



2020-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



There are many reasons we are fortunate to call Yukon home. Our easy access to groomed cross-country ski trails just minutes from Whitehorse's downtown core is certainly one of them. Cross-country skiing is easily learned and enjoyed regardless of age, ability or fitness level. It is also a sport where mastery, for those who seek it, can demand exceptional skills and fitness. However it is approached, it is a sport that can be embraced by all as a lifelong activity that supports a healthy lifestyle, community connection and time outdoors. At the Whitehorse Cross-Country Ski Club (the Club), we are committed to excellence and innovation in striving to meet the needs, values and expectations of a diverse and passionate membership. From our humble beginnings we have grown our membership, expanded our programs and facilities, hosted high-level ski competitions as well as numerous

community-based events and have even seen some of our members attain national and international excellence, including at the Olympics and Special Olympics.

2020 Membership Survey and the 2020-22 Strategic Plan

Part of this commitment to excellence and innovation is having a well-considered strategic plan to guide us toward an even stronger future. In early 2020, we began working with Travis Armour of StrategyNorth Inc. to help us identify this future by engaging with a wide array of partners and stakeholders, including Cross Country Yukon (the sport's governing body), the City of Whitehorse, Biathlon Yukon, the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Part of this engagement involved a comprehensive survey of members, which was conducted in May and garnered an incredible 460 responses (over 30 interviews with



stakeholders were also conducted, as well as 25 other ski clubs reviewed). Many ideas and opportunities were identified on a wide number of issues, from how to respond to an ever-changing climate, how to ensure that our organization is inclusive and welcoming to everyone in our community, and how to effectively prepare to host a number of important ski events such as the Haywood Ski Nationals and the 2027 Canada Winter Games. These results were summarized into key themes, and reviewed in depth by the Board during its strategic planning sessions. Based on the discussions, four inter-related foundational priorities were identified: People, the Sport, Trails and Facilities, and Club Governance. A number of strategies were identified for each priority (as well as statements as to what success would look like 'down the road'),

and a detailed implementation plan was then developed to ensure that these strategies could be effectively implemented. We appreciate you taking the time to read our strategic vision and our plan to achieve it, and we look forward to seeing you on the trails!

[Dermot Flynn, President, Whitehorse Cross-Country Ski Club](#)



OUR VISION

Providing opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to pursue wellness, enjoyment and excellence on skis on some of Canada's finest trails.

OUR MISSION

is to provide a high-quality ski experience by:

- Managing an ever-improving network of professionally-groomed and accessible trails;
 - Offering programs to assist skiers at all levels of performance to reach their goals;
 - Promoting social interaction and opportunities for community connection; and
 - Encouraging and supporting every Yukoner to embrace cross-country skiing as a lifelong activity that forms part of a healthy lifestyle.
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GUIDING VALUES

- We embrace excellence and innovation in striving to meet the needs, values and expectations of a diverse and passionate membership;
- We promote healthy and active lifestyles while building community and connection through sport;
- The safety of our members, day users, volunteers and staff is paramount;
- We embrace diversity and inclusivity to grow this sport and our community of members by ensuring that everyone – regardless of age or ability – can access the joys of cross-country skiing;
- We proactively adapt to the impact of climate change on our sport and we mitigate the impact of our sport on the climate;
- We embrace partnerships and collaborations with government, sport and community-based organizations and Yukon First Nations;
- We conduct our governance with integrity and transparency, and through open and honest dialogue with our membership and partners; and
- We honour and value the support of our sponsors, volunteers and dedicated staff.

We also gratefully acknowledge that we enjoy our sport on the Traditional Territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

PEOPLE



What This Priority is About.

Cross-country skiing is an opportunity to enjoy and make the best of Yukon winters while engaging in a healthy outdoor activity with family, friends, colleagues and fellow competitors. It is in this spirit of community that we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and family-friendly environment that allows our members to connect athletically and socially, to enjoy some time in a beautiful natural environment, or to simply get in some great physical exercise. This priority also focuses on the need to continue to offer fun and engaging events to enhance the skiing experience, where members can come together to share their passion for the sport. This pillar also highlights the need to continue to harness the passion and commitment of our members and volunteers as we continue to build on the successful legacy of those who came before. It also reflects our commitment to supporting diversity and inclusivity,

in part by addressing potential barriers that some may face in accessing and participating in this sport. We also acknowledge the challenges of developing and implementing a balanced approach to skiing with dogs, recognizing that a majority of cross-country ski clubs across Canada do not allow dogs on the trail system.

