

Castlegar Nordic Ski Club

Five Year Strategic Plan

November 2015



Mission:

To provide the highest quality recreational Nordic skiing opportunity for the residents of the Kootenays and visitors from beyond

Goals and Guiding principles -

- **Excellent trails, well laid out with good track setting on quality snow** – our trails are located for best snow conditions, laid out to appropriate ski standards and are maintained to have consistent quality track setting
- **Affordability and financial stability** – our prices will be kept as low as possible to ensure that price is not a limitation to people using our facilities while having sufficient funds to continue operations in a business-like manner for the long term
- **Life-long skiers** – as skiing can be a lifelong activity our club will provide trails for all skill levels and will have sufficient facilities to provide safe and comfortable use
- **Quality Infrastructure** – our parking, Viking centre and trail shelters will be located and supplied to the extent that they can be destinations for recreation, safety and comfort
- **Family recreation** – our goal is to provide a recreation experience for the whole family
- **Safe use and appropriate insurance** – club executive will keep safety as a prime consideration in all aspects of the club's activities and will have sufficient insurance to cover the volunteers, executive and members
- **Youth development** – introduction of youth is critical for family participation sport and creates the longevity of the sport we desire
- **Technology support** – we will provide technology support through our web site and geo referenced maps for those that wish to use this technology

Strategies:

Membership and day users

Membership in our club has increased an average of 53 members annually in the last 5 years and 22 annually since the 2001/02 season. This increase may be due to the completion of our shelters, stability of our track setting and equipment, better than average snow conditions or due to us becoming more known. It is reasonable to assume that the club will continue to increase somewhere between 22 and 53 per year so in 5 years we could have between 924 and 1079 members.

Year	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Average
Members	680	692	734	880	814	760
Increase/decrease	133	12	42	146	-66	53

Day use (including honour boxes) revenue is recorded in our annual budget summary which indicates a relatively stable value of \$14,679 per year. Average membership revenue is \$32,970 and is increasing at a rate of approximately \$3207/yr. During this time we have modest increases in day fees and membership dues however this increase is primarily due to our increased number of members.

	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Average
Day use	\$14,795	\$15,294	\$16,377	\$14,596	\$12,333	\$14,679
Memberships	\$25,869	\$28,707	\$30,168	\$38,204	\$41,904	\$32,970

The carrying capacity of the Club's existing trails and other infrastructure far exceeds the current use. Increased membership and day-use would contribute to the goal of maintaining financial stability and affordability.

Strategy #1

Our goal will be to continue to increase memberships and day-use revenues by at least \$3000 (or approximately 37 members) annually. This will be done through maintaining accessibility and affordability for local and distant skiers, encouraging visits by school and community groups and by promoting the advantages and quality recreational experience of our location.

Volunteers

Volunteers are integral to the overall success of the Club. Volunteers fill the roles of the Club Executive, carry out the majority of trail and facility maintenance, collect user fees, coordinate events and carry out a host of other duties and functions. Historically and generally, the Club has had an adequate number of volunteers to run the club however in recruiting and retaining a volunteer base can be difficult.

Strategy #2

To maintain our existing volunteers and to increase volunteerism, the Club will follow these tasks:

- Develop an incentive program to encourage new volunteers;
- Continue to poll members on their interest in volunteering at membership renewal time;
- Commit to follow up/contact those who offer to volunteer for specific tasks;
- Send reminders of volunteers needed for specific events, through email and the Club website; and,
- Develop a recognition program to recognize/reward volunteers.

Executive

Our current executive has been in place, and for the most part unchanged, in the last 10 years. Some renewal of the executive is preferred as executive members may be tiring of the commitment. In addition the expansion of the executive to include directors for marketing and promotion and

volunteers would reduce the workload of the existing executive and may help to maintain their involvement.

Strategy #3

Our strategy will be to:

- continue to encourage new executive members and
- through the membership surveys, look for opportunities to gain greater involvement in the executive.

Facilities

The Castlegar Nordic Ski Club has a Partnership Agreement with the Recreation Sites and Trails BC for recreational activities over the Paulson recreation site. Our current facilities include the Viking centre, 45 kilometers of trails, 3 trailside shelters, 5 outhouses, trailside safety caches, two parking lots and a number of equipment sheds. Of these facilities our largest challenges are the safe storage of our equipment and adequate parking at Mud Lake.

Strategy #4

Our facilities goals are:

- Equipment security (year one of this plan) will be pursued through stronger protective locks and physical barriers.
- Investigate increased size of our parking lot.
- Respond, within our financial and maintenance ability, to the direction provided in the membership surveys for additional facilities

Equipment and maintenance

Purchase and maintenance of the snowmobiles and track setting equipment is second only to the track setting paid members as the largest expenditures for the club. Unlike the track setting costs these purchases are periodic in nature and not entirely predictable. Snowmobiles can last 4 to 7 years and two must be fully operational at any given time. The annualized cost of this equipment is discussed in the club finances section below.

In February 2004 a Track Setting Options Analysis Report was completed. In that report it was recommended that we continue track setting with snowmobile and commercially manufactured groomers and replace those snow mobiles as necessary. While doing this limits our ability to set skating trails and adds to the time needed for setting the trails, it is by far the most economical option.

Strategy #5

For the next 5 years we must ensure that we have three dependable snow mobiles and qualified members for track setting by:

- Ensure secure capital budget for the periodic replacement of our track setting machines
- Recruiting new track setting volunteers to work with existing paid members during busy times and as replacement track setters in 2 to 5 years.

- Ensure member compensation is adequate for maintaining the interest while fitting within our budget

Trails and Bridge Maintenance

Maintaining a vegetation free zone adjacent to the trails is a significant task that must be carried out each year. Currently this work is done through the use of volunteer work days but is difficult to stay ahead of the task; alternatives need to be considered.

