**Board members**

Present: Jen Chapman, Barb Guillon, Anne Harfenist, Ali Howard, Susan Kinkela, Sarah Newton, Steve Osborn, Joanne Reid, Sarah Sacharoff

Unable to attend: Stephen Wickham

Guest: Roger McMillan

Meeting started at 19:02

**1) Race/training Trail Design**

* Update by Roger McMillan on trail design work he is leading
* Some discussions have been had with expert about some of the ideas with respect to alignment with standards for different types of races
* Output will recommend trail alignments useful in race loops & grooming efficiencies
* May consider stadium design
* Grooming efficiency is top priority
* More technical features – gradual build up to features like the dip
* Contract won’t give us homologated trails – would get to it in next stage
* Suggestion made by board member that decide first what type races want to host first and then go from there
* Do we consider what we might be asked to host if other clubs can’t due to e.g. low snow or warming conditions
* Grooming efficiency and tightness of turns important – don’t break new groomer
* New trail must deliver high value for km; present scenario has 3 km new build, includes .5 km old logging road
* Some of design is race specific
* Includes some wide trail with focus on Northern Lights
* Fun, challenging technical terrain
* Skier safety impt
* All are PB-groomed trails
* Suggests blue recreational line through middle – undulating
* Stewardship considerations: do we need to cut this much?
* Trail density concern – could negatively impact skier experience
* Board asked to provide feedback with respect to hierarchy of trade offs
* Board recommended more outreach – if other user groups, tell Roger; need recreational skiers rep

**2) Minutes of Last Meeting**

***Motion:* Sarah S. moved to accept Dec. 18 draft board meeting minutes; Ali seconded. Approved.**

**3) Directors Reports**

**Barb**: Treasurer (financial reports circulated by Steve O Jan 15)

**Steve O:** Nordic Centre (emailed Jan 11)

**Race Route Design Project**

I authorized a contract to hire Reidar Zapf-Gilje, PhD, PEng to review existing and proposed race courses.  Estimated cost $5,625 excluding GST and airfare. Roger will provide transportation in Smithers and Kevin has offered to billet Reidar.  Funding will come from the Destination Development Fund. $10,000 of the grant was budgeted for the race route project.

The consultant, Reidar Zapf-Gilje, has a lot of relevant experience and did the original design of the Chris Dahlie trails (lodge-side). Roger had a number of informal discussions with the consultant in the last year. Now, with DDF funding, we can get field work done and a report to guide future trail work.

**Costly Equipment Failures**

I’ve been spending a fair bit of money that was not expected in my budget. Some of the recent bills:

* The old deep freeze died before the ski season and so we replaced it with a smaller freezer that is now located upstairs. $455
* The old fridge in the kitchen died last week after the race weekend.  Jan is working with Ski Boosters to ensure the new fridge is suitable for events. Estimated cost $1100
* The wood furnace probably died last year but it took until this fall before we fully acknowledged the fact. Lots of discussions and meetings with experts provided great info and partial quotes.  The resulting proposal will be discussed at the board meeting.
* The PistenBully is not getting any younger or less expensive. So happy that we have a new Bison coming. But we are fully reliant on the PB for at least this ski season so Jan is trying to be proactive about maintenance. The PB has many hydraulic hoses and some in very difficult (expensive) to access locations. This week we had our local heavy duty mechanic replace some leaking hoses. Total cost $1,900.  Old hoses often start leaking before they fail. Jan says:  “so we’re not taking any chances with a small leak on any hoses at this stage.”  I expect ongoing maintenance bills.

**Cold weather**

All the trails were groomed Tuesday night and Wednesday morning before the cold spell started. But we also got a lot more snow than expected that night/morning and throughout Wednesday.  Wednesday night, there was 5 cm or more snow on the trails as the temperature dropped.  We don’t push our people or machines to groom when it is below -20 C.  But despite the cold, Jan (Ginzu) and Patrick (Ginzu or PB?) groomed Northern Lights, the Hustle route and dog trails. More grooming is possible but should not be expected until after this cold spell.

The lodge is being heated with the electric baseboards, portable heaters in the crawl space, and occasional fire in the upstairs wood stove. The lodge is being monitored by Karine (caretaking while Gen and Michel are away), Jan and Steve O. Any members are welcome to feed the upstairs wood stove or start a fire in the RSF fireplace.

**Sarah N.:** Communications (emailed Jan 9)

The third newsletter of the season should be going on in the very near future, thank you everyone for holding my hand through this process.  As I have said before, I am keen for feedback on content, duration, optics, etc. I will start printing them and posting them physically at the club. I also take reminders very well.