What Success Looks Like.

- ▶ Cross-country skiing is a low barrier sport that all can access and enjoy.
- ▶ Members, staff and guests experience a welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment, both on the trails and in our facilities.
- ▶ Members can enjoy opportunities to connect with each other in support of a vibrant, knowledgeable and enjoyable cross-country ski community.
- ▶ The WCCSC is supported by a vibrant, engaged and talented pool of volunteers.



Key Strategies

1. Work with under-represented communities to explore how the Club can provide an inclusive, respectful barrier-free and welcoming environment for everyone.
2. Develop and implement a volunteer recruitment, orientation/training, human resources and recognition strategy.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure members and others are informed and engaged on issues and opportunities affecting our Club and sport.
4. Strike a member-led committee to plan for and develop a series of events and activities throughout the season that brings members together.

I think most people volunteer because they want to help. Being appreciated is probably the number one thing that makes a volunteer enjoy what they do - and knowing they are helping to make a difference.

a Club volunteer

THE SPORT



What This Priority is About.

Ask Yukoners why they believe that Whitehorse in winter is the place to be and they will likely point to being able to access incredible ski trails just minutes from the downtown core. We are proud of the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers to create and maintain a high quality trail system while keeping our facilities running smoothly. We constantly strive to meet the needs of members of all ages and skill levels by providing access to the instructors, facilities and programs they need to reach their goals. We also recognize that our efforts are a key building block to the development of a competitive racing program in Yukon for those who have this aspiration. This priority also recognizes the importance of hosting world-class ski events, which has been a key driver behind much of the trail and infrastructure development that has benefited all members over the years. For example, the original trail system was built in 1972 for the Arctic Winter Games, and the Chalet was built for the 1981 World Cup.

A massive trail redevelopment and the acquisition of important equipment resulted from the 2007 Canada Winter Games, and more equipment for the 2010 and 2016 Haywood Ski Nationals.

What Success Looks Like.

- ▶ Members of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and levels of performance can access the lessons, equipment and support they need.
- ▶ Members have opportunities to test their skills and abilities through Club sponsored events and loppets.
- ▶ Whitehorse has the capacity, expertise and infrastructure to host local, regional and national events that help sustain the Club and allow our athletes to compete in front of their home community.



Key Strategies

1. Work with Cross-Country Yukon to plan for and develop the capacity needed to effectively host competitive racing events such as Haywood Ski Nationals and to prepare for the 2027 Canada Winter Games.
2. Work with membership and Cross-County Yukon to ensure that everyone, from beginners to experts, can access the programs, instruction, coaching and support they need to develop their skills and abilities.

The WCCSC is highly valued in our community and an important part of our family life! I can't wait to see where we are headed as a club - I know it's going to be wonderful!

a Club volunteer

TRAILS AND FACILITIES



What This Priority is About.

With over 1,400 members we are one of the largest clubs in Yukon. We manage and care for an 85-kilometre trail system that is one of the most accessible and extensive in Canada. These trails are at the heart of the cross-country ski experience. Maintaining the quality of the ski experience through trail maintenance, grooming, lighting and snow-making is key to a safe and enjoyable ski experience. Our efforts have financial, operational and environmental implications. We must spend our resources wisely to ensure that members can enjoy a high quality skiing experience for a significant portion of the winter. We must also be proactive in adapting to the impact of climate change on our sport and in mitigating the impact of our sport on the climate. As reflected in the 2020 membership survey and stakeholder responses, there are potential benefits and synergies associated with a closer connection and partnership with the biathlon community. The Club's tenure over its trail network is an ongoing concern for which more formal arrangements are desirable. Finally, we understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to significantly impact operations and that we must take steps to ensure the safety of our community.

What Success Looks Like.

- ▶ Skiers at all levels of abilities can access a system of accessible, safe, challenging and well-groomed trails, including trails for those who wish to ski with dogs.
- ▶ The designation needed to host national competitions is maintained.
- ▶ The ski trail system accommodates a number of Nordic ski sports and harmonizes with other trails in the Mount McIntyre area that are used by our members and the wider community.
- ▶ Measures are taken to adapt to the impact of climate change on our sport and to mitigate the impact of our sport on the climate.
- ▶ The club secures more formalized long-term tenure arrangements that provide the certainty needed when making long-term investments in trails and facilities.



