



Wostawea Cross-Country Ski Club Annual General Meeting

Centre Communautaire Ste-Anne, 715 Priestman Street, Fredericton
7:00 pm, April 19, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Executive

Don Wright (President), John Ball (Past President), Ian Burgess (Treasurer & Registrar), Lise Bleau (Member Engagement Lead), Barb Ramsay (Communications Lead), Pierre Boucher (Youth Programs Lead), Nicki Violette (Secretary), Ron Smith (Coaching Lead)

Regrets: David Cameron (Trails Lead)

Members at Large

Mary Murdoch, Nathalie Comeau, Anna Healy, Toon Pronk, Jane Hadley, Eric Hadley, David Palmer, Erik Mooers, Susan Gavin, Rob Hughes, Liz Smith

1. Welcoming Remarks – Don Wright

- Don welcomed everyone to the meeting. He shared the sad news of the passing of founding club member, Angus Hamilton, and extended congratulations to Brigitte L'Heureux, who received the volunteer of the year award from the United Way and Volunteer Greater Fredericton.

2. Review of Minutes from Last Annual General Meeting (April 13, 2022)

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

3. President's Report – Don Wright

Don highlighted the following items from the season:

- Received a grant from Nordiq Canada to hire Anna Healy as coach. This was a joint effort between Barb, Eric and Don. David Clarke (Barb's partner) wrote

the contract. The contract will be used by Nordiq Canada as a template for other clubs (they were very impressed).

- Nadya moved away in September, so Lise Bleau (long-time member, parent and volunteer) stepped in as Membership Engagement Lead. Applause was given to Lise.
- Due to a health setback for David, Rob Hughes was recruited to be Maritime Cup lead. Applause was given to Rob.
- Don explained how a large part of his role is relationship building with the City of Fredericton. Things tend to move more slowly than desired, particularly where signage is concerned (directing walkers off trails, snowshoers to snowshoe trails, etc.), but Don believes they are moving in the right direction. The city did send groomers to Charlo this winter and David was very pleased with the last two grooming sessions at Killarney.
- Launched No Skier Left Behind (set money aside for families who cannot afford to ski). One skier took advantage, family wrote a lovely thank you note to Brigitte and the club.
- Worked on emergency protocols. With Mary, Ernie and Pierre's experience, now have a working document to be ready for the fall. Will also have an emergency kit at Killarney including fanny packs for coaches and a larger pack if someone must ski/snowmobile out. Someone on the executive will be designated responsible for health and safety. Mary added there is an interest in first aid training by leaders and building safety first into the culture of all club programming.
- Strategic Plan is proceeding at pace.
- Nordiq Pulse app was launched.
- Storage for grooming equipment was added at the Woodlot.
- One major goal is a lodge or lodge extension at Killarney. This is moving slowly, but hopefully will move forward with a 4-5 year plan. The city did make additional storage room available at the lodge.
- One of Don's final acts as president was to recruit a new president – Nathalie Comeau. Applause was given.
- John thanked Don for all his work and shared that Don is the winner of this year's Nancy Hamilton award. This will be properly celebrated at the Volunteer Appreciation event. Dave commended Don for always managing to maintain a sense of humour and cool and calm.

4. 50th Anniversary Celebration Report – Barb Ramsay & John Ball

- A 50th anniversary committee was struck in the fall and executed by in large everything it planned. Rather than host one large anniversary event, it was decided to integrate anniversary activities into existing club activities. This included:
 - Communications: logo design, special banners on newsletter, memory and history pieces (time capsules) in the newsletter (25

- over the season). Time capsules were largely membership-driven with many people stepping up.
 - Offered a 50 km distance in the Loppet (26 skiers took part).
 - Masters group challenged its members to ski 50 hilly trails or 50 kms. A few people participated.
 - Pierre, Nathalie and Lise took the lead on making Fun Day a very fun day including a bouncy castle, 50s themed music, cupcakes, etc. Kudos to everyone who made it extra fun and special.
- Eric remarked how he really looked forward to reading the time capsules every week. Barb heard this from many others and mentioned possibly extending the time capsules as there are still many rich stories to be shared.
- Barb thanked everyone involved on the 50th planning committee.

