



Wostaweá Cross-Country Ski Club Annual General Meeting (Virtual)

By Zoom Videoconference
7:00 pm, April 13, 2022

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Executive

Don Wright (President), John Ball (Past President), Ian Burgess (Treasurer & Registrar), David Cameron (Trails Lead), Nadya Ladouceur (Member Engagement Lead), Barb Ramsay (Communications Coordinator), Michel Poirier (Youth Programs Lead), Nicki Violette (Secretary)

Members at Large

Mary Murdoch, Nathalie Comeau, Pierre Boucher, Ida Orenbach, Jane Hadley, Katrina Mulherin, Marie-France Turcotte, Floriane Place-Verghnes-Wood, Toon Pronk, William Kerr, Rob Hughes, Mel Soicher

1. Welcoming Remarks – Don Wright

- Don welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Review of Minutes from Last Annual General Meeting (April 21, 2021)

- Barb Ramsay motioned to approve the minutes, Ian Burgess seconded. All in favour. MOTION CARRIED.

3. President's Report – Don Wright

- This season required a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan rather than COVID Operational Plan. Don thanked everyone for complying.
- Don thanked the grooming teams at Killarney and the Woodlot for all their hard work this winter.

- Season highlights included:
 - MCAF celebrated its fifth anniversary.
 - Hosting the first in-person race since the beginning of the pandemic (CCNB was thrilled and very appreciative).
 - A new outreach program formed with the Under One Sky Family Centre (kudos to the team of volunteers involved).
 - The Ski Team celebrated its 10-year anniversary.
- Conversations are still ongoing with the City to try and improve trail conditions at Killarney. New signage is expected for next year. Some trails will be designated for walking only, some skiing only, and some mixed use (mixed use closest to the lodge). The City was very reluctant to do more (no by-law enforcement), but plan to do public education. Hopefully this will work.
- The Executive recently developed a No Skier Left Behind policy to support families who want to ski but need financial support. If requested, a skier's lesson fees will be waived and support given for their equipment lease from Radical Edge. For skiers who have outgrown the lease program, the Club will purchase them skis, poles and boots. The policy will be in place this fall.
- Don commented on how great it is that the Club is growing and how special it is to see how involved Wostawea is in the community.
- Eric commented that it would be nice to do something special for the Club's 50th anniversary next year. It was suggested that a committee be struck for anniversary celebrations. Don will reach out to Raymond regarding the Club's history and potentially having something written.

4. Ski Team Report – Eric Luiker

- The Ski Team celebrated its 10th anniversary this year.
- Season began with an exchange with a club summer training camp. Skiers were exposed to high level athletes and coaches.
- New dry land training for Track Attack and Level 4s helped bring more experience into the Ski Team and create a link with Jackrabbits.
- Due to size, the team was split into three groups (junior, intermediate, senior). Eleven adults were involved with 6 coaches (again, significant growth). Eric anticipates the team continuing to grow.
- A strong mandate has been made to get a paid, full-time coach for the Club and Ski Team. The work currently being put in by volunteers is huge and a dedicated person is needed.
- Eric expressed his thanks to this year's sponsors (Ian, the Radical Edge, and others – see report for details).
- This will be Eric's final year as a full coach (he will continue to be involved but is looking for a new head coach). Eric will also be active with members attending the Canada Winter Games, taking place on PEI winter 2023.
- Don thanked Eric and his team for all their amazing work.

5. Masters Group Report – John Ball

- John began by explaining that the Masters Group was previously part of the Ski Team but typically only had 3-4 participants. As the youth program grew, it was decided that the Masters Group might have better luck if separated out from the youth.
- This year exceeded expectations with 30 people joining. The program ran three times per week (technique work and group skis), varying between skate and classic techniques at both Killarney and Kingswood.
- One goal of the group was to get more people to participate in races. This was not achieved this year (conditions and restrictions likely played a factor), but the hope is to build on that in future seasons.
- Overall was a good first year, but there is room to grow (more regular sessions and attendance).
- John thanked Fran Robinson who helped organize and Nathalie and several other members who assisted.
- Eric suggested the Masters Group could take a bus to Gatineau to race in future years. John thought this would be a great motivator.

