

Central Division Women's Seminar



Mission Statement:

Women patrollers share their passion with the purpose of encouraging and supporting other NSP women in a nurturing environment.

Central Division Women's Program builds participants' confidence to accept the challenges of leadership roles and improve their personal skill set.

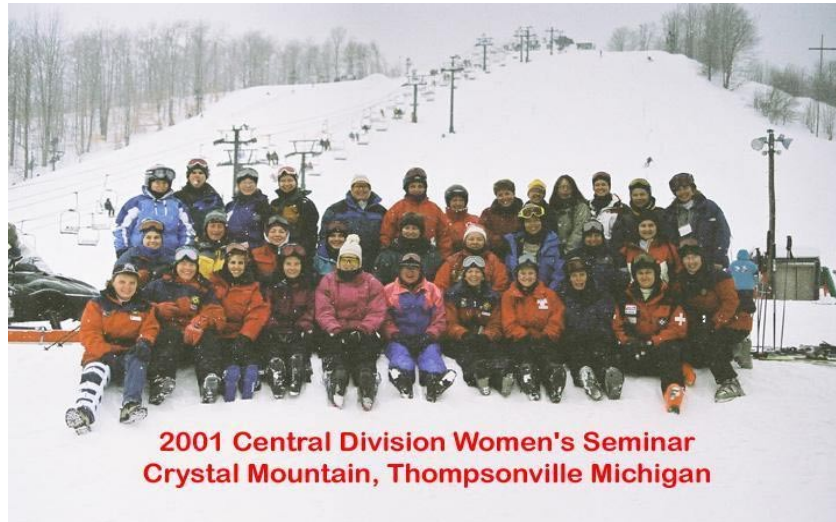
Central Division Women's Program encourages active recruiting of women in the NSP.

Background:

The Central Division Women's Seminar (CDWS) concept was initiated in the fall of 1999 when Division Director Chuck Martschinke requested that Linda Murphy-Jacobs, Assistant Division Director-Proficiency, attend the Eastern Division Women's Program. The objective was to determine the feasibility of a similar program starting in Central Division. At that time the concept of a women's focus ski clinic was beginning to take hold across the ski industry. Several ski resorts were offering women's ski weekends and the PSIA was offering women only sessions in their education programs. Within the NSP there were two divisions, Eastern and Far West, with women's clinics on their calendars. Murphy-Jacobs traveled to upstate New York to participate in the Eastern Division clinic late that ski season. Eastern Division offered 3 different sessions and averaged about 15 participants per session. Murphy-Jacobs found the Eastern Division program focus was for more advanced skill level women patrollers interested in auditioning for the Certified program. The participants were taught advanced toboggan handling skills by women certified alpine toboggan instructor trainers. Skiing skills were taught by women level III PSIA instructors, both NSP and non-NSP members. Their program was strictly on the hill only, no off hill sessions or meetings indoors or afterwards.

The following season the program development began with the recruitment of teaching staff. The intent was to bring the best instructors to the program and the initial team was built around the women in the certified program. These ladies brought to the program a vast package of leadership and teaching skills. However, to a person, they did not want it to be advanced skills only, and all supported the idea of expanding the clinic concept with additional off-snow education, and subsequently, leadership opportunities.

The first clinic was held in 2001 at Crystal Mountain, in Western Michigan Region. The event was met with overwhelming success on all fronts. That spring the Central Division Board of Directors voted to continue the program. Anne Blaedow was appointed the first Central Division Women's Program supervisor.



Program Evolution:

The program initially offered registered skiing enhancement seminars and toboggan enhancement seminars. Both components were offered on Saturday and Sunday. The staff was divided between the disciplines based on instructor certification. The Saturday evenings are organized with an education component , a social session/meal and the opportunity to network across Region borders.

Course feedback evaluation forms are an important tool used by the staff to judge the success of the event. Consequently the program has evolved based on participant feedback. The current clinic format is more dynamic and student driven. The courses are registered NSP Ski and Toboggan Enhancement Seminars. The participants are given the option of participating in one or both seminars. Each seminar has offerings to meet the desires of the participant both on terrain and skill focus. The staff is flexible in meeting the needs of the participants and has the ability to adapt as circumstances develop.

Metrics:

Since the inception of the CDWS the participation level has been outstanding. The numbers range from 14-32 women. The average number per event is 24 participants. Assuring a quality event is a high priority and maintaining a reasonable student:instructor ratio is critical to the quality of the participant's experience. The staff numbers have gradually increased through the years to accommodate the increasing level of participation. By rotating to all corners of the division the program is meeting the goal to offer the program to as many women as possible.