5. Ski Team Report – Eric Luiker & Anna Healy

- Eric expressed that there was a lot of good news out of the Ski Team this year. Anna has taken the senior group to the next level with more training and competitions than ever before, and it can be seen in the results. Brigitte has taken on the role of running the Junior/Intermediate group, which has also had great success.
- Senior Team: The biggest shift for the senior ski team this season is it is now a year long program, running from May – April. The team trains 6-7 times per week (big commitment) and is a strong, close unit. Team Wostawea was exposed to its first Canada Cup and is now known by Nordiq Canada. Friendships were formed with other clubs, and everyone was welcoming and willing to share their knowledge.
- Junior Team: Brigitte and Michel had the junior team doing quite a bit of dry land training. Brigitte's daughter earned a bronze medal in Joliette (big accomplishment!). The team had a fun year with great comradery.
- Anna would like to start thinking about how to incorporate university-aged students. Three skiers are attending UNB in the fall and plan to ski on the team. Can a UNB ski team be created? Something to consider. Two kids are moving away for university, so will be sad to see them go.
- Barb expressed how grateful the club is to have Anna as the lead. Eric added how there is now a strong foundation for moving forward. Don remarked on the ski team being a remarkable group of young people, coaches and parents.

6. Masters Group Report – John Ball

- John reported that this was the second season of the masters group. It drew lots of interest this year with 24 skiers signing up, but actual turnout was low.
- Technical work took place on Wednesdays and skis on the weekends. Fran, Nathalie and John acted as core leaders. Anna helped a few Wednesday sessions which drew the best crowds.

- Group is still a work in progress – leads are trying to determine how best to operate the group to meet the needs of the club and connect to the 30+ age group. They are open to ideas and suggestions. The intention is to keep going next year but perhaps scale things back.
- Don thanked John, commenting that it is a neat addition to the club and he looks forward to seeing how it grows in the future.

7. Racing Events Report – Rob Hughes & Eric Luiker

- Maritime Cup: Rob was happy to step in as lead this year. This was the first in-person, normal event in a few years. Lack of snow was a concern during leadup, but it came just in time. The event went well with just a few small road bumps. Numbers were good, though almost had the same number of volunteers as competitive skiers. Finishing times were fast. Anna commented on what a wonderful job Rob did, and everyone agreed. Lise remarked on the huge list of volunteers who helped. Don added that it takes a village and thanked Rob and his team for their work.
- Sprints: Took place on the Ski Terrain Park this year, which worked well. 29 participants – would be nice to have a few more, but still a good number. Eric asked if the sprints should be held the same weekend or separate from the Loppet. Anna commented that other provinces combine a timed hill climb (could be at Crabbe), classic or skate race, sprints and a loppet, crowning a nordiq queen and king the end – perhaps this is something NB could do. Don added he thinks it works well to have both events the same weekend.

8. Youth Programs Report – Pierre Boucher

- Pierre reported that this was the best Jackrabbits year since the pandemic with 165 participants.
- The schedule was the same as last year (two time slots). Will likely continue this format next season due to parking and coaches involved in two groups (kudos to those volunteers!).
- Two weeks were cancelled due to lack of snow and/or ice and cold. Temperature and conditions were otherwise good.
- Group warm up was run by Laura Davis – a great re-addition to the season.
- Fun Day was a big hit with bouncy castles, curling, canoe pull, tug of war, ski team setup, cupcakes, and more.
- There were 35 instructors this year (eight new). Canada Games posed a challenge (needed to recruit several coaches to fill the gaps). If anyone knows someone who might be interested in coaching, please send them to Pierre. Of 200 parents, only managed to recruit one this year.
- Eric mentioned that the unfinished Community Coaching training that began two years ago will be completed in the fall. Pierre added there is also interest in the Learn to Train training. Eric expressed that coach development is a major need.

