

# Yellowknife Ski Club

## 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan

### Snapshot

The Yellowknife Ski Club (YKSC or the club) has been an integral part of the Yellowknife community since it incorporated as a society in 1968. It is 100% volunteer run with a strong and committed membership of more than 500 people and an annual operating budget of just over \$200,000. The Yellowknife Ski Club is a member of Cross Country NWT, which is both the Territorial Sport Organization for cross country skiing with Sport North, as well as the NWT division of Nordiq Canada, the national sport governing body. The club is governed and managed by a Board of 12 directors. The club maintains and manages approximately 14 kilometres of groomed trails, snowshoe trails, a biathlon range, a fully equipped ski chalet that is open to its members 24/7 and a tent frame at Banting Lake.

Supported in part by Cross Country NWT, Nordiq Canada and the City of Yellowknife, the club also provides a range of volunteer-run, nationally developed programs and services, which include:

- trail development, maintenance and grooming;
- ski programs for a range of ages and abilities (*the biathlon program is not currently accepting new biathletes due to a lack of volunteer interest*);
- access coach training and certification for coaches, race officials and groomers;
- ski races and an annual loppet;
- a range of social events throughout the season; and
- a discount arrangement with Overlander Sports.

### Membership

The YKSC has a strong and committed membership base. Many of our members also volunteer. A recent membership survey showed high member satisfaction overall. The membership of the YKSC has been steady over the past few years and we feel we are well-positioned to grow, but we will need to better understand how to reach out and attract new members.

Increasing our membership would have many important benefits, including:

- increasing our revenues, allowing us to improve our trails, programs and facilities;
- increasing our pool of potential volunteers to sustain and improve our programs and services;
- strengthening our position as we prepare to renew our land lease; and
- allowing us to make a stronger case when applying for grant funding.

We recognize that there may be barriers to entry that include cost, access to equipment and a perception that the club is only for those with some experience. While we cannot address all of these barriers directly, we can try to learn more about what might attract new members and we can take potential barriers into consideration when planning our communications and promotions.

## *Governance*

We take pride in being a large, yet entirely volunteer-run organization. This model requires significant commitment from members and a strong governance system. To maintain the club's assets and take on new projects we must effectively maintain and renew our pool of volunteers. We take a team-based approach that offers people different ways to get involved that align with their interests and skills.

One key issue that requires immediate and focussed attention is the expiry of the club's land lease in 2026. There is uncertainty as to how the ongoing land claim and self-government negotiation with the Akaitcho Dene First Nation will impact the land tenure in our current location.

Financially, our club is very stable; however, if we want to take on any new projects or be able to take advantage of new opportunities, we need to seek out new funding sources.

As a club, we value and hope to grow our relationship with Cross Country NWT (CCNWT). Our club can also benefit greatly from a wide variety of material available through Nordiq Canada. Maintaining strong linkages between the Cross Country (CCNWT) Board of Directors and the YKSC Board of Directors will benefit our members and club operations.

A pan-Canadian "Declaration for the Prevention of Harassment, Abuse and Discrimination in Sport" was signed in Red Deer, AB in February 2019. As a result, both national and territorial sport organizations are developing Safe Sport policies and protocols, which will require implementation at the club level. We anticipate that policies will be forthcoming through CCNWT in the next year that will guide our programs and travel to help keep our athletes safe at all times.

## *Facilities and trails*

The YKSC has excellent facilities overall. Our chalet underwent a significant renovation in 2018-19, thanks to a grant from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, as well as community donations, discounts and in-kind contributions. However, trails are by far the most important feature of the club for members; a recent club membership survey identified improving and/or expanding the trails as the top strategic priority for the next five years. It is also expected that trail improvements would be key to attracting new members. Improving/expanding trails is an expensive undertaking and should be done with proper analysis and planning. In the short-term, there are immediate improvements that can be made to make the trails safer and more user-friendly. More significant improvements, trail expansion and development of multi-use or alternate use trails (i.e. fat biking, dogs, walking, snow shoeing) are all possibilities, but additional consideration is needed to ensure the choices will be supported by our membership and will add value to the club overall.

## *Programs*

Providing a diverse set of high-quality ski programs is a way that we attract and retain members. Our programs are currently a strength, but we believe there is room for improvement in a few areas. The recent member survey rated programs as the second highest area of focus for the strategic plan. Because our programs rely heavily on the availability and quality of our volunteer coaches, supporting and training coaches is imperative for successful programming. Clarity of and consistency between programs is also required in order for participants and volunteers to fully understand objectives and progression.