Bridge maintenance and replacement is a significant safety and financial priority. As of the 2014/15 season we have a potential liability of \$30,000.

Strategy #6

Each year we must commit funds or volunteer resources to trail maintenance:

- Alternate strategies to the hand cutting with brush saws need to be considered for longer term effectiveness; machine work and grass seeding, potentially at high cost
- Source of funds will be from capital account, from donations of time etc from forest companies and/or through grant applications

Forest management

The Paulson Recreation Site lies within the operating area of two major licensees, Atco Wood Products and BC Timber Sales, who each have been cooperative with the ski club in operating in non-ski seasons and tailoring any trail construction to ski standards. Legal objective for the use of the recreation site determine that these companies must refer any proposals to the club for input; this has been done routinely and has lead to improvements in logging activities in relation to our trail use experience. Continued positive relationship may support the club by asking for donations of equipment or time for trails maintenance. In the past Selkirk College students completed reports on the trail construction and experience. These can be followed up on in the future to continue to monitor the recreational experience.

Strategy #7

Our strategy will be to continue to request referral of licensee logging proposals and actively respond to those referrals:

- Comments to referrals will, to the extent possible, reflect the opinions of the club members as stated in the periodic membership surveys.
- Periodic review of the proportion of the trails that exist in regenerating and juvenile stages will be done to aid in our comments to the forest companies.

Skier development program

The club executive has, since our strategic plan of 2005, believed that the introduction of youth to nordic skiing is a fundamental goal of the club. Significant change in this program has been necessary since the club withdrew from membership with Cross Country BC in 2014. We believe that the diversion

of the CCBC membership fees to our operations budget in support of an independent program is financially prudent.

Strategy #8

Our goals include:

- Youth and adult programs will be supported
- Purchase of quality equipment as support for families through rental opportunities
- Maintain a paid coach to coordinate the youth ski and school involvement programs

Affiliation with Provincial and Canadian associations and local clubs

For the 2014/15 season the club chose to not renew its registration with the ski associations. This was primarily a financial decision as the cost of this membership was increasing and the perceived benefit was not considered there. This decision created the need for our important youth participation program to redefine its delivery which came at some cost and effort. The competitive and race program nature of the associations were not supported by our club mission and principles. Furthermore an equal and cost competitive insurance policy was sourced at significantly reduced total cost. Contact information and promotion of the club that is lost by not being included in the CCBC annual magazine will need to be replaced by some suitable practice.

Strategy #9

Goals:

- Private insurance must be acquired each year to ensure coverage
- Advertising of the club facilities will be placed in Kootenay and southern interior publications to ensure awareness
- A minimum of one article in club activities will be placed in the local papers each ski season

Affiliation with adjacent clubs has also been routinely supported whereby members of affiliated clubs received a 50% reduction in day use fees. Although this is of more benefit to the other clubs on a daily basis there is benefit to our club in the low cost of our annual membership. We believe that what we gain from this relationship outweighs what we lose.

Strategy #10

- Maintain our commitment to reduced day rates for Blackjack and Nelson Nordic ski club members.

Supported activities and programs

- Loppet,
- Community (schools) liaison,
- Youth Skier development

Promotion, marketing and advertising

The club's decision to no longer be affiliated with CCBC has reduced our exposure therefore we must do some marketing to ensure new members are encouraged.

Strategy #11

In order to maintain our profile we must:

- Participate in the Castlegar Parade of programs each year
- Take advantage of opportunities to promote the club through advertising and articles in local newspapers, publications and internet sources
- Continue the participation events,

Financials

In order for the club to be sustainable in the long term it must be run so as to continue to have sufficient funds for the activities we supply. A summary of average costs and revenues as a generic budget over the last 5 years is contained in Appendix A. Net revenues have existed in most years and the capital account has been increased however, as stated in the bridge maintenance section above, there are large periodic expenditures expected.

- a) **Expenditures** – See Appendix A for typical expenditure categories and amounts
- b) **-Revenues** - current membership and generation of other sources (companies, government agencies, CBT, etc)

	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	average
Net revenue	\$5,045	\$14,843	\$3,276	\$7051	\$14,165	\$8,876

- c) **-Capital account** – Periodic equipment purchases and large periodic maintenance costs

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Annualized cost
Snowmobile replacement			\$15,000			\$15,000	\$6,000
Bridge replacement		\$30,000					\$6,000
Brushing contracts			\$10,000			\$10,000	\$4,000
Others?							
							\$16,000

Potential shortfall in net revenue \$16,000 minus \$8,876 equals \$7124

Sources of additional funds

- Increased membership
- Increase membership fees
- External grant applications

In summer 2015 the club applied for, and received, grants and funding from a number of local sources (Columbia Basin Trust, Regional Districts, Rec. Sites and Trails BC)

Strategy #12

Financial Action Plan:

1. Pursue grant applications to fund large capital projects
2. Redirect funds previously committed to Associations fees to new Skier development programs
3. Ensure safe storage of our valuable equipment and actively explore electronic security technology, as suitable

As a not-for-profit organization, the Castlegar Nordic Ski Club exists to serve the needs of all of its members. As such, it is critically important that this Strategic Plan and the day-to-day decision-making by the Club Executive reflect the desires and preferences of the majority of the Club's members.

In addition to on-going contacts, communications and other interactions with members, the Club Executive will undertake a structured periodic survey of members to gather information on members' opinions and preferences related to the Goals and Guiding principles of this Strategic Plan and other issues of importance to the functioning and operation of the Club.

Summary of Strategies

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