

# NORTH SHORE JOURNAL

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Christine Mallory, Editor

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## Cold Hunter One Launched: Dupre Expedition

By Kitty Mayo

Lonnie Dupre, Grand Marais explorer, is preparing to begin his ascent of Mount Hunter in Alaska on January 7th.

Disappointed to call off the Hunter expedition last March due to fierce weather that was calling for up to six feet of snowfall during the time of the expedition, Dupre made the difficult call early this year to opt for safety and rescheduled the climb for this winter.

Meanwhile, in April 2018 Dupre, along with Canadians Vern Stice and Pascale Marceau, accomplished being the first to summit Jeannette Peak in east central British Columbia.

The steepest (14,573 feet) and most technical of the three main peaks in Denali National Park, Mt. Hunter is considered the most difficult 14,000 foot peak in North America. Mt. Hunter has another name in Athabaskan, Begguya, or Denali's Child, and in his previous climbs of Denali, four attempts before he was successful, Dupre says he was eyeing Begguya and wondering if he would ever make it there. Just four years ago Dupre made a solo climb of Mt. Denali, making the books as the 17th person to summit the highest mountain in North America during the winter, and the first person to accomplish that climb solo in January.

Vying to be the first person to make a solo winter ascent of Mt. Hunter, it was first summited by a three person team in 1980 on the north side, and that team remains to date the only other winter summit of Mt. Hunter. Dupre is going to give it a go this year on the south side of the mountain, hoping for a more attainable



Dupre's route up Mount Hunter is marked in red. (lonniedupre.com/blog)

strategy.

Low visibility that impedes the ability to anticipate crevasses and ice falls are one of the perils of harsh weather on Mt. Hunter, along with the risk of avalanches.

Last year after making the decision to reschedule the climb for January 2019, Dupre said, "...there is simply no room for error and it takes forever waiting for the right weather window."

Flying into Anchorage on the 4th of January, Dupre and supplies will fly to Kahiltna base camp on the 7th.

This shot at the Mount Hunter climb officially starts on January 7, 2019 and is anticipated to take about 19 days. Daylight is even a more precious commodity in the sub-arctic, where Dupre will have to camp in the dark and even do some of the climbing without light.

Strapping on homemade 80-inch birch skis with a sled of gear and food in tow, Dupre will trek to the south side of the mountain.

Dupre's projected route has him passing through an ice falls, and then he will have to surmount "the Ramen". The Ramen is a couloir, or steep, narrow gully on the mountainside that traverses 3,000 feet at a 50 to 60 degree climb.

Once at base camp at 8,000 feet of elevation, Dupre has to shuttle his supplies up the first 2,000 feet of the Ramen. From there, at 11,200 feet he will take a shot to the summit and back when he determines there is a good window of agreeable weather.

Dupre has a book about his adventure at Denali written in 2017 (with Pam Louwagie) called "*Alone at the Top: Climbing Denali in the Dead of Winter*". Other books by Dupre and his previous expeditions include "*Greenland Expedition: Where Ice is Born*" (2000), and "*Life on Ice: 25 Years of Arctic Exploration*" (2010). You can also find out more about how to stay warm in sub-arctic weather conditions, and how he cooks his food from his recently posted video blogs at: lonniedupre.com/blog.

## 35th Beargrease Changes Adapt to the Times

By Kitty Mayo

This year's John Beargrease sled dog marathon starts on Sunday, January 27th, but lots of other race related activities start the previous Friday. The race itself will continue through January 29th.

Among 2019's changes, a return to a Duluth start is among them. The race has also been shortened to 300 miles instead of 373, with the end of the race now in Grand Portage. The mandatory number of dogs for the race has been dropped from 14 to 12.

Feedback from mushers indicated that a shorter race with fewer dogs was preferable.

Still the longest sled dog race in the lower 48, this year's events will host around 60 mushers, and utilize over 500 volunteers from all over the states.

The Cub Run on January 19th will be a fun way for spectators to join in the excitement. Novice mushers in the 3 to 14 year age range will race for one to two miles. Leaving from the Silver Creek Town Hall, mushers check in at noon with the first racers taking off at 1:20 pm.

January 20th is the opening of the Beargrease Art Show photo exhibit at the Great Lakes Aquarium, running through

March 10th.

Mini Sled Dog Races will be held near the Canal Park Brewing Company in Duluth starting at 7:00 am on Friday, January 25th.

Saturday, January 26th's events includes veterinarian checks, the opening ceremonies, dinner and silent auction. The always adorable Cutest Puppy Contest will be held at Fitger's on January 26th.

On race day this year, the current plan is to begin in Duluth instead of Two Harbors as has been the tradition in recent years. The race will kick off at noon at Billy's Bar on Tischer

Road, followed by the Beargrease 120 and the Beargrease 40 races.

If you want to cheer the teams on at their checkpoints they are estimated to pass through Two Harbors on Highway 2 at around 3:30 pm on the 27th, and the Finland checkpoint around 8:00 pm. The Sawbill checkpoint should begin to see action around 5:00 am on the 28th. For more checkpoint estimated times, and current timing during the race, visit: [www.beargrease.com](http://www.beargrease.com).

The mushers award ceremony and banquet will be held at the Grand Portage Lodge & Casino on January 30th.