

# STAKE LAKE CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAILS



Annual Report  
2014-2015





## **STAKE LAKE SKI TRAILS operated by OVERLANDER SKI CLUB**

### **Executive Summary of Trails Operations in 2014-2015**

In our 24th year of operations snow conditions were marginal throughout the season and deteriorated rapidly after several periods of warm temperatures. As a result we closed in late February, much earlier than usual. Trail attendance was 8,889, well below our long term average. No days were lost but the season lasted only 79 days which is the third shortest on record. Snowshoe trail use was similarly affected.

Trail fees remained at the previous level for the year and revenues reached \$105,030, despite the short season. Trail operating expenses increased to \$91,447, including purchases of ski and snowshoe rental equipment, a second Ginsu and new map and interpretive signs. Depreciation was estimated at \$26,000 resulting in total costs of \$117,447 and a net loss of \$12,417. Costs were kept low through the use of many hours of volunteer labour. The estimated value of labour donations was \$27,960. The total net value of assets held by the club and used to operate the trails is \$413,000.

Trail use was promoted through the distribution of the trails brochure, the Club web page, the Cross Country BC magazine, participation in local tourism promotions and media releases.

The snow grooming machine and other equipment continued to perform well thanks to our dedicated crew of volunteers. Many volunteer hours were spent grooming track and maintaining equipment.

The washroom building opened in November 2014 and was officially opened in January 2015.

The trail system was used for teaching skiers of all ages and abilities. Special rates were again offered to all college students. The Ski S'Kool program was successful with 568 children and 17 schools and groups but numbers were reduced because of the short season..

The Club hosted the Canadian Masters championships, our Overlander Loppet and a Teck Cup, which is a ski event for provincial racers.

Overlander Ski Club has served 239,230 skiers since 1991 and plans to continue serving the people of the Kamloops area and the province in the 2015-2016 year.



## ***Table of Contents***

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### REPORT

- 1) INTRODUCTION
- 2) OVERLANDER SKI CLUB
- 3) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
- 4) MARKETING
- 5) PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ADMINISTRATION
- 6) TRAIL USE
- 7) FINANCIAL SUMMARY
- 8) STAFF
- 9) TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE
- 10) TREE REMOVAL AND LOGGING
- 11) TRAIL GROOMING
- 12) SNOW REMOVAL
- 13) EQUIPMENT
- 14) BUILDINGS
- 15) PROGRAMS
- 16) SKI AND SNOWSHOE RENTAL
- 17) SAFETY
- 18) SECURITY
- 19) CUSTOMER SUGGESTIONS
- 20) RECOMMENDATIONS
- 21) ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### APPENDICES

- A. FINANCIAL SUMMARY
- B. TRAIL USE BY USER CATEGORY
- C. BC CUP PHOTOS
- D. TRAIL FEES 2014-15

## In Memoriam

We said goodbye to another long time volunteer at Stake Lake this year.

Bob Furseth spent thousands of hours working to improve the trails for the people of Kamloops and was a member of the Trails Committee for 24 years. He was the joint first recipient of the Overlander Ski Club Distinguished Service Award in 2011. Thanks Bob!



Bob is wearing his favourite ski hat while receiving a gold medal at the Canadian Masters Championships at Stake Lake in February 2015.

# **Stake Lake Ski Trails Annual Report for 2014-15**

## **1) INTRODUCTION**

Overlander Ski Club operates the Stake Lake Ski Trails under contract with Recreation Sites and Trails BC. The contract requires the club to produce an Annual Report on the operation of the trails. This report must provide the management agency with the information necessary to monitor and audit the performance of the Overlander Ski Club in relation to the approved management goals.

Our management goals for the 2014-15 ski season, as in previous years, were:

1. To operate the Stake Lake Ski Trails in such a way that our customers, regardless of skiing ability, enjoy a safe high quality skiing experience each and every time they use the trails;
2. To promote the use of the ski trails by Kamloops residents, other area residents, and visitors to the area;
3. To improve the skiing facilities and trail maintenance equipment through volunteer efforts, public fund raising, and reinvestment of operating surpluses in order to raise the quality of the skiing experience in the coming year and in future years.

Overlander strives to provide facilities and programs that are a clear benefit to the Citizens of Kamloops and the surrounding area, and to our many visitors from afar. Our facilities are available to anyone regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, gender, religion, income or sexual orientation. We engage in long term planning to ensure that our programs and facilities are sustainable for the next generation.

