



Attachment to the Agreement with the **Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club** (BVCCSC) for  
Partnership Agreement No. **PA24DSS-04**

## **Bulkley Valley Nordic Centre, within REC 98586**

### **Operating Plan, 2024 - 2028**

**February 28, 2024**

The primary intent of this Partnership Agreement (PA) is to promote public safety while meeting the requirements of Risk Mgmt. Branch – the branch of provincial government that provides PA Holders with third party liability insurance and accidental death and dismemberment for volunteers.

An up-to-date operating plan is a requirement of the PA Schedule E. It's the main tool for requesting support and authorization from RSTBC. When developing and updating the operating plan the PA will be referenced and will be reviewed with the executive / board and targeted volunteers annually, at minimum.

In an effort to ensure a timely review of operating plans by RSTBC, the following dates are in place:

- November 1 – February 28: timeframe that RSTBC will accept operating plans.
- November 1 – April 30: timeframe that RSTBC will review submitted operating plans.
- April 30 - deadline that RSTBC will provide comment based on review of operating plan.

### **CLUB MANDATE / PURPOSE:**

The Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club (“BVCCSC” or “the club”) is a not-for-profit society established in 1984 under the *Society Act*. The purpose of the society is to promote community participation in the healthy outdoors lifestyle of cross-country skiing in the Bulkley Valley by:

1. encouraging recreational cross-country skiing;
2. developing and maintaining the Nordic and biathlon facilities at the Bulkley Valley Nordic Centre;
3. offering and promoting cross-country skiing skill development programs for children, youths and adults;
4. offering and promoting athlete development programs for cross-country ski racing and biathlon; and
5. organizing and hosting cross-country ski and biathlon race events.

The BVCCSC is not designated as a “member-funded society”, meaning that it can accept public and outside funds to help support operations.

BVCCSC, in partnership with Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), operates the Bulkley Valley Nordic Centre, located within the Wetzin’kwa Community Forest, west of Smithers on the Hudson Bay Mountain Road. The Nordic Centre is within the traditional territory of the Wet’suwet’en people and specifically the Cassyex House of the Gidumden Clan.

The Nordic Centre has 52 km of ski trails of which 5 km is lit and over 10 km is dog-friendly. (A map of maintained and groomed trails is available at <http://www.bvnordic.ca/trails-and->

[facilities/map/](#).) The club owns a fleet of machines, several buildings and system of night lights located at the Nordic Centre. The buildings and lights are on Licence of Occupation 635826 and Licence of Occupation 635827 held by BVCCSC. Although owned by the club, these assets serve essential roles in providing a safe and enjoyable skiing experience for the public and club members. They are therefore included in this operating plan. The club offers skill development programs and events which are operated under the policies and standards of Cross Country BC and are not addressed in this operating plan.

### **KEY PERSONNEL:**

The club's board of directors provides oversight and direction for the club's programs. Each program has a responsible director, delegated decision-making and a program budget within the overall club budget. Directors and areas of responsibility change from time to time. Current directors and key personnel and their areas of responsibility are available at <http://www.bvnordic.ca/about-our-club/executive/> Policies and procedures are available at <http://www.bvnordic.ca/about-our-club/club-handbook/>.

The general BVCCSC email contact for use by RSTBC on matters related to the Partnership Agreement is: [bvccsc-pa@bvnordic.ca](mailto:bvccsc-pa@bvnordic.ca).

Table 1: Key Personnel

As of February 2024, key personnel with responsibilities under this Operating Plan include:

Personnel	Title	Contact Info	Primary Duties
Jen Chapman	President	chair@bvnordic.ca	Supervise other directors in the performance of their duties; keep confidential records including police record checks
Steve Osborn	Director of Nordic Centre Operations	operations@bvnordic.ca	Board liaison with Wetzin'kwa Community Forest and government agencies; Oversee the general manager and Nordic Centre projects
Kevin Kriese	Trails Coordinator	trails@bvnordic.ca	Prepare and update a trail plan; coordinate summer brushing and maintenance; coordinate trail improvement projects
Anne Harfenist	Secretary	anne@bvnordic.ca	Filing of annual reports to RSTBC; correspondence of the society
Jan Wangelin	General Manager	gm@bvnordic.ca	Oversee Nordic Centre operations including coordinate maintenance of machines and buildings; implement assigned projects, supervise groomers and volunteers.