# YKSC strategic plan summary

## Our mission

*A succinct description of we do, for whom and to what benefit.*

**The Yellowknife Ski Club mission is to:**

- promote cross country skiing and biathlon;
- provide the Yellowknife community with opportunities for growth, development and enjoyment through skiing;
- support other organizations that promote outdoor activities that complement skiing;
- provide members, athletes and volunteers with a safe and healthy environment; and
- provide well-run programs and events that are consistent with club values and goals.

## Our vision

*An aspirational description of the future we hope to create.*

*The Yellowknife Ski Club is a community and a place. We foster a love of winter and nordic sport for all ages and abilities, providing members with diverse opportunities to develop their skills and reach their potential. Our trails and facilities are valued as a focal point for community activities and active living throughout the year in a vibrant and healthy city.*

## Our values

*Our values describe the character of our club, what matters to us, and how we conduct ourselves.*

- **Being 100% volunteer run** – *We rely on, and reflect, the interests and strengths of our volunteers.*
- **Acting with accountability, respect and integrity** – *Our board and our members take responsibility for their words and their actions. We treat the club, its facilities, other members and the environment with respect. We are transparent in our governance and relationships.*
- **Being inclusive** – *We welcome people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.*
- **Being member-centered** – *Our members are at the heart of our club and we strive to provide them with value for their membership.*
- **Keeping it fun and healthy** – *We don't take ourselves too seriously and remember to have fun. We are family-friendly and promote active, healthy living through our programs and events.*

## Goals and objectives

Broad strategic building blocks of our vision and the concrete and measurable ways we will know we are making progress.

MEMBERSHIP	GOVERNANCE	TRAILS	PROGRAMS
<p><b>GOAL #1</b> Grow our membership by maximizing retention of existing members and attracting new people to join the club</p>	<p><b>GOAL #2</b> Maintain a stable, safe, sustainable, and well-managed volunteer organization</p>	<p><b>GOAL #3</b> Improve the overall value of our trail system for our members and to attract more and new users</p>	<p><b>Goal #4</b> Attract more people to our programs and help them progress along their development path</p> <p><b>Goal #5</b> Ensure a consistent high quality of coaching for all programs</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p><b>1.1.</b> Achieve a year-over-year increase in total membership</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> Maintain or improve current level of member satisfaction</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> Increase participation in our programs and events</p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p><b>2.1.</b> Secure a new long-term lease arrangement by 2025</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Achieve an overall increase in number of members who volunteer</p> <p><b>2.3.</b> Have a complete and up-to-date set of policies that enables directors to act within their authorities and budgets</p> <p><b>2.4.</b> Maintain a financial situation that accommodates all required assets management activities each year, and provides the flexibility to make strategic investments</p> <p><b>2.5.</b> Adopt a Safe Sport protocol for all programs.</p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p><b>3.1.</b> Improve member satisfaction with our trail system in terms of safety, user-friendliness and quality</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> Maintain a team of volunteers for quality trail maintenance and grooming</p> <p>Also, see <b>objective 1.1</b> regarding increasing membership</p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p><b>4.1.</b> Increase the number of participants in our programs</p> <p><b>4.2.</b> Increase retention of participants through our program path</p> <p><b>4.3.</b> Provide all coaches with the necessary training</p>

## Actions

What we will do to achieve our goals and objectives over the next 5 years.

THEME	ACTIONS
<p><i>Membership</i></p>	<p><b>Action #1: Maintain and get additional value from existing communications and contact with members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain website and Facebook page</li> <li>• Maintain member newsletter and targeted email distribution</li> <li>• Do member survey every two-three years</li> <li>• Use event and programs forms to gather targeted feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #2: Develop an advertising and promotion plan focused on attracting new members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote all benefits of and address potential barriers to skiing</li> <li>• Increase promotion of Overlander Sports’ rental service and discount</li> <li>• Increase use of social media to reach broader networks</li> <li>• Link promotions to specific locations, activities and seasons for greater impact</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #3: Identify ways to further incentivize membership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Overlander Sports to actively cross-promote rentals and memberships</li> <li>• Explore ideas for other discounts and cross-promotions</li> <li>• Partner with Cross-country NWT on outreach efforts to attract new people to Nordic sports</li> <li>• Draw upon resources from Nordiq Canada and other Nordic clubs across Canada</li> </ul>
<p><i>Governance</i></p>	<p><b>Action #4: Set up a land tenure working group and develop a land tenure plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information and do a situational analysis to assess risks and options</li> <li>• Identify potential resources, advocates and facilitators</li> <li>• Develop our “value proposition” to land owners</li> <li>• Open a land tenure dialogue with key players including the City of Yellowknife, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and possibly the GNWT</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #5: Develop an annual Board workplan that ensures review and updating of policies, and directors’ roles and responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include orientation to Board policies, roles and responsibilities of directors</li> <li>• Check existing policies, roles and responsibilities for alignment with strategic goals and objectives</li> <li>• Include in forward agenda planning to allow Board members time to prepare</li> </ul>

