

# STAKE LAKE CROSS COUNTRY SKI AND SNOWSHOE TRAILS



**Annual Report  
2015-2016**





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

### **Executive Summary of Trails Operations in 2015-2016**

In our 25th year of operations snow conditions were very good throughout a long season. As a result we set a new record for Trail attendance at 18,719, which is an amazing 30% increase from the previous best year in 2012-13. The season lasted 122 days, one short of our record. Snowshoe trail use at 1802 visitors was almost double the previous high.

Trail fees remained at the previous level for the year and revenues reached \$151,225. Trail operating expenses increased to \$105,165, including purchases of ski and snowshoe rental equipment, ski trail improvement work, expanded lit trails and major machine repairs. Depreciation was estimated at \$31,000 resulting in total costs of \$136,165 and a net gain of \$15,059. Costs were kept low through the use of many hours of volunteer labour. The estimated value of labour donations was \$21,630. The total net value of assets held by the club and used to operate the trails is \$433,000.

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

The snow grooming machine and other equipment continued to perform well despite a major breakdown in January, which was repaired thanks to our dedicated crew of volunteers. Many volunteer hours were spent grooming track and maintaining equipment.

The lit trails were expanded increasing to 4.5 km in November 2015. Work was done throughout the trails to improve early season ski-ability.

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 1482 children and 25 schools and groups but numbers were reduced because of the short season.

Overlander hosted a Provincial Teck Cup competition Feb 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> with 300 skiers attending from around the province. A Polarthon was held in cooperation with River City Racers, a speed skating club in Kamloops, and the Dirty Feet Company held their annual snowshoe event.

Overlander Ski Club has served over a quarter of a million skiers (258,088) since 1991 and 4425 snowshoers since 2012. We plan to continue serving the people of the Kamloops area and the province in the 2016-2017 year.



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# **Stake Lake Ski and Snowshoe Trails Annual Report for 2015-16**

## **1) INTRODUCTION**

Overlander Ski Club operates the Stake Lake Ski and Snowshoe 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 2015-16 ski season, as in previous years, were:

1. To operate the Stake Lake Ski and snowshoe Trails in such a way that our customers, regardless of ability, enjoy a safe high quality experience each and every time they use the trails;
2. To promote the use of the ski and snowshoe trails by Kamloops residents, other area residents, and visitors to the area;
3. To improve the ski and snowshoe 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 2015-16 membership was 550 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 25 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 \$21,630, which is about 50% 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 2015-16 Committee members and their responsibilities were as follows:

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 mid-2015)

The 2015 Executive committee of Overlander Ski Club was follows:

Vesta Giles	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
Alan Vyse	Director -- Trails

### **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 early February with 300 participants. River City Racers held a Polarthon with 20 participants. A race was held on the snowshoe trails for the third year by “Dirty Feet” an independent race organization from Kamloops and 86 people took part.

## **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 Overlander Ski Club and Recreation Sites and Trails BC. This agreement ends in 2023.

## **6) TRAIL USE**

The trails were open for a total of 122 days from November 21st, 2015 to March 21st, 2016, 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 18,719 skier days were recorded for the year. This total is 30% higher than our previous highest annual attendance and 80% higher than our long term average. Snow came relatively early persisted through the season resulting in excellent trail conditions until mid-March.

The greatest use of the trails occurred on weekends. Saturday is now the busiest day of the week. The highest day attendance was 495 on the BC Cup race weekend. The highest weekly total of the year was during the New Year holiday period (1,992 skiers). Night use of the trails was high (2753), particularly on Tuesday night. There were more than 100 skiers on several nights in mid-winter. Night use contributed about 15% of total attendance.

Use of the snowshoe trails was high throughout the year and the annual total was 1802, almost double our previous best year (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 484 season passes, including 23 families, covering a total of 508 individuals. Season pass sales were low, which is likely a reflection of the relatively poor snow conditions last year. 555 six-day passes were sold, a big increase from last year, probably because people switched from season's passes. 2277 day passes were sold, about 80% more than last season. School visits also increased.