Overlander wishes to thank our many supporters in the local community and financial contributions from government funding agencies.

The Annual Report is intended to provide the management agency with information to assess performance of the ski trail operation.

## **2) OVERLANDER SKI CLUB**

The Overlander Ski Club is a registered, non-profit society and has operated in the Kamloops area since 1981. The objectives of the Ski Club are to foster cross country skiing and ski racing and to assist in the development of skiers in the Kamloops area. The 2014-15 membership was 606 persons.

In the early 1980's, the club played a major role in the campaign to seek compensation for the destruction of the Bush Lake/Timber Lake ski trails during the construction of the Coquihalla Highway. This campaign led to the construction of the Stake Lake Ski Trails in 1986. Following a public competition, a trails operating contract was offered to Lac Le Jeune Resort. Over the next few years the club made numerous representations to the public management agencies concerning the poor performance of the contractor and the condition of the trails. When the contractor declined the obligatory offer of a new contract in 1991, the club was asked to manage the trails. The membership agreed, but not without many misgivings. The financial and

organisational commitments were thought to be close to the limit of our capability, given our status as a voluntary organisation without previous experience in the field.

Since 1991 the Overlander Ski Club has operated the trails with growing confidence under contract with the Provincial Government. The current contract runs until 2023. Public support has been strong, club membership has grown, and after 24 seasons of operations, the quality of the Stake Lake skiing experience is second to none in the province. The club continues to rely upon a dedicated group of volunteers to manage the trails along with a small number of paid staff. The value of volunteer time over the past season is estimated to be \$27,960, which is about 90% of the expense of paid staff.

### **3) TRAIL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Responsibility for the operation of the trail system rests with a Trail Management Committee which reports to the Executive of the Overlander Ski Club.

The 2014-15 Committee members and their responsibilities were as follows:

Bob Furseth	Trail maintenance (Bob retired in February)
Luke Guilherme	Equipment and track preparation
Chris Jones	Equipment and track preparation
Klaus Mey	Trail maintenance
Al Michel	Snowshoe trails
Lisa Palechuk	Trail maintenance
Alan Vyse	President, Overlander Ski Club
Joe Wlasitz	Radio system (Joe left Kamloops in 2015)

The 2014 Executive committee of Overlander Ski Club is as follows:

Alan Vyse	President
Neil Steinke	Vice President
Sandy Eastwood	Secretary
David Hallinan	Treasurer
Joan Bernard	Director - Membership
Roy Davidson	Director - At large
Vesta Giles	Director - Publicity
Luc Guilherme	Director - Trails
Dana Manhard	Director – Junior Programs
Bruce Tucker	Director – At large
Leslie Tucker	Director - Volunteers
Brian Vermey	Director – At large

### **4) MARKETING**

Our marketing efforts continue to develop an enhanced level of awareness of the Stake Lake Trails, Overlander Ski Club, and cross country skiing in general, in the Kamloops area. Our primary medium for marketing is the Club web page.



We also sought publicity for the trails through various promotions. The pre-season ski swap, trail opening and waxing clinics were advertised on radio, TV and in local newspapers.

Further improvements were made to the Club Web Page ([www.overlanderskiclub.com](http://www.overlanderskiclub.com)) as a means of serving our members and promoting the club and the trails system to others. The web page was updated daily during the ski season. A web camera and automatic weather station allow members and visitors to check trail conditions. Ski Trail and Snowshoe Trail maps were distributed free of charge to patrons.

Snow conditions were reported daily to area residents through the web page, our staff and our Snow Phone answering machine. The trails are also featured on the Snow Forecast site ([www.snowforecast.com](http://www.snowforecast.com)).

The Club hosted a regional level Teck Cup race in January. We also hosted the Canadian Masters Championships at Stake Lake followed immediately by the annual Overlander Loppet in February. A race was held on the snowshoe trails for the third year by “Dirty Feet” an independent race organization from Kamloops.

## **5) PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ADMINISTRATION**

On Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 2001, Overlander Ski Club signed a Recreational Trail Management Agreement with the B.C. Forest Service, Kamloops Forest District under authority of Section 170 of the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act. The term of the agreement was 10 years. In 2006, management responsibility for the trails was transferred to the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts, and then the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. In 2010, responsibility was transferred to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. The club signed a second 10 year agreement with Recreation Sites and Trails BC, which is part of the Ministry, in November 2011. A revised Partnership Agreement was offered to the Club in 2013 and signed December 10<sup>th</sup> 2013 by Alan Vyse, Club President and Noelle Kekula of Recreation Sites and Trails BC. This agreement ends in 2023.