THEME	ACTIONS
	<p><b>Action #6: Develop a long-term asset management plan (5-10 years)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a working group to develop and recommend the plan to the Board</li> <li>• Consider both ongoing management and potential strategic improvements</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #7: Strengthen relationship between the YKSC and CCNWT and Nordiq Canada</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicate Board member to relay news, resources and requirements from CCNWT and Nordiq Canada to YKSC.</li> <li>• Appoint Director responsible for implementation of Safe Sport protocols, once developed.</li> </ul>
Trails	<p><b>Action #7: Set up a trail orientation program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide method, tools and schedule for members to get in-person orientation to trails based on their interest and abilities</li> <li>• Explore this as a possible fundraising opportunity for the HP program</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #8: Explore potential to support and promote non-Ski club trails</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a working group to make recommendations to the Board</li> <li>• In consultation with CCNWT, examine and assess liability and insurance considerations</li> <li>• Could include basic grooming support, mapping and promotion via club channels</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #9: Develop a trail improvement plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a working group to develop and recommend the plan to the Board</li> <li>• Identify both short-term improvements and longer-term projects</li> <li>• Link to the asset management plan</li> <li>• Implementation through next strategic plan</li> </ul>
Programs	<p><b>Action #10: Develop an annual coach training plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In consultation with CCNWT, keep track of which coaches have and need training</li> <li>• Work with CCNWT to identify barriers to coach training and options for addressing them</li> <li>• Work with CCNWT to promote advance schedule for training to include in club calendar of events</li> </ul> <p><b>Action #11: Develop an overview of the program path for skiers at our club</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw upon resources from Nordiq Canada</li> <li>• Can be used to support coaches and to communicate with members</li> <li>• Cover the spectrum of ages, skills and motivations</li> <li>• Emphasize access points and supports available along the path and linkages to other organizations as appropriate (e.g. funding bodies, territorial organizations, etc.)</li> </ul>

<i>THEME</i>	<i>ACTIONS</i>
	<b>Action #12: Conduct an assessment of our existing programs to identify gaps and opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="457 233 1850 298">• Drawing upon resources from Nordiq Canada, set up a working group to report and make recommendations to the Board</li></ul>

## Implementation timeline

	Action	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 & Next strategic plan
Membership	Action #1: Maintain and get additional value from existing communications and contact with members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain website and Facebook page</li> <li>Maintain member newsletter and targeted email distribution</li> <li>Use event and programs forms to gather targeted feedback</li> </ul>			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct membership survey</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain membership survey (every 2-3 years)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate &amp; adapt plan</li> </ul>	
Governance	Action #2: Develop an advertising and promotion plan focused on attracting new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Overlander to actively cross-promote rentals and memberships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore ideas for other cross-promotions</li> <li>Partner with Cross-country NWT on outreach efforts to attract new people to Nordic sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement outreach efforts as identified</li> </ul>	
	Action #3: Identify ways to further incentivize membership				
	Action #4: Set up a land tenure working group and develop a land tenure plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up working group, gather info &amp; do analysis</li> <li>Develop value proposition</li> <li>Identify resources, advocates &amp; facilitators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop land tenure plan</li> <li>Begin dialogue with key players</li> </ul>		
Trails	Action #5: Develop an annual Board workplan that ensures review and updating of policies, roles and responsibilities	Ongoing			
	Action #6: Develop a long-term asset management plan (5-10 years)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up working group</li> <li>Develop draft plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize and approve draft plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement plan</li> </ul>
	Action #7: Set up a trail orientation program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the idea &amp; identify who is willing to take it on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate &amp; adapt program</li> </ul>	
Programs	Action #8: Explore potential to support and promote non-Ski club trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a working group</li> <li>Examine and assess liability and insurance considerations</li> <li>Develop recommendations for Board consideration</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement approved recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate &amp; adapt</li> </ul>
	Action #9: Develop a trail improvement plan			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up working group &amp; develop proposed plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Board-approved plan through next strategic plan</li> </ul>
Programs	Action #9: Develop an annual coach training plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop plan and present to Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate &amp; adapt</li> </ul>
	Action #10: Develop an overview of the program path for skiers at our club			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the idea and identify who is willing to take it on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement through next strategic plan</li> </ul>
	Action #11: Conduct an assessment of our existing programs to identify gaps and opportunities			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a working group</li> <li>Recommendations to Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement through next strategic plan</li> </ul>



