

**SASKATOON NORDIC SKI CLUB  
VISION 2020:  
A 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club (SNSC) is a volunteer not for profit organization that offers fun and fitness for cross country skiing enthusiasts year round through various skiing and hiking activities, instruction, and events for all ages and skill levels. The SNSC is a member of the provincial sport governing body, Cross Country Saskatchewan (CCS), which is a division of Cross Country Canada (CCC), the National Sport Governing Body for cross country skiing.

In the spring of 2010, the membership of the SNSC identified a desire to focus resources on a specific trail network in or in close proximity to the City of Saskatoon with an associated support facility for future programs. To allow the SNSC to make decisions on trails and resource allocation, a strategic plan that outlines a vision, objectives and implementation procedures was required. The SNSC established a committee, Vision 2020, to guide the development of a 10 year strategic plan for recommendation to the membership in the spring of 2011.

### **1.1 About the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club**

The SNSC was established in 1968, formed when the Saskatoon Ski Club (established in 1928) split into Nordic and Alpine disciplines. The organization consists of a volunteer board (i.e. executive), that is elected by the membership and comprises sixteen positions, in addition to several committees. Executive members provide leadership and act as spokespeople for the various aspects of the club that they represent during monthly executive meetings from September to April of each year. The majority of the work completed within the SNSC is accomplished at the committee level. Permanent committees are established to carry out the club's various programs and activities. Two general meetings are held per year to consult with the membership, one in the fall, and one in the spring. In addition, the executive regularly communicates with the membership via the SNSC publication (the Kivilski), the website, and mailings. Revenue for programming and facility operations comes primarily through membership fees supplemented from grants from the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Ski Association (SASKI) and CCS.

Annual membership of the SNSC has historically ranged from approximately 400 to 500. Members are of all ages and abilities with families comprising the majority of memberships at 51%, followed by adults at 25%, couples at 11% and youth at 2%. The club has several programs that it manages including youth instruction, adult instruction, competition and biathlon (biathlon currently not active), touring and hiking, loppets, and blind skiing. Programs are mainly carried out at three facilities in Saskatoon and area that are maintained by the SNSC: Kinsmen Park, Wildwood Golf Course, and Eb's Trails.

The SNSC purchases and services equipment that is operated by dedicated volunteers to maintain classic and skate cross country ski trails in these areas during the ski season. The SNSC also maintains two cabins and two sets of pit toilets at Eb's Trails. The SNSC

currently uses City of Saskatoon owned facilities at Kinsmen Park and Wildwood Golf Course to carry out its youth and instruction, competition, and loppet programs. All facilities are on government owned land; Kinsmen Park and Wildwood Golf Course are owned by the City of Saskatoon, and Eb's Trails are located in the Nisbet Provincial Forest, 85 km north of Saskatoon.

## **1.2 The Vision 2020 Committee**

The Vision 2020 Committee consisted of the President, Past President, Secretary and Youth Programs representative. The role of the Committee was to initiate, coordinate and lead the strategic planning process through the recruitment of a strategic planning consultant, coordination of membership input and strategic planning session and review of the strategic planning document. The Committee will recommend the adoption of a 10 year strategic plan to the Executive for presentation to the membership at the Spring General Meeting for 2011.

## **2 THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Toni Villiers of Action Associates (the consultant) was contracted by the SNSC to provide a 10 year strategic plan document that reflects membership input and is supported by the Vision 2020 Committee by March 31, 2011. The strategic planning process entailed the following:

- Kick-off meeting with the Vision 2020 Committee (Dec. 16, 2010)
- Gathering of Membership and Stakeholder input on Vision and Priorities (Jan. & Feb. 2011)
- Development and agreement on Vision, Principles and Strategic Directions by the Executive and Vision 2020 Committee (March 12, 2011)
- Document preparation for approval (March 31, 2011)

## **3 MEMBERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

All members were presented with the opportunity to provide their input through an email survey on the following questions:

- 'What do you like and enjoy about the Nordic Ski Club?'
- 'What is the single most important thing that the club could provide, either right now or in the future to enhance your skiing experience?'
- 'If you had 3 wishes for the Nordic Ski Club, what would they be?'

In addition, surveys were available at the Kinsmen Park and Wildwood Golf Course facilities. Fifty-four surveys were returned and themes were summarized for each question (Appendix A).

Individual members were also contacted on a random basis to attend one of two focus groups. The consultant facilitated participants on the following questions:

- ‘How would you currently describe cross country skiing in Saskatoon?’
- ‘What is working with the Nordic Ski Club?’
- ‘What is not working with the Nordic Ski Club?’
- ‘What are your hopes and dreams for 2020?’
- ‘What barriers need to be overcome to achieve this?’
- ‘What are some ways to achieve our Vision?’

A total of 29 members participated in the two focus groups held on Feb. 3 and 10, 2011. All responses were recorded for each question (Appendix B).