## **6) TRAIL USE**

The trails were open for a total of 79 days from December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, and there were no closures for bad weather. Night operations continued and staff members were on duty at the trails from Tuesday to Friday from 4pm to 8pm.

A total of 8,889 skier days were recorded for the year. This is considerably below our long term average. Snow came relatively early but fell infrequently and the trail conditions deteriorated rapidly as a result of several warm spells. We were obliged to close the trails on February 22<sup>nd</sup> which is the earliest closure date to date. Trail visits declined for all ages compared to last year. Night visits declined the least, probably because skiing conditions were better at night during the warm weather.

The greatest use of the trails occurred on weekends. Saturday is now the busiest day of the week. The highest day attendance was 425. The highest weekly total of the year was during the

New Year holiday period (1,435 skiers). Recorded night use of the trails was similar to last year and there were more than 50 skiers on many nights (more than on many days).

Use of the snowshoe trails was steady throughout the year and the annual total was about 2/3 of last year (676 vs 972). Snowshoe trail seasons passes were sold.

We know that the total of skiers is more than the recorded total but this difference is not as high as in the past. Opening at night has allowed us to capture some of those who used to ski after hours. In addition, our staff members are often on duty well before official opening time and are aware of early morning skiers. Most of the skiers who ski before or after hours are club members. Skiers used the trails before official opening because snow on the trails was rolled several days before opening. There was also some minor use after the trails were closed at the end of the season. Entry to the trails from access points at the south end of the trails is a minor irritant ... people continue to access the trails without paying.

We sold a total of 487 season passes, including 30 families, covering a total of 608 individuals. Season pass sales were less than last season which is likely a reflection of the relatively poor snow conditions at the beginning of the season. 308 six-day passes were sold, also a decrease from last year. 1430 day passes were sold, much fewer than last year because of the short season and School visits decreased for the same reason.

Two free skiing days were held this season: at the beginning of the season and on Family Day. On Family day patrons were encouraged to bring donations to the Kamloops Food Bank. A substantial amount of cash and food was collected.