- Pierre had hoped to do group photos for each group this year but was unable to do so (coaches or kids missing), but he did get a large group photo.
- Liz mentioned it would be nice to not have to cancel lessons the week of the Maritime Cup. Don said this could be added to the agenda for the fall. Eric suggested Jackrabbits could park at the beach that week and ski out to a location for hot chocolate.
- Don commended Pierre on a fantastic youth program, adding that the mugs were great.

9. Adult Programs Report – John Ball

- Adult lessons: Had a very successful season with more coaches than usual. Looking at some training options for coaches for future years and trying to build a more robust intermediate program.
- Skate Ski Clinic: More modest program held over two weeks early in the season. 38 people registered this year. Two, 2-hour sessions with groups of 5-6 skiers at a similar level and the same coach both weeks. Program is very popular (some return customers) and a nice revenue generator. John commented that this has been a great program to offer with a wonderful group of coaches, many of whom also coach in the mornings. It was asked if more sessions could be held in the future. John replied this is a possibility but could start to encroach on MCAF. David suggested a skate clinic could be held within the classic adult lessons (have one group for skate skiers).
- Eric Hadley mentioned that Jane used to offer lessons in Wilmot park in the evenings under the lights (the city used to groom there). Perhaps the city would groom again if asked. This could be a way to offer more lesson times.
- Don thanked John and Ernie for taking lead on the adult programs.

10. Outreach Programs Report – Mary Murdoch

- Mary shared Wostawea had three great partners and programs this year:
 - MCAF: 56 skiers registered and more kept showing up each week! Toon played a key role in recruiting coaches. Laura Davis and Kristie Heard also joined leadership. Program ran over five weeks (had to cancel one).
 - Under One Sky: Two events were held – one for kids from kindergarten program, one family event.
 - Kehkimin Forest School: Shelley took those kids (4–5-year-olds) under her arms. The group went out five times.
- Funding this year allowed for more skis to be purchased (including tiny sets for young children). The club now has 60 sets of equipment, providing great flexibility to help with Jackrabbits (e.g. skiers with improper equipment). Some thought must be given to how to manage equipment lending. Volunteer capacity and lodge rentals must both be considered.

- Don commented that outreach began as an impromptu program and now is six years in with some great partnerships, which is wonderful. He thanked Mary for all her work.
- Eric mentioned it would be great to have a world map showing where everyone comes from. Mary added that something missing this year that was fun in years past was the MCAF potluck. This helps build even more community (newcomers are keen for friendships that extend beyond skiing).

11. Recreational Programs Report – Don Wright, Pierre Boucher & Liz Smith

- Hot Chocolate: Pierre shared that Shauna was the new hot chocolate lead this season and did a great job. The best location was found to be near the hut (no sun in their eyes). Mary brought hot chocolate to the Lone Pine, which received positive feedback. Garbage was cut in half thanks to the carabiner cups. Four volunteers helped – special thanks were given to Peggy. A few points of feedback/lessons learned:
 - Looking for ideas to recruit more helpers next year.
 - Containers overflow/spill (cap is made for venting, not a seal). Something better would be nice.
 - Hoping to have a hot chocolate booth made for fun for next year. Still need to talk to the city about storage.
- Sunday Ski Tours: Liz explained that Sunday Ski tours are for people who want to see what is over the next hill. Quite a few people in NB maintain trails that could potentially be used (farmland in Woodstock, Nackawic ski association and Sussex were all mentioned). The hope is to have more ski tours next year, provided mother nature cooperates (more snow is needed). Liz pointed out that half of the participants are usually those involved in getting the trails ready, which is a whole other matter.
- Loppet: Don thanked everyone who helped this year. 163 skiers participated, the event turned a small surplus. Positive feedback was received around timing – people enjoyed that it was not competitive and family friendly (no chips were used, just the ski team race clock).
- Para Skiing: Dorothy Drost happily took on the role of Para Ski Lead this year. A few events were held, family members who are able bodied were able to try sit skiing. Dorothy was thrilled and wants to continue in this role.

