

The Early Days

Downhill skiing began on Wachusett in the 1920s when local ski and hiking club members began making winter treks to the mountain. The Worcester Ski Club and the Scandinavian Ski Club were major players in fall trail clearing and winter outings. The WSC is said to have cleared the Balance Rock ski trail in 1933.



also built Bullock Lodge and several other stone structures on Wachusett.

The Civilian Conservation Corps a Depression-era jobs program created by FDR to put the nation back to work — improved Balance Rock and built the Pine Hill Trail in 1936-37. CCC crews

HISTORY OF SKIING

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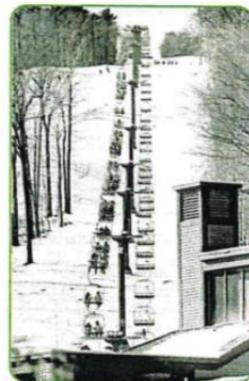


Ralph V. White of Boylston, 1906-2001, a driving force in the Worcester Ski Club since its founding in 1936, has done as much as anyone for skiing in this area. Through the 1930s, he would organize club outings each fall to brush out trails to the summit of Wachusett. He would laugh at the memory of skiing in the years before lifts were built at Wachusett, describing the laborious packing required before trails were fit for skiing. Each five-minute run downhill meant a half-hour's climb uphill carrying skis and wearing ski boots.

Lift Service on the Mountain

Creation of a lift-served downhill area was proposed to the Legislature in a bill filed in December 1958. The bill was passed in 1959. In 1960, \$250,000 was approved for the project. In 1962, E. Russell Vickery Jr., superintendent of the reservation, oversaw installation of two T-bars, clearing of three trails and creation of a snowmaking pond. Facility opened Dec. 24, 1962, without snowmaking or a lodge.

The Worcester County Commissioners supervised ski area operations until the reservation was transferred to control of the state Department of Natural Resources on April 1, 1967. The Division of Forests and Parks supervised ski area operations in the winter of 1967-1968.



Skiing on Wachusett Mountain

Alpine skiing became popular in the 1920s. Ski trails at Wachusett Mountain were cleared in 1930 by the Civilian Conservation Corps allowing people to walk up the trails and ski down.

In 1959 the Commonwealth reviewed legislation to set aside an area on the mountain for the purpose of alpine skiing. Construction of the ski area was approved and the Oxbow lift was installed. The Commonwealth operated the ski area for a few years and then took bids for leased operation.

In 1968, after a ski outing with his family, Ralph D. Crowley learned of the opportunity to bid on leasing the ski area. With his love of the area and his desire to provide a quality family ski area, Crowley transformed the ski area into one which has gained a national reputation for its service, its operations, and for its dedication to the environment. Today, three of Ralph Crowley's five children – Jeff, David, and Carolyn – continue his legacy at Wachusett Mountain, managing the ski area operations.