### **SAFETY PLAN:**

### **Hazard Mitigation & Abatement:**

BVCCSC will conduct a thorough inspection in the fall prior to the operating season. During the operating season, the trails are inspected regularly by groomer operators. Hazards will be flagged or signed if the operator cannot deal with it immediately.

Hazards discovered by users can be communicated to any club official or sent to BVCCSC at the feedback email address shown on the website [feedback@bvnordic.ca](mailto:feedback@bvnordic.ca).

Hazards are communicated to skiers using on-site signage and the Nordic Pulse grooming report. Longer-term or extensive hazards (e.g. early season low snow) may also be communicated as a website news article, an email to all members and/or posting on the BVCCSC Facebook page.

Table 2: Hazard Mitigation

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Mitigation Strategies</b>
Danger trees and blowdown	<p>*Our danger tree management strategy is to reduce risk at designated stopping points, which are all trail junctions or signs on our trails. We have previously identified and removed dead trees at all junctions and will annually survey junctions for dead trees. Dead trees will be removed by machine or certified faller.</p> <p>*Provide chainsaw and PPE for groomer operators and mowers to cut blowdown as they groom.</p> <p>*Volunteers keen to help with bucking blowdown must be assessed by BVCCSC as qualified as per Sch. B.</p> <p>*Annually, the club will identify areas of hazard trees for falling by wildfire crews.</p> <p>*If there appears to be increased risk from hazard trees, warning signs will be placed at trailheads.</p>
Crossings and water	<p>*All crossings and culverts will be monitored regularly by the club's Trails Coordinator and during the ski season by the general manager and groomer operators.</p> <p>*Bridges (&gt; 6m span) will be inspected every three years by qualified professional in coordination with RSTBC.</p> <p>*If risk of open water or thin ice, trail sections will be signed as closed on both ends and noted on website. (e.g. Pine swamp crossing closed and new bypass trail proposed.)</p> <p>*Replace bridges and culverts before end-of-life.</p>
Hudson Bay Mountain Road and parking lots	<p>*Trail signage and grooming directs skiers to use the tunnel from/to the lower parking lot.</p> <p>*MoTI approved signs on HBM Rd to warn drivers of groomer crossings.</p> <p>*Lower parking lot was expanded and signed to increase capacity.</p> <p>*Access roads and parking lots plowed regularly after snowfalls.</p>

The Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club recognizes the following hand falling guidelines:  
[https://gww.nrs.gov.bc.ca/flnrord/files/flnrord/media/safety/guideline\\_hand\\_falling\\_activities.pdf](https://gww.nrs.gov.bc.ca/flnrord/files/flnrord/media/safety/guideline_hand_falling_activities.pdf).

BVCCSC understands that only BC Forest Safety Council or BC Wildfire Service certified Fallers are permitted to fall trees greater than 15 cm at stump height (30 cm above ground). Trees smaller than this can be felled by qualified individuals as assessed by BVCCSC.

BVCCSC understands that only qualified individuals, as assessed and recorded by BVCCSC, will use power-tools, chainsaws, operate equipment, or perform specialty activities.

#### **Maintenance:**

BVCCSC will follow the standards of the PA, in particular Schedule F, for trail and infrastructure maintenance and inspections. The Club has checklists to ensure that all inspections are done and relevant information passed on to the Director of Nordic Centre Operations and, where appropriate, with the club's board and/or RSTBC. The Director of Nordic Centre Operations, the General Manager and the Trail Coordinator will periodically review the standards to ensure that they are understood and implemented.

BVCCSC understands that the requirements listed in the PA are in place to promote public and volunteer safety and must be followed in consideration of Liability. If BVCCSC is struggling to meet these requirements, BVCCSC will ask RSTBC for help.