6. Racing Events Report – David Cameron

- **Maritime Cup:** Had to be virtual. Spread over three days due to weather.
- **NB Cup #1:** Managed to host the race at the end of February. This was the first live race in two years and turned out very well (lots of smiling faces). Due to weather, courses were changed a few days prior (Pisten Bully was unable to groom in the valley due to rain fall). 62 racers participated. Start was opposite to years past – if trails get homologated, all future races will begin this way.
- Eric thanked David and his team for pulling off this in-person event – it was just the spark needed to get the program up and running again.

7. Youth Programs Report – Michel Poirier

- **Jackrabbits Program:**
 - Despite COVID and the weather, it was another fantastic season.
 - Start of lessons was postponed by two weeks due to COVID. Program was extended until later in March, but unfortunately the weather did not cooperate. In the end, only 6 of 8 scheduled lessons were completed.
 - Lessons were offered in two time slots due to space in park and in parking lot. This allowed coaches to coach two groups if desired.
 - Despite setbacks, everyone seemed to have a good time and Michel only heard positive feedback.
- **Dry Land Training:**
 - Dry land training was offered for the first time for Track Attack and Level 4. Two lessons were held per week (Tuesday and Saturday)

from mid-September until late November (18 lessons total). This helped further align lessons with what Nordiq Canada wants to see.

- 18 pairs of roller skis were purchased to make training more fun for kids. Success exceeded expectations. The plan is to purchase 6 additional pairs for roller skis for next year.
- **Ski Terrain Park:** Most of the earth work was completed by the City in the fall, next will be some final grading and landscaping (sod and trees). This will be a great place for skiers young and old to practice hills and a 1 km circuit and will be enjoyed by many for years to come.
- **Coaches Training:** Efforts are ongoing to recruit new coaches. Hoping to offer training next year for new recruits.
 - Floriane inquired about the Community Coaching Course that took place in the fall, as the on-snow portion was never completed. Michel replied that it was unable to take place due to COVID restrictions in January and prior commitments for the trainers in February, but the intention is to offer it again next year.
- Michel thanked Mary for the hot chocolate station, exclaiming that it puts a smile on everyone's face every week.
- Don thanked Michel for all his amazing work this year.

8. Adult Programs Report – John Ball

- **Nancy Hamilton Award:** John went off the agenda to recognize Michel Poirier as this year's winner of the Nancy Hamilton Award for his long-serving volunteer efforts for the Club, including:
 - Coaching in the Jackrabbits program for many years;
 - Leading the Jackrabbits program since 2018 through tremendous growth and challenges (COVID);
 - Helping support and grow the Track Attack group and pioneering the first dry land training for Track Attack and Level 4;
 - Using his professional skills as an engineer to help bring the Ski Terrain Park to Killarney;
 - Helping Don run many loppets, creating the Lone Line Café with his family, and so much more.

Michel thanked the group and indicated it was only possible due to all the fantastic people he has had to work with.

- **Adult Lessons:** A great success again this year – 66 participants and 20 coaches. Many thanks to David for his leadership with this program.
- **Skate Ski Clinics:** Very successful and popular – largest numbers yet this year with 35 skiers and 7 wonderful coaches (listed in the report). John expressed thanks to everyone who helped.
- Don thanked John for all his work this season.