Individual interviews were conducted with 5 key stakeholders identified by the Vision 2020 Committee. A stakeholder was defined as an individual or group/ organization that are either affected by decisions made by the SNSC or can influence the organization. The stakeholders identified were the City of Saskatoon, Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA), CanoeSki, Eb’s Source for Adventure, and the Provincial/National Sport Governing Body.

Individuals representing these stakeholder groups were interviewed on the following questions:

- ‘What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?’
- ‘What could be possible for the Nordic Ski Club over the next 10 years?’
- ‘Where should the Nordic Ski Club focus their efforts in order for this to happen?’

Responses to these questions can be found in Appendix C.

## **4 VISION 2020**

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club is a community of enthusiastic, engaged and supportive people who are advocates for Nordic Skiing.

We provide year round programs, activities and events that are fun, well organized and of benefit to our members and the community.

We provide a ‘home’ for skiing in Saskatoon that is comfortable and welcoming to all members and the community. Our ‘home’ has multi-purpose trails and terrain that accommodates all levels of ability.

We collaborate with stakeholders in providing a wilderness skiing experience for all levels of ability at Eb’s trails. Our trails in the Nisbet Forest are fun, safe and

welcoming to our members and the skiing public within the Province of Saskatchewan.'

## **5 PRINCIPLES**

In striving to achieve our vision, the SNSC considers the following principles:

- Are we inclusive and easily accessible?
- Are our programs, activities and events fun and do they promote health and fitness?
- Are we respectful of the needs of our members and volunteers?
- Do we strive for excellence in everything we do?
- Do we respect and appreciate the environment?
- Are our decisions transparent and accountable?
- Are we aligned with and supportive of CCC and CCS?

## **6 CURRENT STATE**

Using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, the following were identified:

### Internal Strengths

- good, dedicated, long term core of volunteers
- good coaches and officials
- beautiful trail system at Eb's Trails
- positive environment
- lots of members compared to other cross-country ski clubs in Saskatchewan
- great youth programs (Jackrabbits, Bunnyrabbits, Track Attack)
- great hiking and touring programs
- opportunity for Wildwood clubhouse access in winter months
- some track setting equipment
- full service club – diverse group of interests and people
- low fees
- good reputation
- represent all skiers in Saskatoon
- strong relationships with some stakeholders
- outdoorsy city
- fiscally responsible
- a plan
- MOMENTUM!

Internal strengths of the SNSC can be summarized as:

1. People – enthusiastic and involved,
2. Programs – varied and of good quality,
3. Trails – unique and easily accessible,

4. Timing is right.

#### Internal Weaknesses

- volunteer burnout
- not everyone using technology - affects communication
- executive transparency
- lack of executive support for Eb's trails
- perception that not all disciplines are equal

Internal weaknesses of the SNSC can be summarized as:

1. Perceptions of lack of transparency of executive decision making,
2. Not being inclusive,
3. Not retaining approximately 20% of membership from year to year.

#### External Opportunities

- many potential local locations for establishing a 'home'
- MVA is supportive
- lots of partnership synergies (e.g. running, hiking, cycling, canoe/kayak, ultimate Frisbee, biathlon)
- Government has money
- growing city
- Saskatoon Speaks is ongoing
- Kinsman Park and Area Master Plan Project being undertaken
- Leisure Services Branch of the City of Saskatoon is focusing on winter programming in 2012
- Saskatoon has a strong economy providing varied corporate sponsorship opportunities
- existing fitness and health promotion programs ( e.g. InMotion)
- CCC's current 2018 Strategic Plan ("It's Our Time!") has objectives around building capacity at the club level to feed athletes into the national high performance system.

External opportunities can be summarized as:

1. Key stakeholders, MVA and City of Saskatoon are ready for trail, facility and program development and partnership with SNSC,
2. The City population is growing and there is an opportunity to expand membership.
3. There is an opportunity to explore new partnerships e.g. InMotion, Corporations.

#### External Threats

- our physical location and climate
- lack of a Nordic 'winter' culture
- potential loss of grooming by the city
- Kinsmen Park re-development

- competition for use of a possible facility
- forest fire
- CCC & CCS changing programs and/or direction

External threats can be summarized as:

1. Areas where the SNSC has little or no control; e.g. location, weather, and natural events.
2. Areas where the SNSC can have influence on the outcomes and impacts on the club, e.g. Kinsmen Park and Area Master Plan and CCS/CCC.

