BATTAWA

This small community in the city of Quinte West, was set up by the Bata Shoe Company, around its factory. The factory moved to Canada prior to WW II, due to conditions in Europe, opening in 1939. Bata operated the town, providing reasonably priced accommodations for its workers. There was a Bata grocery store, Bata recreation hall, Bata clubs, Bata teams etc. Many of the residents were immigrants from Bata’s homeland, Czechoslovakia. The town was headquarters for Bata in Canada, until they moved to Toronto in 1964. The factory in Batawa closed in 2000 and the chain of shoe stores a year later, in 2001.

Batawa Ski Hill

In the winter of 1959, a volunteer group of ski enthusiasts from the nearby Bata Shoe Factory created the Batawa Ski Club. The objective of the club was to promote recreational skiing and friendship.

The Club’s Nancy Greene and the North Star Alpine Ski Teams made a name for themselves by their excellent performance in ski competitions throughout Ontario. In February 1985, the Club was excited to have the Canadian Ski Patrol (Ontario Division) using their facilities. The annual Provincial First Aid Competition was held on the Batawa Ski Hill, with an Annual Awards Banquet held in the Chalet in the evening.

When the Batawa Ski Club first began in 1959, it consisted of a truck-powered tow rope and a small donated tent for serving hot drinks. A two-storey Chalet was developed with the aid of a Wintario grant, private pledges and volunteer labour. It officially opened in 1979 and was named in honour of Sonja Bata.

The Chalet housed a lounge, banquet hall, ski rental shop, canteen and ticket booth. Other early developments and improvements to the Ski Club included T-bar lifts, excellent lighting, a pro shop and a wide selection in downhill and cross country ski equipment rentals on a daily basis. The Club provides 17 miles of natural cross country ski trails.

On December 23, 1988, Colleen DeBruyn, treasurer of the Batawa Ski Club, received a provincial grant to go towards the purchase of a new snow-making machine, a new all-terrain vehicle and 50 more rental ski outfits.

In December 1989, a new water pipeline was installed, providing the Ski Hill with a large amount of water for making artificial snow. Colleen DeBruyn commented that the water line “will help the ski hill run a season which will start earlier and run longer than past years.”

The challenges of keeping a small volunteer community ski hill afloat in Eastern Ontario necessitated the not-for-profit incorporation of the ski hill in 2006-07 under the leadership of Sonja Bata. Rechristened “Batawa Ski Hill”, the organization embarked on an extensive modernization and expansion program to keep it alive for the community and future generations.

Included in the expansion was new state-of-the-art snow making technology, Canada’s first LED lights for a ski hill, a new snow grooming cat, and a Leitner-Poma quad chairlift that moves 2,400 people per hour up the hill.

Come the warm weather, Batawa Ski Hill has 25 kilometres of trails open up to hikers and bikers. And for young, curious palaeontologists, a 40-foot replica Tyrannosaurus rex is waiting to be discovered in the ever-popular Dino Dig Park, the centrepiece of their Summer Adventure Day Camps.

https://www.batawaskihill.com/

BATTAWA LIONS NATURAL PLAYGROUND