BVCCSC understands that damaged and worn infrastructure / signage can have a significant impact on how the site is respected and therefore made a priority for remedying and reported to RSTBC when required.

BVCCSC understands that significant snow load on infrastructure (outhouses, kiosks and other structures) can result in the structure failing. BVCCSC will monitor snow load and address as required.

#### **Closures:**

Trail closures may occur due to a significant trail hazard or active logging on the trail system. Any planned closure will be advertised ahead of time on the website and in email announcements to users and RSTBC. Logging closures will be posted on site in cooperation with Wetzinkwa Community Forest Corporation. Unplanned closures for a section of trail will be signed and advertised as soon as possible on the Nordic Pulse grooming report. For larger area closures, the club will use the website news, email announcements to members and Facebook.

RSTBC has a *Danger Tree Policy* in place that follows the Parks and Recreation Danger Tree Assessor's Manual. The Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club acknowledges that danger trees can threaten the area within one tree length and a half of the tree.

For formal closures, where a hazard or event is posing a significant threat to the public (i.e., dead moose attracting grizzly bears) or the environment (i.e., fuel leak), BVCCSC will inform RSTBC immediately and implement the safety plan.

### **Accident and Emergency Management:**

In the event of an accident or close call, BVCCSC will inform RSTBC immediately and work with RSTBC to complete the required forms. BVCCSC understands that reporting of incidents allows for an investigation and review of RSTBC standards / Policy. This is outlined in the PA.

### **Volunteer Safety:**

Volunteer safety is the first priority in all activities where volunteers are involved. BVCCSC will follow the safety-related requirements and precautions in the PA Schedules B and F and in this operating plan.

For organized work bees, BVCCSC will keep a record of volunteers including name, address, date of birth, relevant qualifications, dates the person started and stopped performing work. As a condition of insurance BVCCSC will keep records of the specific dates that each individual performed Services under this Agreement.

## **PRIORITIES:**

### **PA Deliverables, Annually:**

1. January 15<sup>th</sup> – PAES and Annual Report submitted to RSTBC.
  - a. **Jan. 15 is the firm date.** It cannot be late. This is a requirement of Risk Mgmt. Branch in providing you with insurance.
  - b. The PAES reports on the number of volunteer hours for the year prior. See Sch. B of PA for list of activities. Use template provided by RSTBC.
  - c. The Annual Report lists the activities you completed the year prior. See Sch. B of PA. There is no template for this. Word doc and bullet form is the preferred method.
2. By October 31 – a statement of income and expenditure will be submitted with information described in Schedule D of the PA.
3. By February 28 – Operating Plan
  - a. Review annually and submit updated version if needed. Replace at end of term.

### **Annual Priorities - Maintenance & Inspections:**

Timeline	Tasks	Description	Club official
Oct-Nov	Start-up checklist	Seasonal start-up tasks	General Manager
Oct-Nov, as needed	Lodge supplies	Check and replenish 1 <sup>st</sup> aid supplies, AED pads, water testing, cleaning supplies	General Manager
Late fall	Workbees	Firewood, lodge maintenance, hand brushing	General Manager
Ongoing	Machine maintenance	Machine-specific maintenance schedules plus club procedures	General Manager
Summer & fall	Trail mowing	All trails are mowed every one to two years depending on the level of brush.	Trails Coordinator
April & November	Sign maintenance	End of season, remove groomer warning signs from HBM Road. Remove map signs from public logging roads. Cover other maps to protect from fading. Move kiosk to avoid vandalism. Pre-season, replace/uncover maps, move kiosk to lower parking, check all signage	General Manager