Thank you Ben for the images from the Teck Northern Cup, I made a short video to thank volunteers and to raise awareness about what we do. I will send it out via our channels and on the Smithers Events Facebook page. If an article has not been written about the race I will include details in my next article submission to the newspaper.

Please continue to put images in the folder on the drive. I will take lots of pictures now that I am back but your shots help. I will probably give photo credit to BVCCSC unless you otherwise request your name.

Social Media uploads have had a bumpy start for me, Instagram is not my forte, so they are pretty simple. Once I connect more with that generation I hope to find someone to do them for me. I have asked once via email to the folks who checked the 'communications' box when asked how they could help.

I purchased a CANVA account, it has a free version but the paid version is far more easy to navigate and offers better options. I love making posters and shout outs, please use me for this function. I have attached screen shots of the purchase, I hope this suffices for reimbursement, and I asked for permission before purchase. I can share login information if others in the club would like to use the premium version.

**Position open:** Grants & Sponsorships

**Ali:** Events (emailed Jan 14)

**Holiday StoryWalk Dec 16 to Jan 1**

-- once again provided by SCSA was well-received and a very nice story (The Mitten). Heard a few comments that it would have been nice to get kids to ski out to it, but one of the priorities of the StoryWalk is that it is as accessible as possible, so having it close to the lodge allowed more people to see it. As a side note, I was unable to find any volunteers to either put up or take down the signs indicating where the walk was (ie the road signs). This was at most a 10 minute job. Fairly disheartening, and now both (nice, wooden) signs have been removed and I have lost track of them. We are extremely fortunate that Laura Duursma from SCSA and her volunteer, Christine Bruce, put the StoryWalk up & took it down, otherwise it was unlikely we would have had one.

**Holiday Hustle Dec 24 to Jan 7**

-- over 85 participants completed at least 146 laps; there were likely a few more people whose segments weren't picked up by Strava. If people didn't have Strava, they could just email their results and several people chose to participate that way. Prizes were provided by Nature's Pantry and BV Pool and Rec. Big thanks to Ben Forsyth, Sarah Sacharoff, Kira Hoffman, and Ryan Chapman for setting up the course, to Tom Christian for providing a map, and to Shannon Irvine for keeping track of all the laps.

**Teck 1 & 2 Northern Cups and Chris Dahlie Open Dec 30 & 31**

-- Despite the low snow conditions, we welcomed nearly 90 racers each day, in part because the Teck 1 race was a qualifier for our BC Games zone and also subbed in for the Prince George/Vanderhoof zone qualifier. A number of challenges were overcome to provide safe race courses for athletes of all ages. The race committee did well and thanks to Sarah Newton's humorous social media posts we had enough volunteers without having to shake bushes at the last minute. Special recognition should go to Roger McMillan who did an outstanding job as the Chief of Course in challenging conditions. The trails were barely recognizable from what they had been even two days before the race. Roger did a great job liaising with Kelsey, our new Chief of Grooming. At the conclusion of the races, the race committee, headed by Robbie Dunbar, held a quick debrief. During the meeting, a number of equipment requests were made. Simply put, without securing a grant, we will not be able to purchase any of the items the RC feels are necessary without raising the price of our races. Unfortunately, the new Nordiq licensing (basically $3 day insurance) has already increased registration fees for all racers, so raising our own fees means registration costs will climb significantly and may result in lower turn out.

**Looking ahead**

**Womxn's Clinic Jan 21**

-- fully booked with 70 registrants by Jan 4. Julie Sheppard and Kate Wills have done a great job so far of advertising & organizing. They have secured the help of 14 coaches who will receive honorariums. I'll give my impressions of the event in my February brief.

**Tour de Treat Jan 28**

-- Sue Harrison & Kate Kantakis are hard at work organizing this fun event. Again, volunteers have been slow to sign up -- we are getting there for bakers, but have very few (read, 2) people signed up to hand out the treats. Two weeks to get those numbers up.

**Family Day Feb 18**

-- free skiing all day and Pete & Jill from McBike will be bringing their rental fleet. I hope to get enough volunteers that we could have one person set up at the dog parking lot and another at the lodge handing out day passes that are needed for insurance. At the lodge especially, it is hard for people to pick up the tickets due to how McBike sets up on the deck.

**Loppet** -- scheduled for March 9. The Race Committee needs to firm up details soon as members and folks from other ski clubs have already been asking about it. I suspect we may have a significant number of people from out of town if we continue to have some of the best ski conditions in the province. Ben Forsyth assisted me in at least getting last year's maps (the most likely routes) back up on the website.

**Sarah S.:** NSDP (emailed Jan 10)

**Chris Dahlie 2023**

From my perspective things ran smoothly.