**Daily Ski Trails Use Record**

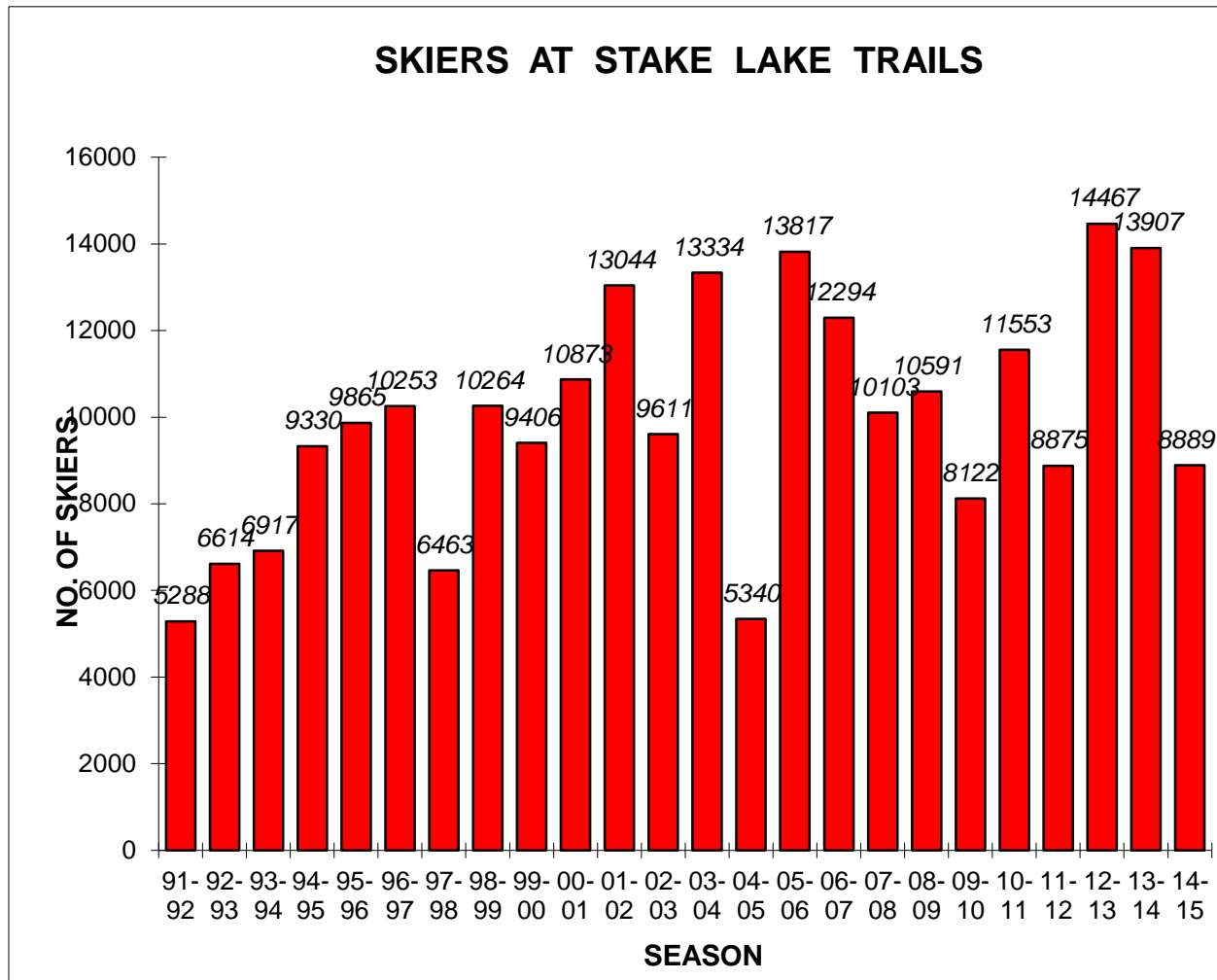
Date	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
17-Nov								0
24-Nov								0
30-Nov							108	108
07-Dec	101	29	9	0	3	2	56	200
14-Dec	110	25	18	77	29	51	197	507
21-Dec	116	60	79	112	89	177	227	860
28-Dec	274	115	59	178	260	178	371	1435
04-Jan	112	12	40	118	182	300	425	1189
11-Jan	355	79	87	244	197	239	362	1563
18-Jan	152	158	167	236	155	243	117	1228
25-Jan	107	54	0	43	11	46	153	414
01-Feb	102	46	64	208	142	116	100	778
08-Feb	77	79	10	66	66	33	103	434
15-Feb	131	5	4	3	0	3	16	162
22-Feb	11							11
01-Mar								0
08-Mar								0
15-Mar								0
22-Mar								0
29-Mar								0
total								<b>8889</b>
	1648	662	537	1285	1134	1388	2235	8889

**Snowshoe trail use**

Date	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
17-Nov								0
24-Nov								0
30-Nov							3	3
07-Dec	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
14-Dec	2	0	5	0	0	0	4	11
21-Dec	4	0	2	2	6	4	13	31
28-Dec	34	8	6	0	0	14	45	107
04-Jan	26	0	0	5	6	9	62	108
11-Jan	45	4	7	10	4	11	40	121
18-Jan	40	2	4	0	14	7	25	92
25-Jan	23	0	6	0	2	7	15	53
01-Feb	82	4	9	3	5	7	9	119
08-Feb	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	10
15-Feb	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	7
22-Feb	6							6
01-Mar								0
08-Mar								0
15-Mar								0
22-Mar								0
29-Mar								0
total								<b>676</b>
	277	22	39	22	37	60	219	676

### Ski Trail use in 2014-15 compared with previous seasons

The following figure compares trail use in the 2014-15 season with yearly use over the previous 23 years that the trails have been under Overlander Ski Club management. Mean attendance is 9,968 skiers per year and the total number of skier days is 239,230.



## **7) FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

At September 30th 2015, trail revenues were \$105,030, much less than last year. These revenues were from the sale of passes and rental of ski and snowshoe equipment. A further \$27,960 was donated in volunteer labour bringing total revenues to \$132,990. Operating expenses were \$117,447. The major expenses were employee wages and benefits, track setting and equipment, snow removal, insurance, fuel and bookkeeping. This year substantial purchases included a second track setter (Ginsu 2) and new signage. Depreciation accounts for \$26,000 of this total. The net loss for the year was \$12,417.

The financial position of the club continues to be sound. However, additional revenues are required to build reserves to replace machinery and improve trail facilities.

The trail buildings include the newly constructed washrooms, the day lodge or trailhead chalet and the machine maintenance building. A 1997 Bombardier Plus MP machine was purchased in December 2002 at a cost of \$110,000. All debts on this machine have now been paid. The total value of assets held by the club, and used to operate the trails, now stands at \$413,000.