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

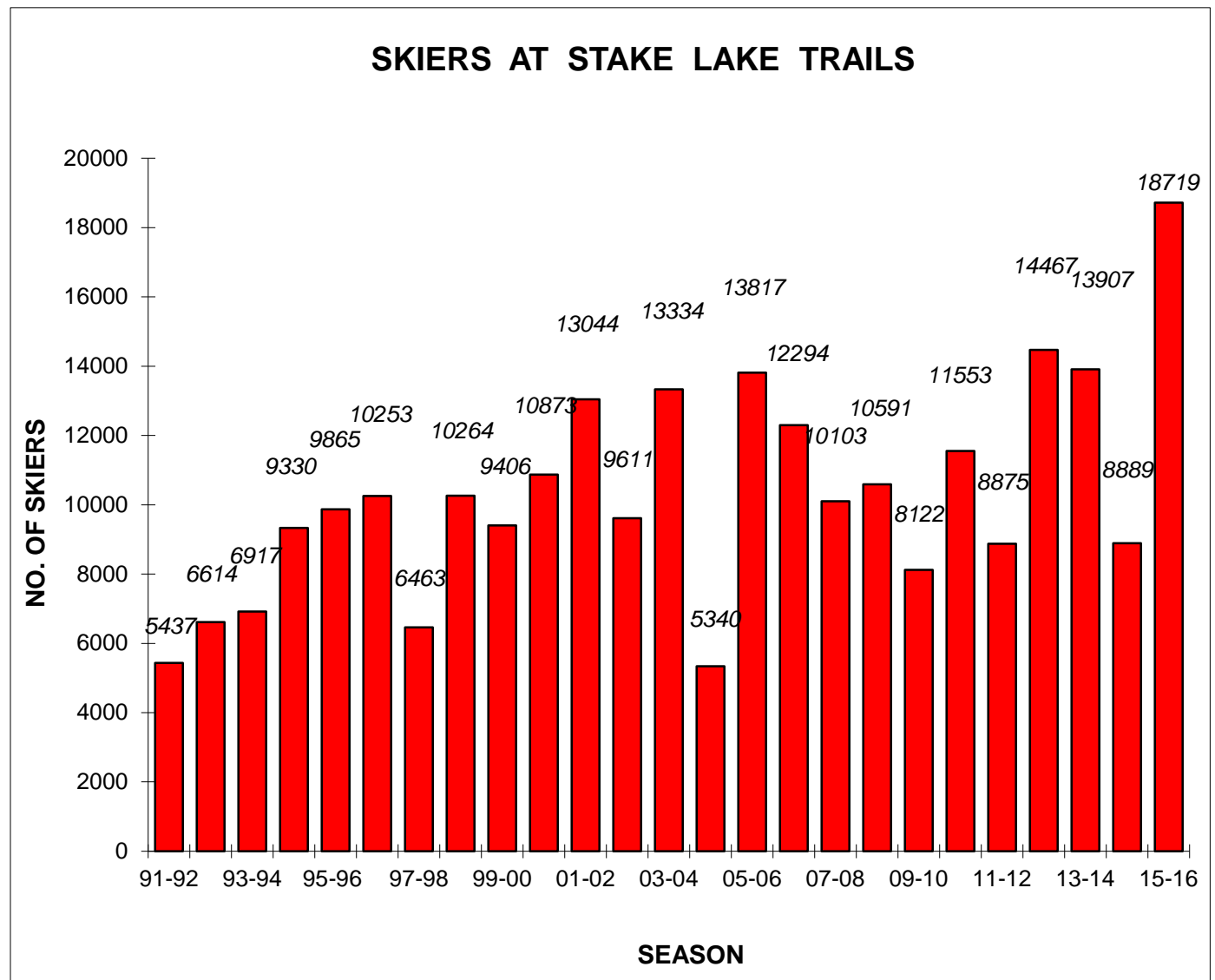
Date	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
15-Nov							142	142
22-Nov	138	33	18	76	75	106	195	641
29-Nov	227	56	58	110	56	103	192	802
06-Dec	177	86	14	90	55	135	273	830
13-Dec	227	75	78	183	115	145	325	1148
20-Dec	253	122	216	226	164	113	216	1310
27-Dec	254	313	303	324	235	246	317	1992
03-Jan	317	46	38	187	112	265	343	1308
10-Jan	322	99	150	202	201	213	300	1487
17-Jan	434	130	163	278	195	145	313	1658
24-Jan	339	147	87	157	110	172	364	1376
31-Jan	261	101	153	172	135	353	495	1670
07-Feb	459	394	109	166	106	155	166	1555
14-Feb	116	106	143	84	111	136	219	915
21-Feb	167	47	50	147	97	125	116	749
28-Feb	87	105	18	156	71	34	61	532
06-Mar	38	5	103	59	38	35	39	317
13-Mar	26	12	22	29	20	39	66	214
20-Mar	27	46						73
27-Mar								
total								<b>18719</b>
	3869	1923	1723	2646	1896	2520	4142	18719

