



# 2020-2022 Strategic Plan



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There are many reasons we are fortunate to call Yukon home. Our easy access to groomed cross-country ski trails just minutes from Whitehorse's downtown core is certainly one of them. Cross-country skiing is easily learned and enjoyed regardless of age, ability or fitness level. It is also a sport where mastery, for those who seek it, can demand exceptional skills and fitness. However it is approached, it is a sport that can be embraced by all as a lifelong activity that supports a healthy lifestyle, community connection and time outdoors.

At the Whitehorse Cross-Country Ski Club (the Club), we are committed to excellence and innovation in striving to meet the needs, values and expectations of a diverse and passionate membership. From our humble beginnings we have grown our membership, expanded our programs and facilities, hosted high-level ski competitions as well as numerous community-based events and have even seen some of our members attain national and international excellence, including at the Olympics and Special Olympics.

Part of this commitment to excellence and innovation is having a well-considered strategic plan to guide our Club toward an even stronger future. In early 2020, we engaged Travis Armour of StrategyNorth Inc. to help us identify this future by engaging with a wide array of partners and stakeholders, including Cross Country Yukon (the sport's governing body), the City of Whitehorse, Biathlon Yukon, the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. We also conducted a comprehensive survey of members, garnering over 450 responses, on a wide number of issues, from how to respond to an ever-changing climate to how to ensure that our organization is inclusive and welcoming to everyone in our community.

This plan, which builds on the excellent feedback we received from 2015's World Café event, identifies four foundational priorities: the People, the Sport, the Trails and Facilities, and Governance. Under each priority is a brief overview of the main issues and the measurable strategies that we will implement to help guide us over the next five years as we look to address future challenges and meet future opportunities. These range from adapting to and mitigating our impact on climate change, addressing the evolving needs of our recreational and competitive membership, improving our outreach to the growing diversity of Whitehorse's population and hosting of ski events such as the Haywood Ski Nationals and the 2027 Canada Winter Games.

We appreciate you taking the time to read our strategic vision and our plan to achieve it, and we look forward to seeing you on the trails!

Our **vision** is of a vibrant and inclusive community of cross-country skiers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities where each member can access the programs, support and facilities they need to reach their aspirations.

**Our MISSION is to provide a high-quality ski experience by:**

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

## OUR VALUES

**We** embrace excellence and innovation in striving to meet the needs, values and expectations of a diverse and passionate membership.

**We** believe in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, and in building community and connection through sport.

**We** respect the values of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council on whose Traditional Territory we are grateful to experience our sport.

**We** believe that the safety of our members, day users, volunteers and staff is paramount.

**We** embrace diversity as a means to growing the sport and our community of members by ensuring that everyone can access the joys of cross-country skiing and develop their skills and abilities.

**We** are proactive in adapting to the impact of climate change on our sport and our community, and in mitigating the impact of our sport on the climate.

**We** embrace partnerships and collaborations with government, sport and community-based organizations, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

**We** conduct our governance with integrity and transparency and through open and honest dialogue with our membership and partners.

**We** honour and value the support of our sponsors, volunteers and dedicated staff.

# PEOPLE

**WHAT THIS PRIORITY IS ABOUT.** Cross-country skiing is an opportunity to enjoy and make the best of Yukon winters while engaging in a healthy outdoor activity with family, friends, colleagues and fellow competitors. It is in this spirit of community that we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and family-friendly environment that allows our members to connect athletically and socially, to enjoy some time in a beautiful natural environment, or to simply get in some great physical exercise. This priority also focuses on the need to continue to offer fun and engaging events to enhance the skiing experience, where members can come together to share their passion for the sport.

This pillar also highlights the need to continue to harness the passion and commitment of our members and volunteers as we continue to build on the successful legacy of those who came before. It also reflects our commitment to supporting diversity and inclusivity, in part by addressing potential barriers that some may face in accessing and participating in this sport.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

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

## KEY STRATEGIES

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

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

*a Club volunteer*



# THE SPORT

**WHAT THIS PRIORITY IS ABOUT.** Ask Yukoners why they believe that Whitehorse in winter is the place to be and they will likely point to being able to access incredible ski trails just minutes from the downtown core. We are proud of the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers to create and maintain a high quality trail system while keeping our facilities running smoothly. We constantly strive to meet the needs of members of all ages and skill levels by providing access to the instructors, facilities and programs they need to reach their goals. We also recognize that our efforts are a key building block to the development of a competitive racing program in Yukon for those who have this aspiration.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

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

## KEY STRATEGIES

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



# TRAILS AND FACILITIES

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

**WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.**

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

## KEY STRATEGIES

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

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

*a Club member*

# CLUB GOVERNANCE

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

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

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

## KEY STRATEGIES

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

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

*a Yukon First Nation Club member*



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US:

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