## **8) STAFF**

Matt Bruce, Lee Card and Jordan Proctor were employed for the whole season and Shannon Hiebert was employed over the holiday season. Lee and Lisa Palechuk organized and conducted ski and snowshoe lessons for Ski S'Kool.

## **9) TRAIL CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE and LIGHTING**

A new trail to by-pass the Rustler Hill was constructed. Club members checked every kilometre of the ski and snowshoe trail system prior to the ski season, removing deadfall and overhead hazards, cutting shrubs and trees and replacing signs. During the season, trees falling across the trails were removed by the tracksetting crews and the snowshoe trail crew.

## **10) TREE REMOVAL AND LOGGING**

Logging operations this year included the Rustler by-pass which was conducted by the club and a section of dead pine between Hold Up and Cowpoke that was conducted by the Kamloops Indian Band. Dead trees are continuing to fall on the trails and many are removed each year by trail maintenance workers.

## **11) TRAIL GROOMING**

Trail grooming was again carried out by volunteer crews and by staff. Groomers were at work for 57 shifts. 14 individuals and Meeko the dog took part in the grooming for a total of 428 hrs.

## **12) SNOW REMOVAL**

A local contractor was engaged to clear snow from the parking lot.

### **13) EQUIPMENT**

The Bombardier snow cat again performed well this season, although some parts were replaced due to normal wear. The Ginsu groomer, which is towed behind a snowmobile, was used to allow rapid touch up of trail conditions after heavy use days and proved invaluable during periods of low snowfall. A Second Ginsu was purchased to increase the speed at which trails are groomed after a light snowfall or after heavy trail use.

### **14) BUILDINGS**

The club has built a number of permanent structures to operate the trail system. The latest addition is the Washroom building in the main parking lot and photos are include in the appendices. A day lodge is sited at the trail head and requires regular maintenance. All of the trails machinery is stored in a large building at the south end of Stake Lake close to the stadium area. A small cabin provides shelter in the Stadium area for officials during events and for younger children during lessons and the trailhead ticket booth provides office space for trail staff. The Kamloops Astronomical Association uses a small observatory at the south end of the stadium to shelter a large telescope.

### **15) PROGRAMS**

The club carried out a number of programs to promote cross-county skiing and the trails. All children under 9 are admitted to the trails free of charge.

The Ski S'Kool program, which encourages school classes from grades 3, 4 and 5 to come to the trails and take ski lessons, free of charge, continued this season. Two classes travel to the trails on each day and one class skis while the other snowshoes. Classes switch equipment at lunchtime. The classes use skis and snowshoes which were purchased by the Club for this purpose.

17 sessions were held for 10 schools and two youth organizations with a total of 568 children. The program was reduced by poor snow conditions.

### **16) SKI AND SNOWSHOE RENTAL**

Skis and boots for children and snowshoes are rented from the basement of the day lodge for a nominal fee. Additional boots and skis for children and adults were purchased and more snowshoes were added to our inventory.

### **17) SAFETY**

Safety of clients, employees and club members continues to be a high priority in our management plans and actions. The safety manual was updated. Staff and club members patrolled the trails on a regular basis. We continue to operate a check-in procedure for our employees when they are working on their own, in accordance with WorkSafe BC advice.

There were several minor injuries reported and all were dealt with by trails staff.

## **18) SECURITY**

Break-ins and vandalism are a constant concern. The Day Lodge and machine shed were equipped with alarm systems two years ago and were upgraded. Video surveillance was installed.

## **19) CUSTOMER SUGGESTIONS**

We maintain a customer suggestion box in the Chalet. Suggestions were generally very positive and acted upon when possible.

## **20) RECOMMENDATIONS**

In 2015-16, the Overlander Ski Club wishes undertake to:

1. provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all skiers
2. promote the ski program for schools
3. promote night skiing
4. host the BC Cup number 2 for provincial skiers
5. promote snowshoe operations
6. retain trail and membership fees at current level
7. complete supply of drinking water in washroom building
8. complete lighting loop around lake
9. carry out trail smoothing
10. improve play area and teaching areas

Any trail improvements will be paid for by the Overlander Ski Club and its supporters.



## **21) ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Overlander Ski Club wishes to thank the staff of **Recreation Sites and Trails BC** for their co-operation throughout the year. In particular we wish to thank Noelle Kekula and Bruce Petch for their efforts to ensure that Stake Lake Trails are managed in the best interests of the people of Kamloops and the Province. We also wish to express our appreciation to the B.C. Gaming Branch and the Blazers Foundation for their generous grants and numerous other supporters.