## 7 STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Considering the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats, the SNSC will focus on the following areas:

1. **Organizational Leadership** – To provide leadership to ensure that the organizational structure, systems and processes support membership growth and engagement, volunteer recruitment and retention, and accountability.
  - 1.1 Objective – Develop a clear organizational structure that outlines roles and responsibilities of executive and committee members.
  - 1.2 Objective – Clarify volunteer roles, recognize existing volunteer efforts, and identify interested individuals from within existing programs to assist in volunteer recruitment.
  - 1.3 Objective – Obtain commitment from volunteers with a personal follow-up.
  - 1.4 Objective – Actively seek membership input and feedback.
  - 1.5 Objective – Engage the membership to participate in programs and events through a personal invitation.
  - 1.6 Objective – Follow up with past members to understand reasons for not renewing membership.
  - 1.7 Objective – Re-vamp the website to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. Include Executive meeting minutes, dates of next meeting, agenda, Vision 2020, and progress reports.
  - 1.8 Objective – Keep the profile of the club high in the community and within the membership.
  - 1.9 Objective – Encourage positive relationships between ski disciplines so that we are working together and not apart.
  - 1.10 Objective – Focus communication tools so that members know where to access all information with respect to club programs, activities, and facilities.

2. **New Projects** – To acquire a ‘home’ for Nordic skiing in Saskatoon.
  - 2.1 Objective – To establish a new committee for facility development in Saskatoon that is motivating and fun to be involved with.
  - 2.2 Objective – Conduct research and consult with other clubs to identify a potential location in addition to parameters for design of a building and trail requirements.
  - 2.3 Objective – Meet with MVA and City of Saskatoon to initiate discussions on possible location and supports available.
  - 2.4 Objective – Participate and provide a strong stakeholder presence in the Kinsman Master Plan development process.
  
3. **Partnerships and Fundraising** - To strengthen current partnerships and explore fundraising opportunities to support our new ‘home’.
  - 3.1 Objective – Establish a committee to lobby for and source out potential sponsorships (either financial or in kind such as design or construction support, etc.) in addition to identifying fundraising opportunities for our new ‘home’.
  - 3.2 Objective – To meet with and explore potential partnerships with funding bodies and/or other sports.
  
4. **Trail Infrastructure** – To maintain and improve upon the existing trail infrastructure in Saskatoon and the Nisbet Provincial Forest.
  - 4.1 Objective – Establish a committee to work with other stakeholders to develop a long term strategy for the continued maintenance and improvement of Eb’s trails.
  - 4.2 Objective – Coordinate a fall “Eb’s Day” event to involve the membership in the maintenance of the trail.
  - 4.3 Objective – Acquire better and more accessible equipment for all trail maintenance.
  - 4.4 Objective – Recruit and train trail grooming volunteers.
  
5. **Programs and Events** – To continue to provide fun, safe and enjoyable programs and events for all ages, abilities and interests.
  - 5.1 Objective – Develop new programs for experienced skiers (e.g. instruction, trips, technique improvement), and other growing groups within the City (e.g. Aboriginal youth, elderly) in collaboration with CCS and CCC where possible.
  - 5.2 Objective – Develop recreational events to coincide with higher level racing events to increase exposure to Nordic skiing.
  - 5.3 Objective – Encourage the existing High Performance Racing and youth development programs.
  - 5.4 Objective – Encourage the existing race series programs.
  - 5.5 Objective – Establish/enhance programs for spring, summer and fall competition training.

- 5.6 Objective – Promote higher level competitions for the City. Utilize corporate sponsorship if possible to bring in well known Nordic ski competitors, and involve media.
- 5.7 Objective – Encourage and enhance existing hiking and touring programs.

## **8 NEXT STEPS**

The Vision 2020 Committee will recommend that the Executive Committee approve this strategic plan and present it to the membership at the 2011 Spring General Meeting.

## **APPENDIX A – MEMBERSHIP SURVEYS**

### **Themes from Membership Surveys – 54 received**

#### **‘What do you like and enjoy about the Nordic Ski Club?’**

- great groomed trails in the city – convenient
- Kinsman is lighted, Wildwood has the clubhouse
- friendships – an opportunity to get out of doors with a welcoming group of people
- Eb’s trails
- Sunday ski tours
- a wide variety of programs and lessons
- fall hikes
- Newsletter
- Loppet being held in Saskatoon
- an activity my entire family can participate in
- the Blind skiers appreciate the trail being set on Saturday mornings
- a voice and advocate for Nordic skiing in Saskatoon
- reasonable membership fee – good discount for lessons
- HiPer group – fun Grapefruit cup races
- the core group of enthusiastic and friendly volunteer that work hard to provide full services
- a central community where skiers can congregate, organize activities, build up and maintain resources

‘I enjoy the fact that the club is a full service club with a wide range of activities for people of all ages and abilities. The two ski areas in the city are great, and Eb’s trails are a treasure. We have a solid Jackrabbit program, an active group of competitors, and lots of ski tourers. We also have Blind skiers and a few disabled skiers. We also have a hiking program for the off season. The club has tried to build a group of certified coaches, and racing support people. We also provide instruction for beginning skiers, children and adults. We also provide ski areas for the general public.’