9. Outreach Programs Report – Mary Murdoch

- Mary expressed how outreach is at the heart of Wostawea, expanding the horizons of everyone involved. While much outreach is ad hoc, a few years ago through Trail for Life (TFL) it became more deliberate.
- This year's outreach included:
 - Learn to ski for newcomers to Canada through MCAF. This was the 5th anniversary of the program.
 - Learn to ski with indigenous neighbours. Hoping to expand this program in the future.
 - Hot chocolate – historical, delivers a welcome apres ski treat.
- More suggestions for outreach continue to be considered. Resources are limited (space, time, volunteers, leaders), so initiatives must be strategic and structured.
- Mary proposed that an Outreach Committee be formed, consisting of a chair, an Executive member, and a leader from each outreach program. The role of this committee would be to foster planning, delivery and follow-up of outreach initiatives, recruit volunteers, meet with partners, address resource needs and entertain new suggestions. The committee would also be responsible for applying for funding and allocating funds. This group would help support successful outreach initiatives and give a direct line of connection between the Executive and the Outreach Committee.
- Don asked Mary to send him her proposal via email to take to the Executive.
- Don thanked Mary for all her incredible work. Barb added her thanks and commented that the Club will be regathering soon to wrap up the strategic planning process which was previously paused due to COVID. This process will flow up into the discussions that happen over the next few months. An invitation will be sent out for anyone wishing to participate.
- Don, Mary, Barb and Nadya applied for a grant for more skis and equipment for the outreach programs. Don is optimistic the funds will be awarded.

10. Recreational Programs Report – Nadya Ladouceur

- Nadya thanked all those who took lead on this year's recreational programs. Despite having fewer events due to COVID and the weather, recreational programs were still a success.
- **Senior Ski Tours:** gathered as often as they could.
- **Sunday Ski Tours:** Only one took place, but it brought out some new people and conditions were good. Hopefully there can be more next year. The Nashwaak Watershed Association expressed interest in hosting – perhaps this could be added to the calendar next year.
- **Loppet:** Nadya thanked Don, Michel, Barb and Ian for organizing the virtual loppet. 85 skiers participated over 3 days and over 900 dollars was raised for the Fredericton Homeless Shelter. This year's Morimanno Cup winners were the Jones-Healy Family.

- **Para Skiing:** Claudette (CCNB) reached out late in the season asking if the Club could help a young female para skier get out skiing. A small group of volunteers was quickly pulled together and managed to take the skier out once (no opportunity to go again due to the short season). Many thanks to Fran and the volunteers who helped with this. Claudette mentioned she could organize a session for next year to help the group understand how best to support a para skier. The City also installed a new parking sign at Killarney for people with mobility impairments. Many thanks to Milda for her help making that happen.
- Don thanked Nadya for all her hard work and enthusiasm this season.

11. Vulnerable Sector Checks & Coaching Certification Database Report – Ron Smith

- As part of executive due diligence and to ensure the protection of vulnerable individuals (i.e. children, the elderly, the disabled, etc.), all coaches and volunteers are now asked to have a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) completed. A database was created to maintain these records and stay on top of when coaches are due for VSC renewal. Cooperation with this initiative has been resounding across the board.
- The database is also being used to keep track of completed coaches' training and coaches' registration and when these items are up for renewal.
- Don and Michel thanked Ron for this important work.

12. Trails Report – David Cameron

- This season was very short due to weather and lack of snow.
- **Woodlot:**
 - Having two snowmobiles allowed trails to be groomed effectively.
 - Two new groomers were trained this season (Rob Hughes and Andrew McNair).
 - Work done in the fall allowed trails to be groomed even when snow was minimal.
 - Better access to the Woodlot is needed, but there are many barriers. Some improvements were made this year to the Lian St. entrance courtesy of JDI. As the area is developed, a parking lot will be added, but this is several years down the road.
 - Better access is also needed for groomers.
 - Improvements to the connector are planned for this fall.
- **Nordiq Pulse App:** Skier expectations regarding reporting conditions are getting more demanding. For this reason, the Club is investing in the Nordiq Pulse App. Mel Sochier has volunteered to help move this forward.
- **Killarney:**
 - The Pisten Bully (PB) started late and finished early due to conditions. David suggested to the City that the PB be stored at the park during the winter season to provide more grooming time. The

City disagreed, as they feel the PB is best stored at their shop at Two Nations Crossing (currently no building at Killarney to store it). The long-term plan is to improve access to the park for the PB from Two Nations Crossing.