Staff Development:

The CDWS staff draws from a wide range of experiences and background. All efforts are made to provide the participants the best instructional experience the division has to offer. Staff members are highly active as clinic leaders at both the region and division level. All staff members are certified alpine toboggan instructors, PSIA level II/III or both. Staff members also are active in their own personal development extending beyond division borders seeking skill and instructional enhancement within NSP and PSIA. Many of our newer staff members have come up through the CDWP.

Requirements for Successful Event:

Communication and teamwork are essential for a successful event. The Central Division women's program supervisor is the conduit for all communications between the hosting ski area patrol liaison, the staff members and the registered participants. Communications will involve details regarding the venue, lift tickets, housing, equipment, and terrain availability.

Criteria for venue:

The appointment of a local female patroller as a liaison between the division supervisor and area management is a critical tool. This streamlines the communication and ensures all parties are getting the same message.

There are needs for meeting facilities. Friday night is devoted to a meet-and-greet reception and to organizing the groups for the on-hill sessions. Saturday evening is a keystone for the event and requires a room to accommodate seating for dinner and the evening presentations.

During the on-hill sessions it is beneficial to be able to boot up and store gear in a secure area. Ideally this area should be away from the duty staffing facility in order to minimize interference with the day-to-day operations of the patrol.

Many new venues have hosted the CDWS and opened the door for future NSP events to be held at those areas.

Housing:

The staff generally rooms together, either in a typical hotel situation or in a rented house. Participants need reasonable access to lodging, and are often encouraged to share rooms with each other.

Terrain considerations:

The CDWS focus is to meet the needs of all the skill levels of the participants ranging from patroller level to certified. Although the program is not designed for just advanced participants it is extremely important that the terrain meets a minimum of senior level (bumps and steep). Many of the participants use this experience to hone their skiing and toboggan handling skills prior to participating in the Sr. alpine module. The program also encourages women to explore the certified program so steeps and deeps are of value. Access to gentle open teaching terrain is also desirable.

Because there are often several groups on the hill with different needs and different schedules the ability to upload sleds at our own pace using chair carriers is beneficial. The clinic takes place on the weekend when the population of the skiing public is high. It is important that the venue have the adequate acreage to allow the groups to spread across the skiing terrain and avoid "traffic jams". The clinics are all day events and the ability to run toboggans throughout the day is important.

Equipment:

Most hosting areas and the hosting region are able to supply several sleds. The division has a toboggan and carrier that the CDWS staff is able to use. Additional equipment provided by division entails “shorty” skis, video capture equipment and computers. It is desirable to have secure areas to store this equipment when the staff is on the hill.

Schedule and Marketing:

The last weekend in January will be the standing date for the CDWS and will be posted on the division calendar. The program supervisor will ensure the details will be published in the Central Division Rusty Parka News fall edition. The hosting region women’s program administrator would be the ideal individual to coordinate with the region director the marketing of the program. Social media and email newsletters can be used to direct the membership to the registration information posted on the Central Division web site programs link. Registration will continue to be done through the electronic format approved by the division. The program will rotate around the four corners of the division. The rotation will ensure both sides of the lake are visited equally.

- Rotation
 - 2015 Northern Michigan Region
 - 2016 Western Michigan Region
 - 2017 Southern Region
 - 2018 Western Region
 - 2019 Ohio Region
 - 2020 Eastern Michigan Region Co-Host
 - 2021 South Central Region
 - Repeat cycle

Outcome of the Central Division Women’s Seminar program:

The CDWS program has had a far reaching effect the goes well beyond the slopes in Central Division. Staff members have assisted with program development in multiple divisions. The program supervisor and staff members have participated in teaching and hosting events sponsored by the national program. The program has had an impact locally. Many participants have gone on to be successful in the senior and certified program. Others have expanded their instructor credentials in both NSP and PSIA certifications. Many regions have established their own women’s focus programs.

As a result of the awareness of the women’s focus program there is a conscious effort to see more women step up into instructor roles, mentoring and leadership roles. The program will continue to expand to meet the needs of the membership and expand the opportunities available in the NSP. The building of confidence, expansion of horizons and mentoring in leadership roles will provide a strong role model of women in the NSP. These women will carry on the mission of the program, develop more leaders and promote the recruitment of new women members in the NSP.