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

- Ron thanked everyone for their cooperation this year. Now that the database is in place, things are getting easier, and a system is in place to protect skiers and coaches.
- Next fall, Ron will start reaching out to those who are due to renew their vulnerable sector checks (VSCs) based on 3-year cycle.
- The database also captures levels of training completed by coaches. This is the most challenging information to collect. Many coaches are “in training”

or “trained” but not yet certified. Eric mentioned this is an issue for Nordiq Canada – Eric, Don, Nathalie, Ron and Pierre to have a side conversation.

- Eric commented that a position is needed for coach development, as it is getting too large. Perhaps it could be a new position, or part of Ron or another executive member’s role.
- Don believes in the next few years funds received from Nordiq Canada will be tied to having VSCs completed and thanked Ron for his important work.

13. Communications Report – Barb Ramsay

- Barb highlighted the following communications items:
 - Newsletters: wonderful content contributor team. 23 newsletters were sent in a 6-month period, plus 16 announcements (cancellations, special event details, etc.).
 - Facebook: Currently very passive. Could do a lot more to be proactive with posts.
 - Website: Popular way for people to get information. Most popular page was the UNB/Kingswood trail blog. Nordiq Pulse was a great addition (14,600 views). Big drop in Killarney blog views, perhaps due to Nordiq Pulse. A comment was made that a lot of people go to Skate Ski Fredericton Facebook group.
 - Gmail: receive emails in waves. Barb was not as quick to respond as she would like so recommends finding a volunteer to focus on that.
 - Gleaner: Had a great relationship with the Gleaner in the past. Barb sent them rich stories this year, but because of the change of ownership, had no luck (“I’ll stick it in my stash”). Can continue to develop/nurture that relationship.
- Anna commented that she spoke with the Ski Team about having a bigger Instagram presence. Next year a skier will be appointed to manage an Instagram account and will be responsible for scheduling posts. This person may need some help. Mary pointed out that Instagram would help target the demographics currently missing from the club.
- Eric commended Barb on a fantastic weekly Wostawea newsletter. Applause was given to Barb.

14. Trails Report – Don Wright

- Don shared a few high-level details from David:
 - A new storage container was put in at the Lian St. entrance to the Woodlot.
 - A gently used snowmobile was purchased.
 - David plans to purchase a new side by side to make grooming a lot easier.

15. Member Engagement Report – Lise Bleau

- Lise took over her role from Nadya. Activities organized this season included:
 - Volunteer appreciation event: Held last June at the Radisson.
 - Fall family picnic: Held on Oct. 8. Will consider this again for next fall. Nathalie remarked that this event is a good way to recruit parents and young skiers for dry land training. Eric added that it gets people engaged in skiing early.
 - Frosted Bites: A grant was received from CCNB and used to purchase signage, food and drinks for Frosted Bites. Lise had lots of fun with these events. 100+ people attended at Killarney (sunny, warm afternoon), ~100 people attended at the Woodlot (colder). Crowds at both locations were quite different. Additional Frosted Bites were added on Saturdays with the leftover food but were not as well attended. Will plan to hold gain next year on Sundays. One goal was to give people a sense of belonging and allow folks to connect and chat, which was achieved. A few people shyly asked about membership cost. Signage was too busy, so Lise had simplified signs made at the end of the season (“Wostawea makes skiing possible, join here”). Lise hopes to work with Barb on ways to reach more non-members to join.
- Mary commented that most social activities take place at Killarney and wondered if something more could be done to engage those in the Woodlot. This can be discussed later.
- This year’s volunteer appreciation event will be held at The Landing on June 1 at 7 pm.
- Don thanked Lise for all her work and for keeping things simple.

16. Membership Report – Ian Burgess

- 1004 members registered this year. Late start to the season might have played a factor. Still ahead of pre-COVID numbers.
- Biggest gap in registration is those aged 20-29.

