictly on the temperature and the amount of ground snow.

"IF WE ARE to increase the number of days when people will be able to use the toboggan run," Fisher said, "we will have to install a heavy duty refrigeration unit and a snow-maker."

When ideal weather conditions prevail, Fisher declared, toboggans zip down the twin run courses at 60 miles an hour. The 1,700-foot run is accomplished in about 20 seconds.

Rental for one of the speedy, four-man sleds is pegged at 50 cents an hour, with an additional five cents for each person. But visitors, Fisher said, may bring their own sleds.

WITH APPROVAL of the State Natural Resources Commission, Fisher said, Pokagon will add a fleet of 10 snowmobiles for park patrons' winter fun this year.

In addition to the toboggan run the park's frigid pleasure fare includes ice-skating, ice-boating and, for the more hardy and adventurous, the exciting sport of sail-skating.

The centerpiece of this



**VISITORS GATHER IN THE LODGE AT MOUNT WAWASEE**  
Circular Fireplace Offers Warmth, Relaxation To Skiers

winter wonderland is the sprawling Potawatomi Inn, which is the namesake of the Indian tribe which once roamed the nearby hills and valleys.

OPEN ON A year 'round basis, the inn, which is managed by Mrs. Marcia Murphy, has accommodations for 223 guests in 81 rooms. A new wing, completely modern, has been added to the inn, erected shortly after the area became a state park in 1925. The older portion recently was refurbished, and brought up to present-day lodging standards.

Hooster winter enthusiasts, who once journeyed far into Michigan and Ohio, are increasingly taking a second look at what their home state has to offer.

THREE OTHER winter spas now are operating west of Pokagon.

At New Paris, north of Syracuse, is the Mount Wawasee Ski Lodge.

Once called Buzzard's Hill,

and a popular sledding run in the 1930s, Mount Wawasee's ski run begins at a point 161 feet above the county road that passes in front of the lodge's property. There are seven slopes for beginners, intermediate and advanced intermediate skiers. A tow rope and T-bar transport skiers to the top of what is called the "highest hill" in northern Indiana.

LIKE POKAGON, "The lodge isn't exactly located in the snow belt," said Thomas Roderick, 24-year-old ski instructor.

"But unlike the state park," Roderick added, "we have a way of providing our patrons with their favorite sport even when the elements are against us."

Wawasee can make snow for its patrons, even on a sunny day, providing the temperature is below freezing.

THE DEVICE is a snow machine comprised of two pipes, laid side by side up the slopes. One contains compressed air; the other water.

At frequent intervals hose connections jut out of these pipes to attach to snow guns, which blend air and water into a spray mist. With the temperature a few degrees below freezing, the mist falls as snow.

At the base of the slopes, but set on a commanding knoll, sits a new, brightly painted Swiss chalet. On the second floor is a circular fireplace, where skiers may congregate for warmth and exchange social chatter.

IN THE VALPARAISO area, one mile west and one mile south of the junction of U.S. 6 and Ind. 49, is The Pines. It too has a chalet, ski shop and snack bar. Five tow ropes pull skiers to the 900-foot summit where the skier has a choice of any of five downhill runs.

Identical facilities are to be found at Ski Valley, which is located five miles west of downtown LaPorte.

Ski Valley, which offers individual and group lessons for novice skiers, also has lighted runs for night-time skiing.