

**Trail Plan**

**Date: April 2017**

This plan is approved by the Board of the BV Cross Country Ski Club and describes our plans to maintain, improve and expand the cross country ski trails.

**Annual Maintenance**

**Current Situation**

Annual maintenance ensures trails are brush free and ski-able. Generally annual maintenance includes; mowing, hand brushing, ensuring signage is maintained, and safety equipment is in place. In general, maintenance has been adequate but especially in low snow years the trails have had more brush than desired and signage has deteriorated. In some years more hand brushing would be desirable. Tractor mowing is the most effective method, and has been limited by the number of people who are trained or interested. There are also several trails where the mower can only access in the very driest seasons (and are not accessible in some years at all). Improvements on these trails (mostly Pine Creek) would make mowing by the tractor much more reliable). There is anecdotal evidence that some members would like to assist with brushing but have not been asked and don't know what to do. The tractor and mower are excellent assets that need regular maintenance but no major replacement or improvements are considered necessary for many years.

**Goals**

- Mow or brush all trails at least every two years
- Close mow a designated network of "early season" trails every year so that they can be skied with a very shallow snow base (map to be developed: Broadway, logging roads, Pooch, Northern Lights)
- Annually inspect and repair all signs and junction markers;
- Annually place safety equipment (1<sup>st</sup> aid buckets) at designated sites.

**Strategies**

- Recruit and train two additional tractor "mowers" by June. Resp: trail coordinator
- Organize a fall brushing plan; Resp: Trail Coordinator
- Carry out annual sign and safety check; Resp: TBD
- Treat Danger Tree hazard; Resp Trail Coordinator
  - Coordinate with Wetzin'Kwa community forest can treat
  - Seek support from Wildfire crews via Recreation, Sites and Trails BC
  - If necessary, hire danger tree faller or feller buncher for untreated areas

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**Trail Improvements**

**Current Situation**

The Nordic centre maintains a total network of 45 km including 5.5 km of lit trails. Most trails were constructed at low cost with very little funding to prepare a proper graded or ditched bed. In high snow years, the deep snow cover addresses all rough places including rocks and stumps but in low snow years the rough trail beds make the trails unusable or challenging. A few places on the trails were constructed with minor grading/slope issues where they do not meet accepted cross country ski standards (“homologation”).

Each year for the past decade, the club has undertaken one or two minor improvements and slowly the quality of the network is improving. The major challenge today is the impact of low snow or late snow given the rough quality of the base for most trails. With projected climate change, there is a risk that later and lower snow will negatively impact the season. Better trail preparation will help maintain the season, especially by allowing skiing on a lower snow depth than is currently possible. Traditionally the BV Nordic Centre has had one of the longest cross country ski seasons in BC, with only Sovereign lake as a major center that offers skiing earlier or later on a consistent basis.

In some years, skiing quality is negatively affected where small streams freeze and overflow the trail, creating a sheet of ice. Another challenge with the trails is the inability to access some areas with the tractor; therefore they cannot be mowed and must be hand brushed which is much more labour intensive.

**Goals**

- Improve early season and low snow skiing on designated “Early Season” trail network
- Improve trail access for tractor to allow almost all trails to be mowed by tractor;
- Address areas that experience frequent water “overflow”; and
- Reduce ongoing costs and maintenance effort for lighting by moving to LED lighting

**Strategies:**

- Undertake improvements to the base for “Early Season Trails”. Base will allow skiing on less than 30 cm of snow
  - Map 1 shows designated Early Season Trails.
  - Improvements include installation of culverts, ditching, and grading of a sub-bed.
- Improve mower access and undertake general trail repairs;
  - Map 2 shows the location of proposed repairs.
- Apply for funding in 2017 or 2018.
  - RSTBC has confirmed partial support for this project for 2017
  - Apply for grants to Wetzinkwa Community Forest and potentially other sources for the remainder
- Replace existing lights with LED lighting; depends on funding. Complete an investigation in 2017 or 2018.

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**Trail Expansions**

In general, the club believes the size and diversity of trails is adequate. There is always a demand for 'more' trails, but the extra cost of tracksetting and maintenance can exceed the clubs capacity. There is room over the medium term, for a few specific new trails where they would either be easy to maintain (logging road type expansions), would be low cost (done in concert with community forest activities) or would simplify tracksetting by eliminating "out and back" tracksetting today. In addition, there is a desire by some members to have a small cabin as a destination for day use.

**Potential projects:**

This list is preliminary. If funding is received the trails will be located in the field and a formal proposal submitted.

- New Biathlon loop; approximately 200 m trail connecting the tunnel trail to the lower biathlon stadium. This trail will allow skiers to ski uphill into the range and increase the level of difficulty to simulate race conditions;
- Valleyview connector; from end of Valleyview to Perimeter to create a longer "destination" ski;
- Wetzin'Kwa connector; from end of Wetzin'Kwa, north to end demo forest trail (or via "zipper twister"). Would allow current "out and back" tracksetting on the Demonstration forest road and Wetzinkwa to be eliminated;
- Dog trail expansion to southeast of Pooch Paradise. Provide an additional 2 to 4 km "stacked loop" to create a longer dog trail.
- Race loops; potential new steep and curve loops inside the 2.5 km lit trail. Similar to "Northern" lights loop at Otway and targeted at more challenging and varied courses for racers and advanced skiers.
- Day use cabin about 1 km from end of Valleyview trail, or on connector from Valleyview to Perimeter. Would be a "destination" ski.
- Biathlon Target roof; construct a roof for biathlon targets, similar to Omineca ski club. Improves target performance and significantly reduces volunteer effort to shovel and clean targets.









