

**National Para Nordic Team to Ski the Birkie**

For the first time members of Canada's National Para Nordic Cross Country Ski Team will participate at the Canadian Birkebeiner on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Four athletes will take part in the 55 kilometre and 31 kilometre events as standing and sit skiers.

The athletes represented Canada at the Torino 2006 Paralympics and are coming directly from the World Cup in Europe. Shauna Maria Whyte from Hinton, AB and Colette Bourgonje from Saskatoon, Sask are Paralympic, IPC World Cup and World Championship medalists.

Tyler Mosher of Whistler, BC will stand ski 55 kilometres with a 5.5 kg pack. Shauna Maria Whyte and Lou Gibson of Vancouver, BC will sit-ski the Birkie Lite 55 km. Colette Bourgonje will sit-ski the Journal Tour 31 km.

The Canadian Birkebeiner is especially proud and honoured to have these athletes participate in this year's events. Spectators may see these skiers and approximately 2,000 other participants compete at Cooking Lake -Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area 35 kilometres east of Edmonton.

Come meet the Para Nordic team during Birkie Week at Strathcona Wilderness Centre and at the Nordic Fair next Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. The last day to enter a Birkie event is Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>.

- 30 -

Contact for further information on these athletes -

Bjorn Taylor, Manager of the National Para Nordic Ski Team.

Cross Country Canada E-mail [btaylor@cccski.com](mailto:btaylor@cccski.com)

P 403-678-6791 ext 204

F 403-678-3688

For information on Birkie week Para Nordic team schedule –

Jean Funk, Strathcona Wilderness Centre (780) 922-6099

For Birkie information –

Brian Lucas, Director of Marketing (780) 467-0524

Canadian Birkebeiner Society (780) 430-7153