Ali and I are working on an agreement between NSDP and Events for how we calculate catering costs.  Volunteers like coaches, wax team, food prep team will likely receive a free lunch but this will be a NSDP expense, not Events.  Ali and I are also figuring out how we will account for jackrabbit meals and registration at the Loppet.

**Westerns in Canmore**

cancelled due to cold weather.

**Masters Drop In / Women’s Clinic Coach the Coaches session** with Ingrid Granlin.  Sounds like it went really well Participants: Nellie Dow, Ali Howard, JoAnne Reid, Liz Holdyk, Linda Kusleika, Tenley Dahlie, Kira Hoffman (am), Abby Morgan, Karen Miller

Sarah requested to organizers of these clinics that in the future we first consider setting up a clinic with Andrea for these volunteer coaches rather than bring Ingrid in.  Andrea will touchdown with these organizers to offer her assistance and support for future.

**Masters Drop In**

I believe they have decided not to require pre registration and will go back to full drop-in model.

**Ski S’kool Grant Application for 2024-25 year +**

Haven’t heard back yet.  Not very hopeful that we will get another 3 years.

**ADP Duties**

Over the holidays, with record number of daypasses sold, we found that the bathrooms needed more attention and that we were often running out of day passes to restock.  Updated our Thursday lodge parent shift to include checking on the bathrooms (especially emptying garbages) so this is now happening midweek as well as on weekends.  Added some notes for ADP parents with instructions on what to do if there are no day passes available for restocking.

**Rabbits/ Bunnies**

Sue has found someone to shadow her as rabbits coordinator!  Sounds like rabbits have all of the coaches they need.  Parking lot was very full last Saturday morning (first rabbits practice which intersects with ADP practice).

**Ski Boosters Coordinator**

Yeva Glover has offered to be ski boosters coordinator.  I’ll meet with her later this week to get her up to speed on the role.

**Finances**

Perdicting surplus. Andrea didn’t start until mid August and in my budget planning I had her starting in July, also, she only receives a fraction of her RRSP matching for this year, we had higher registration than expected and created a second Masters Performance session which wasn’t originally planned.  All this led to more income.  Have approved some extra spending but waiting for Dec/Jan reports for any significant spending within NSDP.  Will likely have some end of year surplus.

**Volunteers needed:**

in ADP, none!  we seem to be in good shape.

in Ski S’kool.  I think Denise feels we are short a few coaches.  We put out some communications to the club and at least one new coach came forward.  Will check in with her to see if this solved the problem.

**Susan:**  Membership (emailed Jan 12)

January 2024

1. Total Members: 1114

Adults: 910

Child: 118

Youth: 70

No Pass: 15

1. Deposits:

December 27, 2023 $2,179.05

January 3. 2023 $3,575.60 (record)

January 10, 2024 $2,245.25

1. Reciprocal completed with Caledonia

**Anne:** Secretary (emailed Jan 14)

* I submitted our Partnership Agreement Engagement Summary for 2023 to Rec Sites and Trails.

**3) Action Items from Previous Meeting**

* ***those directors who have not already done so*** *to prepare job descriptions – some still outstanding*
* ***Sarah N*** look into moving to mail chimp for newsletters (ask Ben for help in making transition) – not yet done
* ***Sarah N*** to reach out to Communications volunteers to see if anyone wants to oversee discussion group. If not, group will be folded. - done
* ***Jen*** to invite Roger to January meeting - done
* ***Jen*** to look into how other clubs compensate volunteers - ongoing
* *Tabled: Steve O to ask insurer about bundling snowmobile coverage and forest fire coverage*
* *Tabled: recalculate what our targets for reserves are*
* *Tabled:* Steve O to work with Steve W and Brandin to find cost cutting opportunities

**4) New/Continuing Business**

1. Lodge Heating Assessment and Proposal

**Motion:** Steve Osborn moved that the Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club endorses a funding request to Northern Development Initiative Trust for 70% of the cost of a new Heat Pump and Ventilation Heating System for the Buchfink Lodge and that the Club contribute 30% of the cost (up to $15,000) from club reserves; Anne seconded. Approved with all in favour.

1. Ticket Checking
* Concern expressed about number of skiers found skiing from lower parking lot without a pass and the normalization of that behaviour
* Suggest more ticket checks occur in lower parking lot itself to catch people before they head out and are still near their wallets

***Action Item: Sarah to discuss with ticket checkers or their organisers***

1. Misc

***Action Item: Sarah to add Onion Lake to website list of clubs with whom we have reciprocal agreement***

Meeting adjourned 20:48

Next meeting: Feb 12