- Walkers on the ski trails is an ongoing source of conflict. Hopefully signage being put out this year and public education will help improve the situation.
- Much effort has been put in with the City to try and make things better. Communication about grooming has improved.
- The City implemented a trial use of an app typically used for snowmobile trails to report on grooming. It had many hiccups, so the Club suggested Nordiq Pulse (specifically designed for cross-country skiing) instead.
- The Ski Terrain Park was a great success. Due to lack of shade and ice, grooming became a problem late in the season.
- A trail was cut from the top of trail 6 to 7. This will be grubbed this year to hopefully allow for grooming next winter.
- The City plans to make additional improvements (details unknown) to help smooth the trails and allow the PB to be used earlier in the season and in lower snow conditions.
- An application was submitted to Nordiq Canada for trail homologation, which would allow the Club to host national events. The hope is the City will do the necessary work this year to bring the trails up to standard. David thanked Rob Hughes for his help with mapping and looking at the requirements for this.
- David acknowledged the significant contributions made by the Trail Builders (six local businesses) to TFL, which wrapped up this year (5-year commitment).
- Don thanked David for taking on this massive job and for all his hard work.

13. Communications Report – Barb Ramsay

- Barb explained how communications aim to communicate primarily with the Club's internal audience (i.e. members), but also skiers who are not yet members. Communication goals include encouraging all skiers to join and support the Club and communicating to the public and partners about all the incredible work being done.
- Barb gave an overview of the season's communication activities:
 - Newsletter: 36 sent this year (with Nancy Hamilton award going out next week making 37) to 1256 member units. 61% average open rate (25% industry average), 6% click rate (3% industry average). Barb thanked everyone who contributed content this season.
 - Facebook and Twitter: Metrics modestly increased in followers and page likes. Barb would like to develop a calendar so posts are more intentional.

- Website: Virtually unchanged (46000 visits this year compared to 46118 visits last year). Most popular pages are trail blog pages. Barb agreed with David that skiers are getting used to having quick trail updates. Skiers should be encouraged as much as possible to share their experience on the trails through comments.
- Daily Gleaner: A good relationship has been established with Bruce.
- Email: The Club easily receives 350-400 emails per year. Response time is less than ideal (can be a busy thing to do); Barb recommends having some volunteers to help manage this.
- Paul Jordan photography: Free to download, uploaded very quickly. A wonderful resource.
- Barb thanked Nadya, the newsletter content providers, Nicki and Peta for their help this year. Don thanked Barb for all her incredible work.
- Mary gave kudos to Barb for creating a newsletter that people want to open, explaining that it is very important for keeping Club members (including newcomers) engaged and connected, and giving them a sense of belonging.
- Floriane asked if there is any appetite for creating an Instagram account for the Club. This would be another way to show people what a great time skiers are having. Barb thought this was a great suggestion and said she would add it to her list. It was pointed out that this might be a good way to bring in the younger generation who are not on Facebook.

14. Member Engagement Report – Nadya Ladouceur

- Nadya reiterated how amazing it is what the Club accomplishes with only volunteers, and that it is important to recognize this hard work through volunteer appreciation events. This year's event is scheduled for June 9 (later timing worked well and was enjoyed by all last year).
- 197 people volunteered this year, with 21 different volunteer teams (some volunteered on multiple teams).
- While the list of coaches is getting longer, there is still a need for more (particularly with outreach programs). Nadya recommended a push next season to recruit more people for coaching and training.
- **Club Structure:** Nadya has been working on creating a Club structure to show the various programs the Club offers (competitive, lessons, recreational), and the links between them. This is still a work in progress but will help to identify where more volunteers are needed.
 - Mary asked where outreach falls within this structure. Outreach is currently included under lessons as it requires coaches.
 - Nadya is unsure how to fit in events (may require their own category). If anyone has any suggestions, please let her know.