‘Just wanted to let you know that I am so thankful for all the people that keep the club up and running. There are many of you that do so much that not everyone knows or sees the extent of what you do. THANK YOU!’

**‘What is the single most important thing that the club could provide, either right now or in the future to enhance your skiing experience?’**

- continuing provision of city ski trails is very important
- instruction for older skiers to upgrade their skiing technique – weekly workouts
- have better warm-up facilities
- wooded trails near the city – unused property near the wastewater treatment plant, along the riverbank
- knowing within a couple of hours whether trails have been groomed
- skate ski lessons, more focused 2x/wk for a month
- a club house to call home – Mendel?
- avoid burnout of volunteers
- continue to attract people to skiing
- additional lighting – snow making equipment
- coaching and support of junior skiers
- keep up Eb’s trails
- continue tours and fall hikes

‘The single most important thing is a dedicated facility – well maintained classic and skate tracks close to the city, with terrain (should be 1/3 each flat, climbs and descents) suitable for both recreational skiing and high level competition (loops with different difficulties), partially lit for nighttime skiing, lots of parking for races, loppets and youth instruction, a chalet with gathering/warming/changing space, instruction space, race office, kitchen, washrooms and a timing hut, a stadium area for loppets and races, some long hills to train on. All else in a ski club depends on this – “build it and they will come”.’

**‘If you had three wishes for the Nordic Ski Club what would they be?’**

1. A permanent facility – a Home
  - better warm up and washrooms
  - storage for tracking equipment
  - a stash of ski equipment available for a nominal fee – think Meewasin rink

‘It would be great to have our own LARGE clubhouse – a place to gather, a room to have classes or coaching clinics. A waxing room...a small kitchen, an area to have an ongoing ski, clothing and equipment swap? and exercise room with equipment? How big should we dream? Ideally, it should be in the city or very close to the city for convenience.’

2. Additional groomed trails around Saskatoon that are lit, have varied terrain and reliable snow.
  - lit trails at one venue
  - new snowmobiles – second Tidd Tech
  - snow making equipment
3. Recruit new members, retain current volunteers and engage current members in volunteering.
  - more financial benefits for club members
  - encourage younger, stronger members to assist in maintaining trails at Eb’s
  - get more volunteers – strengthen the volunteer base
  - focus on what matters most – long term sustainability of the club – prioritize based on resources i.e. volunteers and finances –can’t do it all

‘We have to figure out a way to recognize the builders of this sport and club in Saskatoon. A huge work load has been carried out by a few visionaries over the year. (example: a hill on the trail could be called McGibney’s climb, Sedgewick’s screamer, Butler’s Dive or Randy’s Ravine...you get the idea...)’

## **APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUPS**

### **Focus Group 1 – Feb. 3, 2011 15 participants**

#### **‘How would you describe cross country skiing in Saskatoon currently?’**

- delighted
- active – lots of opportunities – Sunday trails, groups of people to ski with
- lots to do for a broad range of ages
- easy access
- no elevation
- small group is greatly involved – down side is exhausted volunteers leading to burning out
- a large group are not involved in membership – don’t see the value of joining – need to make people aware of the benefits
- no bingo’s, or fundraising – good, unlike other groups where this is an expectation with being a member
- supportive
- lack of awareness from others who are not involved
- skiing is not part of the culture
- variable weather affects skiing
- friendly, social – like a big family group, best friends
- welcoming
- miss the old trails i.e. Sutherland beach, Victoria park
- trails are substandard
- great potential for using the river valley – a natural corridor for active transportation
- most people view skiing as recreational – need more opportunities for competition

#### **‘What is working with the Nordic Ski Club?’**

- Jackrabbits – 80-90 participants, has increased 3x since 2004 where there was 45-50 participants
- trails are well maintained
- the wildwood facility has completed the trails
- membership is over 470 – primarily family base
- Eb’s trails – good setting, maintenance, shelters
- well trained coaches/officials, however when there is a Provincial event they are not available for the club
- club is accessible through the website
- Sunday ski tours
- on-line registration process for the loppet

**‘What is not working with the Nordic Ski Club?’**

- no recreational programming for youth 11-14yrs., only competitive
- Kinsman facility is inadequate – no water, washrooms – size limits the number of participants in Jackrabbits
- terrain at Kinsman – 2.5 km with limited elevation
- lack of ownership and commitment from membership to volunteer
- current volunteers need to let other help
- Blackstrap trails and facility are not usable – snow mobiles are using
- competitors are at advantage because of the terrain and elevation
- lack of elevation for recreational skiers – afraid to try more difficult trails
- no transitional trails
- when google ‘hiking’ there is no link to the website
- more people needed for trail maintenance in the fall
- general lack of awareness
- need to actively recruit for volunteering for activities
- website need work