Key Strategies

1. Explore the development of infrastructure (such as a 'mini-clubhouse' in the Stadium), and new trails and trail access points to reduce congestion during peak hours.
2. Develop an asset management strategy to facilitate a transition to equipment that optimizes development and management of the trail network, while also reducing staffing, operational and environmental costs.
3. Work with Biathlon Yukon, Sport Yukon, City of Whitehorse and others to explore the feasibility of further integrating the sport of biathlon within our facilities and infrastructure.
4. Work with membership, government and environmental organizations to assess our current environmental footprint before developing a long-term climate change policy and plan.
5. Work with Yukon Government and the City of Whitehorse toward renewed and more certain tenure arrangements to replace, expand or strengthen the current seasonal License of Occupation.
6. Conduct a comprehensive safety assessment of the trail system, equipment and the Chalet, and implement identified recommendations to improve or enhance safety.

As I get older, it's apparent that having places to sit and rest are things that I'm aware of. I think we have an amazing number of programs now - well stocked rental system, basic ski supplies, school programs, adult ski lessons, etc. I think we should try to live within our means, and keep things simple.

a Club Member

FROM THE MAY 2020 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY – 460 RESPONSES



TOP SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SURVEY:

1. Programs for specific demographic groups (women, seniors, new arrivals to Yukon, etc.).
2. More social events.
3. Ability to purchase and enjoy food and beverages on site.





OF 460 MEMBERS SURVEYED:

- **98** percent of members surveyed (460) are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with quality of the trails and trail system;
- **84** percent 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the Club demonstrates a clear commitment to safety (and the two main suggestions to improve safety? Greater compliance with skier 'code of ethics' and policies, and more safety stations on the trail system);
- **54** percent are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the ability of the Board of Directors to effectively represent and manage the collective, best interest of members; and
- **79** percent agree that the cost of a season pass is set about right;
- **14** percent of members surveyed agree that the Club has provided volunteers with sufficient incentives, training, safety, comfort, support and recognition;
- **45** percent agree that, aside from skiing, the chalet is a great place to socialize with family and friends;
- **55** percent believe snow should be made to maintain a corridor that connects with Selwyn's Loop (a higher elevation) - **10** percent believe the Club should never make snow under any circumstance;
- **66** percent of members surveyed are satisfied that the Club provides sufficient support and attention to other winter sports options such as fat-biking, biathlon and snowshoeing.

CLUB GOVERNANCE



What This Priority is About.

This priority addresses the need for strong and effective governance that is policy-driven, results-oriented and attentive to the needs of the membership. Effective governance means ensuring that the diverse needs of our membership are carefully considered when making decisions, within the context of available resources and long-term sustainability. It also means a renewed focus on Board effectiveness and carefully delineating the roles and responsibilities between the Board and staff. Finally, it means keeping a close eye on financial stability and developing new mutually beneficial partnerships by strengthening positive and productive relationships with other stakeholders, including Cross-Country Yukon (the sport's governing body), other Nordic sport organizations, sponsors, funders and government as well as with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

What Success Looks Like.

- ▶ We are financially, environmentally and operationally sustainable.
- ▶ We are a transparent and accountable organization, committed to open and honest dialogue with membership and key stakeholders.
- ▶ We have effective policy-based Board governance, and motivated, well-trained staff.
- ▶ We have effective working relationships with Yukon First Nations, partners and sponsors.



Key Strategies

1. Continue the transition toward and implement policy-based governance.
2. Work with Cross-Country Yukon to formalize roles, responsibilities, timelines, communication protocols, joint planning and other relevant matters.
3. Further explore partnership opportunities with other Nordic sport organizations that advance mutually-beneficial interests.
4. Develop a staff retention, recruitment and training plan to ensure we continue to have the professional capacity we need to meet our operational needs and to achieve our strategic goals.
5. Develop a Board succession plan to ensure Board continuity and to facilitate efforts to ensure that our Board is representative of membership and the general population.
6. Re-engineer and reinvigorate our corporate sponsorship strategy.

As Indigenous people, we believe in the spirituality of the land and animals, and view cross-country skiing as a platform to wellness, healing and a way to motivate youth to belong to something.

a Yukon First Nation Club member



About our members:

- 63 percent ski for fitness training or competitions;
- 83 percent ski to socialize with my friends and family;
- 41 percent ski to exercise with their dog;
- 60 percent ski at least 10 times a month;
- 60 percent have been members for over a decade.

"Thanks to the Board and volunteers for all the hours they put into keeping the club running. I feel really fortunate to have such a great club in town."

a Club member



For more information, please contact us:

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