



Saddleback Mountain's trails in the early 1960s.

(Air photos by the late Howard N. Gray)

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* SADDLEBACK MOUNTAIN

Saddleback is 49 years old this season. Located in the Franklin County town of Rangeley, this four season resort area is growing, both in size and service. The mountain has three distinct peaks, Saddleback, Saddleback Junior and The Horn. The Saddle is a tableland between Saddleback and Saddleback Junior.

The Appalachian Trail traverses Saddleback from the west, passing an interesting rock formation known as Piazza Rock. This large flat rock was left by a receding glacier.

In the 1930s, the Civil Conservation Corps Rangeley camp built a horse trail from the lake to the summit.

"A group of local citizens in Rangeley were planning a ski area in 1958," said Jim Quimby, Operations Manager of Saddleback. "The group split efforts and Rangeley ended up with Bald Mountain and Saddleback Mountain, the only town in the East operating two ski areas."

Bald Mountain opened a ski area with a rope tow in the winter of 1960. It later added a 1,200 foot T-bar that ran for about 12 years. However, the mountain closed due to increased skier traffic at nearby Saddleback and Sunday River.

Quimby said Saddleback Mountain opened with one tow Dec 31, 1960. "A new T-bar that was operating in front of where the lodge sits now and one trail called the Wheeler Slope was opened."

"The lodge was a log-sided lodge situated on the other side of where the Sandy Chair sits now," Quimby said. "Later in January of 1961, the Cuspsuptic T-bar (still there today the original T-bar) opened with the Gray Ghost trail. Both trails were covered with stumps and debris as they were not completed yet. In 1964 the Rangeley Chair opened with much fanfare, because of the views down the Rangeley Lakes chain from the elevated ride.

Trails were all named after fishing flies, accord-



Bald Mountain ski area opened in the winter of 1960. It ran for 12 years before closing.

ing to Quimby. "Roger Page, Harland 'Spike' Kidder, and others in the group were all avid sportsmen, so in keeping in tradition with the Rangeley region, they named all the trails after fishing flies." Trail signs with the names also include a painting of the fishing fly.

In 1967 the "new" lodge (which is a part of the current new lodge) opened. The Sandy chair was also built in 1967 and the original small T-bar and three trails were constructed below where the lodge sits now.

Bill and Irene Berry of Farmington purchased the mountain from Don Breen in 2003. Since that time, the South Branch Chair, the new lodge, additional trails, and a state-of-the-art snowmaking system were built. "We continually add trails and upgrade systems," Quimby said. "The Kennebago chair was installed and put into operation in 2009. This chair has to be one of the greatest improvements, other than our beautiful lodge, that Saddleback has ever done."

A new stop-over facility is planned for the base of Tightline trail, near the Kennebago chairlift. "It is going to be a Yurt and we're calling it the Kennebago Station," Quimby added. The facility will be a warm up place for light meals and re-

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