**‘What are your hopes and dreams for 2020?’**

- more people are active
- a quality facility – ‘build it and they will come’ –lighted, elevation, snowmaking, multi-purpose trails for dogs, an indoor facility, ski rentals, parking, ‘a home’
- partner with summer sports
- Saskatoon is known as a winter city, skiing is integral to that and you can commute on skis along the river valley
- claim the northside trail
- there is a large group of active seniors
- ‘Eb type’ trails close to town
- integrate the schools with skiing activities
- partner with other winter activities i.e. snowshoeing
- don’t lose Eb’s trails – perhaps travel with a bus
- there is as culture of skiing
- a buzz of communication i.e. website, website, ski rentals by the river
- education – increase awareness –provide a good initial experience for children, offer parents lessons with children

**‘What barriers need to be overcome to achieve this?’**

- capital funding for a facility, land use options
- need to establish partnerships
- expand volunteer base and engagement of members
- Leadership and Vision

**‘What are some ways to achieve our Vision?’**

- make a strategic plan for a facility
- improve the website to tap into the membership skills – achieve notification of volunteer opportunities – special skills can be identified – opportunities for training
- on-line registration
- have some kind of ‘open house’ event (with wintershines?) to encourage interest
- once plan is in place ask people for specific help with an estimated time line – need to know your membership so you can use their skills and interest
- vision implementation team – people with time, enthusiasm, drive, leadership to take plan/vision and make it a reality – volunteers needed by leadership is key!
- teach club members to be ambassadors – greet all like they are new friends
- more ‘pro-active’ consideration of volunteers
- club hire a person (full/part time) to run activities, help president to run the club!!
- use social media to connect i.e. facebook, etc.
- maximize opportunities at Kinsman & Mendel
- offer ski instruction at daycare and after school programs
- special Olympics team?
- target new moms – offer care for babies while they ski
- do an exchange with a great club in Quebec
- Communication through; website, posted information at ski trails, connect with schools
- Expand and welcome volunteers to help with the work of the club
- establish a direction and strategize
- begin discussion with MVA and the city to begin negotiating a potential plan
- advocate for cross country skiing
- ski club needs to partner with other clubs (biking, canoe) so that facility is used in all seasons
- federal or provincial funding
- fund raising
- an education program for school groups or other groups with media (newspaper, videos, TV sport or internet sites)
- the SkiFit North program was a great program for kids that was fun and instructive
- we could expand our presence with advocating and leading
- collaborate with the MVA!!
- engage the membership and create excitement (ask the membership for experts that can help the vision)
- create a plan to gather support from other user groups
- Fundraise, create a focused plan to support the capital requirements
- poll membership for areas of expertise, connections to funding sources
- form a large facility committee
- get more help (labour) from city to develop and maintain trails!
- education – awareness within club and public

Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club

Vision 2020

March 2011

- club employee to do the day to day so can free up volunteer time and energy
- visibility and marketing – website with online discussion – media group to do video feature form promotion – greater integration into Winter Shines: free downtown ski clinic, riverside loppet
- partner with other groups – snowshoeing, biathlon, summer activities – running, rollerskiing, hiking
- partner with prominent industry
- get to council through Meewasin
- committed effort by a core group of tireless people
- partner with dog walkers

**Focus Group 2 – Feb. 10, 2011**  
**14 participants**

**‘How would you describe cross country skiing in Saskatoon currently?’**

- it’s a growing sport that you can do throughout your life
- facilities are limited
- flat terrain
- appreciate the groomers
- it’s free once you have the gear
- a great sport, however not ingrained in the Saskatoon culture
- there is a diverse skiing community – young/old, recreation/competitive
- anyone can do it – even if you can’t see
- like to get out doors
- low level of respect from the powers that be
- accessible
- active
- competitive aspect
- fitness group

**‘What is working with the Nordic Ski Club?’**

- large turn out for youth programs
- the fall hikes – a lot of hikers that don’t ski – smaller turn out for the Sunday ski tours
- full service club – all aspects, youth, recreation, competitive, independent
- fellowship – welcoming club – friendly
- yahoo site allows communication with other
- track setting at Kinsman and Wildwood
- Eb’s – wilderness ski – 52 km groomed tracks – warming huts, not flat – culture of respecting the facility
- 12 members in PA, Rosthern, Hague
- enthusiastic leadership
- growing membership – increase 14% this year – increase 67% in 5 years
- majority of members don’t participate in organized programs
- Eb’s trails – provides a higher profile in the city and surrounding communities
- Kivilski – 90% receive electronically
- communication is good
- blind skiers (13) receive support – financial, programming, coaching
- there is support for other disabled skiers
- there is a pool of volunteers willing to do tasks
- member of CCS