We also wish to thank:

- Our employees
- Our volunteers
- Spoke N' Motion, Runners Sole and "Dirty Feet" for their support of the trails
- The Kamloops media for their assistance in publicising the sport of cross-country skiing and the Stake Lake trail system

## APPENDIX A

### Stake Lake Trails Financial Information for 2014-15

#### Pass sales

Regular day passes sold	1430
Night passes	1270
Under 9's (free)	434
Disabled skiers	4
School visits	568
Snowshoe passes	676
6 Day passes	308
Season ski passes	487
Season s'shoe passes	4

<u>Trail revenues</u> ( <i>Ski and snowshoe passes and ski rental</i> )	105,030
Volunteer labour donations	27,960
<u>Total revenues</u>	<u>\$132,990</u>

#### Trail Costs

Advertising and Promotion	1,245
Bookkeeping	960
Building maintenance	4,116
Debit machine	1,229
Depreciation	26,000
Equipment, repairs and maintenance	10,260
Electricity	2,426
Freight	81
Fuel for tracksetting	2,809
General supplies	1,399
Insurance	7,416
Misc	60
On line payment fees	4,260
Signs	4,215
Snow removal	4,512
Ski rental equipment	5,355
Telephone and radio system	1,433
Ticket booth supplies	1,612
Trail maintenance	1,789
Travel	5,172
Volunteer labour donations	27,960
Wages and benefits	31,098

<u>Total costs excluding labour donations and depreciation</u>	<u>\$91,447</u>
<u>Total costs including depreciation</u>	<u>\$117,447</u>

<u>Total costs including depreciation and labour donations</u>	<u>\$145,407</u>
--	------------------

<u>net revenue or net loss</u>	<u>\$12,417</u>
--------------------------------	-----------------

## APPENDIX B

### Trail use by user category

Category	user days
Senior	976
Adult	4458
Student	60
Junior	670
Rabbits	434
Night	1270
Disabled Adult	0
Disabled Junior	4
Unknown	1017
Total	8889

Snowshoe	676
----------	-----

## APPENDIX C

### Photos from the Trails

#### Constructing the washroom building in the summer and fall of 2014



The new washrooms were constructed by a volunteer crew with funding from the Club, the Kamloops Blazers Sports Legacy Fund and donations from a number of supporting businesses



**Opening the New washrooms on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2015 with (left to right) Murray Owen, President, Kamloops Blazers Sports Legacy Foundation, OSC Junior Team member, Jane Laithwaite OSC Member, Alan Vyse OSC President, OSCAR the moose, Luc Guilherme OSC Member and washroom project coordinator, and Bruce Petch, Regional Manager, BC Recreation Sites and Trails**



## Logging the new section of Rustler Trail in the fall of 2014



**A new section of Rustler was constructed to by-pass the big hill, which is now named Heartbreak. The trail was opened at the beginning of the season to great acclaim.**

## Teck Cup Race at Stake Lake Jan 2015



Awards at the Teck Cup



Organizers Tammy and Natalie



Finish Line



Junior Boys Winners



## Canadian Masters Championships at Stake Lake in February 2015



Coach Dana at Work



Waxing for the 10k classic



Men 65-70 Skate Start



Men 70-75 Skate Start



Ladies 60-65 Skate winners



Men 70-75 Skate winners



## APPENDIX D

### TRAIL FEES 2014-15

Category	6 day pass <sup>1</sup>	day skiing	night skiing	snowshoe
Adult	70	14	5	4
Senior	70	13	5	4
Student	55	11	5	4
Junior	35	7	free	free
School groups	n.a.	free	free	free
<9	free	free	free	free

Category	Seasons Pass – Ski <sup>2</sup>		Seasons Pass – snow shoe <sup>2</sup>	
	early	late	early	late
Adult	145	170	40	40
Senior	135	160	40	40
Student	115	130	40	40
Junior	67	77	10	10
<9	10	10	10	10
Family	345	405	n.a.	n.a.

<sup>1</sup> no time limit to 6 day pass

<sup>2</sup>Includes OSC membership fee

Rates for large groups are available. Season passes include night skiing. Skiers under 9 years of age ski free of charge. School groups ski free of charge. Rates for large groups are available.



**Stake Lake Trails**

**Barb Klie 2015**