### **Outstanding Priorities & Needs:**

Timeline	Deliverable	Description	Authorizations & RSTBC support	Club official
2024-2025	Planned trail improvements	Within existing trail right of way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>planned trail improvements include grading, culverts, and ditches on Pooch, wild Dog, Hound Heaven, Upper Logging Road, Wetzin'kwa.</li> <li>If funding allows, grading and rock hammer work on Goldeneye, Northern Lights, Perimeter, Hilltop, Down the Mountain, Valleyview.</li> <li>final portion of the Adventure Trail if funds are available.</li> </ul>	Previously authorized trails	Trails Coordinator
summer-fall 2024	Swamp bypass trail	New trail to bypass swamp and replace part of 5 km cut-off	Applied for s57 authorization	Trails Coordinator
2024-2025	Valley View connector	Connector from Down the Mountain to lower Valleyview.	Applied for s57 authorization	Trails Coordinator
2024	Update Recreation Site polygon	Propose to RSTB an amended boundary of Recreation Site to include all authorized trails plus planned new trails.	RSTBC designation	Director Nordic Centre Operations

## **Project-Based Goals:**

Timeline	Deliverable	Description	Authorization Needed	Responsible club official
Spring-summer 2024-2025	DDF Trailwork	Replace one minor Pine Creek culvert. Subgrade reconstruction and drainage on select areas of Pine Creek, dog and Demo Forest trails, allowing an extra 20 km of trails to be available in low snow.	existing trail authorizations	Trails Coordinator
Spring-summer 2024-2025	DDF Bridge	Replace Wetzin'kwa crossing with an engineer-designed bridge.	bridges WSA Section 57 authorization	Trails Coordinator
2024-2025	DDF Race Route	Race route design (homologation) and trail widening to enable future competitions and better grooming.	Future trail authorization	Trails Coordinator & Chief of Course
2024	DDF New Groomer	Purchase new Prinoth Bison with power tiller, 4 track pans, Renovator	n/a on order	Director Nordic Centre Operations
2024-2025	DDF Outhouse	Install an attractive, all-abilities accessible outhouse in the lower parking lot where it will be available to visitors year-round	n/a	Trails Coordinator
2024-2025	DDF Signs	New signage for visitor navigation and enjoyment, including interpretive information about local indigenous people and culture.	RSTBC funding will be request for new map signs	Director Nordic Centre Operations
Spring-summer 2024	Heating system for lodge	Replace non-working furnace with heat pump, (subject to grant application)	n/a	General Manager
Summer 2024	Poop scoops along dog trails	Install additional posts and scoops for removing dog feces.	n/a Request ___ posts	General Manager

**Note:** Maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of recreation trails and facilities is authorized under Section 57 of the Forest and Range Practices Act, of which the Recreation Officer is the delegated authority: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/camping-hiking/sites-trails/program/authorizations>

## MANAGEMENT OF OVERLAPPING VALUES & FIRST NATIONS INTERESTS

### **Coordination with Wetzin'kwa Community Forest**

The BVCCSC has a Memorandum of Understanding Respecting Forest Harvesting Activities and Ski Club Operations within the Bulkley Valley Ski Club Operating Area (2009) with the Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation (See section D - Agreements on the Bylaws, Policies & Plans page: <https://bvnordic.ca/about-our-club/club-handbook/> ). The MOU details how the BVCCSC and Wetzin'kwa cooperate and collaborate on forest harvesting, protection, silviculture and the promotion of cross country skiing. The director of Nordic Centre Operations (operations@bvnordic.ca) is BVCCSC's primary contact with Wetzin'kwa Community Forest. BVCCSC will review planned operations and ensure that forest management activities within the area are implemented in a manner that is accommodating of both parties' interests. The General Manager and Trails Coordinator will assist with communications wth the Community Forest.

### **First Nations**

The Bulkley Valley Nordic Centre is within the traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en people and specifically the Cassyex House of the Gidumden Clan. Members of the Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club reach out to the Wet'suwet'en to engage and share information. BVCCSC relies on RSTBC for formal consultation related to Nordic Centre operations. BVCCSC has expressed interest in working with the Cassyex House to ensure access to the trail system, to engage early regarding any new trail proposals, and to explore ways to incorporate Witsuwit'en\* trail names and cultural interpretive signs. (\**The Wet'suwet'en people speak Witsuwit'en, ... From <<http://www.wetsuweten.com/culture/language/>>* ).