**‘What is not working with the Nordic Ski Club?’**

- training facilities for completion is not adequate or easily accessible
- the Kinsman ‘chalet’ is inadequate – no water, washrooms
- maintain accessibility to all – be mindful of any barriers
- all trails are interrupted by walkways or walkers with dogs
- no home
- website is not updated
- Eb’s has dogs even though good signage
- filling executive positions is difficult
- trouble getting volunteers for Eb’s
- not enough publicity or public awareness
- Winter Shines was a low priority
- awareness of member of yahoo user group
- lack of public funding
- the general public assumes that the city grooms Kinsman/Wildwood
- no foot print – no visible presence in the off-season – easier to change the trail
- city hasn’t recognised/priorized Nordic skiing compared to other sport
- not having a home – no washrooms

**‘What are your hopes and dreams for 2020?’**

- a place to call home with uninterrupted trails, with elevation change, within the city
- snow making
- a chalet with a place to ‘pee’
- property adjacent to Eb’s trail to run a Loppet with exclusive access
- recruit and retain skiers as members – every skier is a member
- Jackrabbits accommodate disabilities
- easier, effective maintenance at Eb’s – grooming equipment stored on-site
- more recognition/support by city hall
- skiing becomes apart of the winter culture
- partner/collaborate with ‘like’ sport groups
- SkiFit Saskatoon
- ski teams at the University, high schools
- involvement with physical education
- making Saskatoon more Senior friendly – target this age group and encourage membership
- more winter activities for youth

**‘What barriers need to be overcome to achieve this?’**

- availability of property
- a SeaCan at Eb’s
- funding for equipment, infrastructure
- volunteer resources
- higher profile
- need to determine highest priority
- a facility

**‘What are some ways to achieve our Vision?’**

- ways to overcome barriers
- approach MVA for possible properties which may be used – water treatment plant, Beaver Creek
- for a higher profile seek volunteers to do publicity
- advocate, educate for cross country skiing re: health benefits
- facility – association with MVA seems a good fit – in same area that they manage – Beaver Creek may not be the optimal place because of distance from Saskatoon
- equipment at Eb’s seems an easy thing as well, require funding and a SeaCan – seems that can be done if the Sask Government agree to have a temporary structure put on site
- create a committee to draw up a plan to present to MVA – Beaver Creek area is a very exciting prospect for a home – biggest barrier to overcome is funding for this development and ongoing maintenance
- Beaver Creek sound like a good place if possible to make and maintain hilly trails there – we need people to work on this
- cross use of facility with summer groups – mountain bikers, trail runners – possibility of trail hard surfaced for roller skiing?
- target different age groups in different ways
- give skiers opportunity to donate – the PA model of paying for a light pole worked – ask government to match funds
- communicate to membership regarding benefits of having a ‘home facility’ – have to sell this vision
- determine sources of funding that may be available for programs
- continue to increase membership for volunteers
- recruitment on website, Leisure Guide, Sunday Sun
- partner with high schools, physical education teachers to offer ski experiences
- to welcome kids with disabilities and integrate adults i.e. blind skiers into programs & events
- Beaver Creek is a good possibility
- Kinsman – keep as much the same as possible despite the influx of Billiton money!

## **APPENDIX C – STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

**Stakeholder:** City of Saskatoon

**Contacts:** Roxanne Melnyk,  
Open Space Consultant, Community Services Department

Gerald Rees  
Parks Superintendent, Infrastructure Services Department

### **What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?**

- there are a large number of people who ski who are not members of the club
- engage non-members in a visioning process, provide an opportunity for input – this could assist in expanding membership
- Leisure Services is focusing on winter programming in 2013, there is an opportunity to be apart of this process and determining what programs are offered and to provide delivery providing it is cost neutral
- Trail maintenance and grooming – currently there is an interested lead groomer who provides grooming on a ‘volunteer’ basis – there are no dedicated funds specific to trail maintenance, it comes out of the irrigation budget – there is an opportunity for the club to take on this aspect – ‘Why are we both providing trail maintenance and grooming?’
- Master Plan for Kinsman Park – Aug. 2011 – club has been notified as a stakeholder and needs to identify needs with respect to this park – stakeholder meetings scheduled for March 22, 23, 24, April 13, June 15
- Open Space Consultant provides a liaison and point of contact role for the club within the city – there is an opportunity to improve this relationship, so that we are working together – can provide business plan template for the development of any initiatives – keep the consultant informed of the strategic plan so that the City administration can support the implementation