15. Membership Report – Ian Burgess

- Membership numbers were good this year despite the snow.

- Slight decrease in 20-year-old category.
- Jackrabbits increased to 203.
- Record-breaking year for adult lessons (66).
- Racing Team had 33 members (incorrect in report). Eric noted there were international students and skiers coming in from different avenues this year.
- Maritime Cup numbers were down, largely due to weather. Loppet participation also decreased this year.

16. Finances Report – Ian Burgess

- **Revenue highlights:** had a very good year. Key revenue sources included government grants, youth and adult lessons, generous donations from members and hot chocolate donation.
- **Expenses highlights:** Maritime Cup and Loppet were revenue neutral (balanced revenue and expenses). Ski team budget was well managed. Youth lessons generated more revenue than there were expenses.
- Year began with \$68,000 and is ending with \$106,000 (huge increase). Still a few more expenses and revenue items to come.
- Eric asked why TFL is still showing income for this year. Ian is still receiving money this year and next from commitments from local businesses.
- Eric commended Ian for all his incredible budget work. Don thanked Ian for his wonderful suggestion to donate funds to the Fredericton Homeless Shelter and suggested this become a regular occurrence for the Club.
- **Paid Coach:** Eric expanded on his previous comments about the Club looking to hire a full-time coach, adding that Nordiq Canada offers funding to clubs for this sort of initiative. Additional funds would also need to be raised, which could lead to changes in membership structure. Eric expressed thanks to those who have already donated to this initiative (The Clarke family, Remsoft and the Radical Edge). As more information becomes available, it will be shared with members.
- **Killarney Facility:** Eric explained that the Executive has been exploring the possibility of building a facility at Killarney to better support Wostawea, as the Club has outgrown the existing space. This new space would be used for hosting events, equipment storage, waxing and supporting Club programs. A business proposal was developed (many thanks to Barb and Dave) and pitched to City government. This work is ongoing (nothing set in stone yet) but the hope is to have something to bring forward to membership in the fall. Don added that the seed has been planted with the City but they are not fully on board yet.

17. Election of New and Returning Executive Members – John Ball

- John explained how half of the executive positions are renewed on even-numbered years and the other are half renewed on odd-numbered years.

- Nominated for new two-year terms:
 - President: Don Wright
 - Secretary: Nicki Violette
 - Youth Programs Lead: Pierre Boucher
 - Competitive Program Lead: Eric Luiker
 - Coaching Lead: Ron Smith

- Continuing in 2022-23 (serving the second year of a two-year term):
 - Vice-President: Eric Luiker
 - Treasurer and Registrar: Ian Burgess
 - Communications Lead: Barb Ramsay
 - Member Engagement Lead: Nadya Ladouceur
 - Trails Lead: David Cameron

[Note: John Ball will continue on the executive as Past President serving the first year of a two-year term]

- **Don Wright** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed for the position of President for a two-year term.
- **Nicki Violette** agreed to let her name stand and was acclaimed for the position of Secretary for a two-year term.
- **Pierre Boucher** was nominated and acclaimed as Youth Programs Lead for a two-year term.
- **Erik Luiker** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed as Competitive Program Lead for a two-year term.
- **Ron Smith** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed for the position of Coaching Lead for a two-year term.

18. Closing Remarks – Don Wright

- Don gave special thanks to Pierre for stepping in as Youth Programs Lead. Pierre expressed how he is looking forward to bringing new ideas as well as implementing ideas Michel was unable to see through.
- Don thanked all the Executive for their incredible work this season and members for making the Club what it is today.
- Nadya made a special motion to thank Michel for everything he has done for the executive. John and Eric seconded the motion. All in favour.