### **Trapper consultation:**

There is an active trapline, owned by Bernard Baptiste. The club has communicated with Mr. Baptiste when we installed gates on the trails and provided him with a copy. He does not actively trap on our trails during the winter season. When we update our trail plan, we will communicate with Mr. Baptiste to ensure our trails do not interfere with his interests.

## FUNDRAISING:

### Trail fees

The Club collects trail use fees (season passes and day tickets) in accordance with the PA and the October 11, 2018 determination of day pass by Recreation Sites and Trails BC. Our fees for the 2023-24 season are:

	Season Pass (max fee)	2 Week Christmas Pass	Day Pass
Adult (19+)	\$196	\$75	\$15
Youth (9-18)	\$88	n/a	\$10
Child (8 and under)	Free	n/a	free
Family (immediate family and students to 24 yrs)	n/a	n/a	\$30

Notes:

- Season pass is available to club members. Anyone can become a member by registering and paying a membership fee. The membership fee (not listed above) includes fees determined by Cross Country BC and Nordiq Canada which are outside the control of the club.
- The club may offer discounts on season passes to encourage early registrations or other purposes.
- The club may offer discounts on day passes for large groups, schools, etc.
- Season pass is only available through online registration and is subject to online processing fees which are outside the control of the club.

The club maintains financial records in a way that ensures trail use fees are only applied to the cost of operating the Nordic Centre. In years where there is an operational surplus, it is added to specific capital projects or to a contingency reserve fund which is used for major repairs and upgrades of Nordic Centre assets.

### Surplus from Club Programs

From time to time, the club may allocate surpluses from other club programs (events, memberships, skill development) to support the Nordic Centre's capital projects or contingency reserve.

### Grants

The club regularly applies for grants to support Nordic Centre's capital projects which have been identified as priorities in our Management Plan. In recent years we have received grants for the Nordic Centre from Wetzin'kwa Community Forest, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Gaming, Rural Dividend, Gas Tax Fund (RDBN) and Destination Development Fund. These grants have covered partial costs of trail improvements, safety improvements, new grooming machines and buildings for our machines. Programs not covered by the PA, such as Ski S'kool, also apply for local and provincial grants.

All trail projects related to the PA are submitted to RSTBC for authorization under Section 57 of FRPA.

### Sponsorship

Sponsorships from local businesses will be encouraged within the term of this operating plan.

## **Member Fundraisers**

Occasionally, the club initiates fundraisers to support projects at the Nordic Centre. Our 2021-2022 fundraiser raised \$15,100 for bridge replacements on the Pine Creek trail. A previous member fundraiser paid for our tracked quad (\$22,000) and also contributed to our tracksetter garage project. Future fundraisers will provide opportunities for members to continue support for the Nordic Centre.

## **PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Water Sustainability Act (WSA):**

The WSA and its Regulations aims to protect water and associated riparian habitats:

<https://portal.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/-/change-approval-for-work-in-and-about-a-stream>; in particular, Section 39: Authorized Changes, which outlines the conditions for reducing adverse effects. Notification to the Habitat Officer is a requirement of the process of which the review time is 45 days.

### **Environmental Goals and Strategies**

The club's Management Plan (current version at <https://www.bvnordic.ca/about-our-club/club-handbook>) describes environmental goals and strategies which guide other club plans and priorities. Briefly, the relevant goals and strategies are:

#### **Take Care of the Environment**

- Construct and maintain trails to maintain natural drainage patterns and avoid sedimentation of water sources
- Reduce potential for a fuel spill from tracksetting

#### **Plan for a Changing Climate**

Climate change in this area is expected to result in warmer winters and increased winter precipitation. Projections indicate significant variation from year to year including the possibility of more rain events in the fall, later onset of winter, and periodic fall droughts.

- Adapt trails to allow skiing on a shallower snowpack
- Adapt grooming equipment and grooming protocols
- Over time, reduce then eliminate the carbon footprint of our operations