**Stakeholder:** Meewasin Valley Authority

**Contact:** Michael Velonas  
Resource Planning Manager

**What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?**

- the MVA's 100 year plan refers to active recreation while balancing the need to maintain an ecological site – we would like to increase the winter activities, linking trails as a travel corridor and Nordic ski usage on trails specifically:
  1. Beaver Creek
    - moving the old Meewasin skating lodge to this area with a desire to use this to expand into Nordic skiing
    - Ryerson Technological Institute has chosen this site as a possible candidate for their 'Design Build' program – this could help to facilitate in Nordic skiing
  2. North East Swale
    - this is a significant ecological habitat, however would like to expand this area as a corridor
  3. North West Trail (Factoria site)
    - desire to extend trail to Waneskewin
  4. Cranberry Flats
  5. Chief Whitecap Park
    - city has taken the lead on this and the formalization of implementing the design is taking place
  6. Clark's Crossing
  7. Cosmo, Diefenbaker Victoria Parks
    - will be extending the south trails to connect with the South Bridge
  8. Maple Grove (Leisure Land)
    - outside of 10 year plan as there are still lease holds until 2012
- Chappel Marsh – Ducks Unlimited, contact Barb Hanbidge, Education Specialist 665-7356 – outside of Meewasin jurisdiction, however they currently have Nordic trails
- RM Dundurn has land adjacent to the military site which may be a consideration for trail development
- process for trail development involves approaching Meewasin (Doug Porteous, Manager Education) and the City with ideas/strategies – laying trail is not considered an improvement and does not need to go forward to the Meewasin Board for approval

**Stakeholder:** CanoeSki

**Contact:** Cliff Speer  
Business owner  
CANSI instructor & Club member for 32 years

**What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?**

1. Leadership
  - in the 80's there was strong leadership
  - currently the President is a 'go getter' with a number of followers on the board
  - there is a tendency to keep a low profile & follow the status quo. Change seems to be a scary prospect for a lot of board members
  - more leader types (self starters) who can take independent initiative to make things happen will be critical to realizing any long term vision.
2. Administration
  - historically has at times tended to be inept (e.g. my suggestion to install signage on Kinsmen Park ski trails took 3 presidents & almost 4 years to get accepted)
  - volunteers either lack the skills and/or training to provide good administrative support
  - expectations and clarity of role for various positions is missing – 'Who are we and what is our role?' (Executive & committee roles haven't been defined, or if they have, it isn't apparent)
3. Mindset
  - the "historic" culture of the club tends to be insular, 'ivory tower', academic oriented
  - anything of a commercial or advertising nature tends to be viewed negatively (e.g. my request to put a navigation course notice in the newsletter was rejected)
  - reluctance to negotiate, lobby, or influence other key players in x-c arena (e.g. city grant for track setting hasn't changed since inception years & years ago)
  - reluctance to form alliances with other key players who could potentially benefit the club & further the interests of x-c skiing (e.g. my suggestion to consider joining Sask Trails Assoc was rejected)
4. Communication
  - Communication between the Executive and the membership needs to be improved. Executive members need to understand the importance of

timely and effective, positive communication (e.g. the delays, non-responses, negative responses I've received over the years to many of my suggestions/recommendations has been very discouraging)

- there is no dedicated public relations person – a critical area to be an effective organization
- at times the Executive acts like an exclusive group – having discussions & making decisions, but not involving and/or informing those that are impacted by those decisions (e.g. the “Pedals to Planks” proposal had a direct effect on the adult instruction program, but nobody informed me about it)
- Executive seems to have lost sight of their primary role to serve the membership, instead focusing on running their own club within a club

### **Where should the Nordic Ski Club focus their efforts over the next 10 years?**

#### **Develop a strong, dedicated, skilled leadership base from which to select Program Heads**

- Develop volunteer recruitment, training, reward and recognition policies & programs
- Review organizational structure and terms of reference for positions
- start “hand picking” the volunteers with potential abilities & desire to fill positions & train them for the roles they will perform. Don't default to filling positions with the least reluctant person because nobody else wants to do it.

#### **Develop an effective communications strategy**

- Clean up the existing communications problems
- Develop a Public Relations policy & get an effective leader working on it
- Explore & develop an effective web-based communications program

#### **Consider operating the club on a more “business-like” basis**

- Form partnerships and alliances with external organizations & businesses to promote x-c skiing in S'toon
- Consider fund-raising partnerships for conducting programs or capital purchases

#### **Explore options for a dedicated X-C skiing facility in or near S'toon**

- Investigate how other organizations have procured facilities for their sports/programs
- Get involved in City planning – new neighborhoods, multi-use parks, etc (if they can build lakes, why not a x-c skiing park?)
- Get involved in lobby work – raise the profile on x-c skiing needs/concerns, make presentations to City Council, etc.

#### **Get on the health band wagon – or better still, lead it!**

- Raise the profile of x-c skiing as the best outdoor winter exercise option to produce healthier citizens
- Lobby the City, health care providers, Provincial Gov't, etc.

**Equipment management and trail grooming**

- These are two separate roles
- Need policies and training
- Recognition and honorariums for this
- Acquisition of new equipment should be adequately planned for well ahead of procuring it – how & where it will be used, stored & maintained over the long term (e.g. new grooming equip purchased last year had no storage area when it arrived. Also, currently, it is only being used at one location & remains idle the rest of the time)
- There is potential overlap between the City & Club on grooming. How has this been defined & should it be re-considered on a long term basis?