17. Finances Report – Ian Burgess

- Ian highlighted the following points about this year’s budget:
 - Fiscal year end is May 31. August would make more sense as there are always expenses after May.
 - Ian was able to successfully balance his spreadsheet to zero.
 - Despite this year’s expenses (coach, events, etc.) still achieved a \$9,000 surplus.
 - Fees were raised this season.
 - The club is paying much more for gift cards for volunteers (only receiving \$10 off each \$50 card from Radical Edge, have a lot of volunteers). It was pointed out that Radical Edge has been very generous with their contributions for a long time.

- Assets increased quite a bit (snowmobile, ski inventory, storage container – used funds from Trails for Life).
- \$22,000 remains in Trails for Life.
- \$68,000 balance for this year.

18. 2023-25 Strategic Plan – Barb Ramsay

- The strategic plan is now available on the Wostawea website. Barb explained how it was an extensive process run by facilitators and included over 30 participants and a review committee. Barb encouraged everyone to take a close look and share feedback. Broader communications will be done in the fall, as well as a call for volunteers to help move things forward.

19. Wostawea: The Next 50 Years – David Palmer, Rob Hughes & Eric Luiker

- David Palmer, with input from Rob Hughes, Eric Luiker and Eric Hadley, wrote a letter to the Executive sharing a dream of finding a permanent home for Wostawea – land and a facility that can be managed and run how the club sees fit. While existing locations (Killarney and Woodlot) are convenient, what happens on those properties is not under the club’s control. The idea would not be to abandon those locations, but rather add a third location.
- The executive has reviewed the letter and given the green light for a search committee to be formed. Several people have expressed interest in helping.
- Dave, Eric and Rob had a preliminary meeting to discuss possible locations and criteria. They determined the property should be within 20 minutes of Fredericton, ~1000 acres, higher elevation (for better snow conditions and lower costs). Areas that fit the criteria and do not already have a lot going on include: Noonan Highlands, Marysville Heights, next to Killarney (but much seems to already be committed), Royal Road (not too far beyond McLeod Hill), Claudy Road/Carlisle, Keswick Ridge, Lower Kingsclear and Islandview/Silverwood.
- This will require a major fundraising effort. There are many different models and options to explore (e.g. partnerships, conservation easement, long-term lease, etc.).
- Rob commented on the positive change this could have in the club. A place for Wostawea to call its own would increase commitment and energy and provide security for the future. While this is a big ask, there is a lot of talent in the club and those involved are keen to move things ahead.
- Eric commented how the path forward is still unclear, but for now some thought should be put into determining priorities (find land, then create a space on the website to recruit people to help and gather ideas and feedback). He added that this is multi-year venture (not short term).
- Don commented that this is a very exciting initiative and Rome was not built in a day. Eric indicated he would try to get something added to the website.

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

- John explained how positions alternate so not all positions are up for the same time. That’s why Nathalie’s term is only for one year.
- Nominated for new two-year or one-year terms:
 - President: Nathalie Comeau (one-year term)
 - Vice-President: Eric Luiker (two-year term)
 - Treasurer and Registrar: Ian Burgess (two-year term)
 - Communications Lead: Barb Ramsay (two-year term)
 - Member Engagement Lead: Lise Bleau (two-year term)
 - Trails Lead: David Cameron (two-year term)
- Continuing in 2022-23 (serving the second year of a two-year term):
 - Secretary: Nicki Violette
 - Youth Programs Lead: Pierre Boucher
 - Competitive Program Lead: Eric Luiker
 - Coaching Lead: Ron Smith

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

- **Nathalie Comeau** was nominated and acclaimed as President for a one-year term.
- **Eric Luiker** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed as vice president for a two-year term.
- **Ian Burgess** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed as Treasurer and Registrar for a two-year term.
- **Barb Ramsay** agreed to let her name stand and was acclaimed as Communications Lead for a two-year term.
- **Lise Bleau** was nominated and acclaimed as Member Engagement Lead for a two-year term.
- **David Cameron** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed as Trails Lead for a two-year term.

Mary pointed out that Outreach is not included in the elections. This is not yet a position in the constitution – Nathalie and Don to take care of this.

21. Closing Remarks – Don Wright

- Don thanked Nicki for her unsung work and thanked everyone for attending.