**Stakeholder:** Eb's Adventure Sports

**Contact:** Kevin Robinson  
Business owner  
SNSC club coach; Sask XC Team Coach, 2011 Canada Winter Games

**What do you see as the strengths and/or weaknesses of the Nordic Ski Club?**

- what is unique and growing is the Grapefruit Cup – it is open to anyone who wishes to race – it was dormant in the '80's and has re-emerged and grown – there are 25 regular racers – have FIS bibs, charge \$2.00 to participate, email list generates the start list, have access to the Wildwood clubhouse, participants take turns timing, etc.
- the Jackrabbit program has grown and I have my staff involved in this

**What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?**

- the new track setting equipment has been a positive move
- the facility at Wildwood needs lighting, snow making, snow fencing – these improvements would guarantee early skiing and the potential for athletes to train at home vs. moving out of province
- to have good trails, need consistent coordination of grooming – there are a list of volunteers who are willing to track set however they are currently not being utilized – need a regular schedule of grooming – it takes 2-3 hrs. to do Kinsman/Wildwood and 12 hrs. to do Eb's trails
- need to pursue funding/donation opportunities – investigate Sport Legacy Program for sponsors – tax receipt
- Dogs on Ski Trails – there is a growing interest for 'ski jouring' (skier harnessed/pulled by dog) – need to have a multi-use trails to accommodate this, which would encourage new members
- Eb's trails – people assume that we are responsible for the trails -when they are approached in a negative manner at the site for having their dogs on the trail, it affects our reputation

**Where should the Nordic Ski Club focus their efforts?**

- automate on-line registration for events such as the Loppett which we sponsor
- develop a facility that is sheltered, regularly groomed with lighting/snow making and access to a shelter

**Stakeholder:** Sport governing bodies – Provincial/National

**Contact:** Dan Brisbin  
High Performance Director – Cross Country Saskatchewan  
Executive member – Cross Country Canada

**What opportunities and/or constraints need to be considered in developing a 10 year plan?**

**National level**

- the CCC strategic plan identifies two goals and targets that relate to the club:  
**Participation** – to achieve a domestic stature whereby Canadians recognize cross-country skiing as the ideal fitness, lifestyle, recreational and competitive activity for all regions of the country  
**Build the organization** – to improve the capacity of CCC National, divisions and clubs to operate as a unified, integrated and mutually supportive community providing the organizational structure required to implement CCC's Long-Term Athlete development model
- how these goals will be implemented at the provincial/club level is uncertain
- the recent successes at the National Level has raised the profile and helped to increase membership
- CCC coaching and program materials continue to provide a resource for club programs
- a barrier to coach/official development is the cost to individuals for time/travel

**Provincial level**

- CCS strategic plan – can align with mission/values and objective: to promote member clubs and to encourage development of more full service clubs in the province, target areas of coaches/officials, trails and facilities
- funding opportunities/supports available – MAP , Canada Winter Games, Equipment & Facilities grant, Provincial Coach grant (SkiFit North, SkiFit South?)

**Where should the Nordic Ski Club focus their efforts?**

- developing a better facility
- paid administrative support – sharing time with another sport?

## **APPENDIX D – VISION PRESS RELEASES**

At the Strategic Planning session on March 12, 2011, participants were asked to develop a Press Release which described their vision for the SNSC in 2020. The following were used in the development of the final vision statement.

### Press Release #1

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club is pleased to welcome all Cross Country Skiers to a Family day at their new multi-season facility.

This facility is located on the ‘old Factoria’ site in Silverwood. This is part of the club’s ongoing program of trail and facility development of 20 kms of trails that suit all ages and abilities.

Upcoming this winter is the hosting of the Western Canadian Championships in Saskatoon. Details to follow.

### Press Release #2

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club invites you to the Grand Opening of the new multi-purpose facility that accommodates:

- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Roller Blading
- Cycling
- Hiking
- Dog friendly trails

This new facility consists of 15 kms of easy to moderate and challenging trails. Five kms are lighted and three kms have artificial snow to extend our trail enjoyment.

Join us in the lodge, sit and relax by the fireplace and enjoy a hot chocolate from the concession...it’s on us!

Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club  
Vision 2020  
March 2011

Press Release #3

**Headline:** GRAND OPENING OF SASKATOON NORDIC SKI FACILITY WITH  
LIGHTED TRAILS AND SNOW MAKING FACILITES

**Related stories:**

- SNSC at record high of 5,000 members!
- Grand opening of Eb's Trails Provincial Park!
- Saskatoon racers medal at Canada Winter Games!
- City of Saskatoon dedicates permanent funding to Nordic Skiing!