### Daily Snowshoe Trails Use

Date	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
15-Nov							6	6
22-Nov	6	2	0	10	0	16	3	37
29-Nov	14	0	3	2	5	3	13	40
06-Dec	29	0	1	0	0	5	15	50
13-Dec	8	0	0	5	0	9	45	67
20-Dec	27	13	19	17	19	18	31	144
27-Dec	51	38	60	40	39	49	36	313
03-Jan	52	7	6	23	18	12	68	186
10-Jan	51	16	13	11	13	17	34	155
17-Jan	49	11	8	41	19	32	58	218
24-Jan	51	12	11	10	10	3	48	145
31-Jan	100	0	3	0	5	0	45	153
07-Feb	20	33	7	9	9	3	14	95
14-Feb	15	3	1	2	0	14	23	58
21-Feb	21	1	6	11	2	6	13	60
28-Feb	12	2	2	4	8	3	8	39
06-Mar	9	2	0	2	1	4	2	20
13-Mar	4	.	.	.	.	.	3	7
20-Mar	2	7						9
27-Mar								0
total							<b>1802</b>	
	521	147	140	187	148	194	465	1802

### Ski Trail use in 2015-16 compared with previous seasons

The following figure compares trail use in the 2015-16 season with yearly use over the previous 24 years that the trails have been under Overlander Ski Club management. Mean attendance is 10,728 skiers per year and the total number of skier days is 257,473.



## **7) FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

At September 30th 2016, trail revenues were \$151,225, 50% more than last year. These revenues were from the sale of passes and rental of ski and snowshoe equipment. A further \$21,630 was donated in volunteer labour bringing total revenues to \$172,855. Operating expenses were \$111,667. The major expenses were employee wages and benefits, track setting and equipment, snow removal, insurance, fuel and bookkeeping. In addition, the large track setting machine had a major breakdown which resulted in substantial repair costs. Additional rental equipment was purchased to meet increasing demand. Depreciation was estimated at \$31,000 of this total bringing total costs to \$142,667 and we realised a net gain of \$8,558.

The financial position of the club continues to be sound. However, additional revenues are required to build reserves in order to replace aging machinery, add to the pool of rental equipment and further 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. The club owns three small snow machines and two Ginsu tracksetters. In addition, 4.4 km of lit trails have been installed. The total value of assets held by the club, and used to operate the trails, now stands at \$433,000. No debts are outstanding.

## **8) STAFF**

Matt Bruce, Lee Card, Leah Apeldoorn and Jordan Proctor were employed for the whole season. Lee Card, Leah Apeldoorn and Lisa Palechuk organized and conducted ski and snowshoe lessons for Ski S'Kool.

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

An additional kilometer of lit trail was added at a cost of approximately \$14000. Trail smoothing operations were carried out on several parts of the trail system with good success.

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

No tree removal operations were conducted this year. 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 78 shifts. 14 individuals and Meeko the dog took part in the grooming for a total of 575 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 but there was a major breakdown and the machine had to be retrieved from the trails. The Ginsu groomers, which are towed behind snowmobiles, were used to allow rapid touch up of trail conditions after heavy use days and proved invaluable during periods of low snowfall.

### **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 2-7 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.

33 sessions were held for 23 schools and two youth organizations with a total of 1482 children.

### **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 was one major injury reported and was reported to Canadian Snowsports Association. The injured person is pursuing an injury claim through Canadian Snowsports.

## **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 and video surveillance was installed. A break-in occurred at the ticket booth in January. A window was broken and a security camera was smashed. The security camera was not good enough to capture licence plate images but the police apprehended the culprits when they revisited the ticket booth several days later.

## **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 2016-17, with approval, the Overlander Ski Club will 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 Championships for provincial skiers
5. promote snowshoe operations
6. construct the Little Joe/Ponderosa lighting loop and carry out further trail smoothing
7. improve play area and teaching areas

All 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 2015-16

#### Pass sales

Day passes	2277
Group passes	170
Night passes	1265
Under 9's (free)	805
Disabled passes	1
School visits	1482
Snowshoe passes	1290
6 Day passes	555
Season ski passes	484
Season s'shoe passes	3

<u>Trail revenues</u> ( <i>Ski and snowshoe passes and ski rental</i> )	151,225
Volunteer labour donations	21,630
<u>Total revenues</u>	<u>\$172,855</u>

#### Trail Costs

Advertising and Promotion	955
Bookkeeping	900
Building maintenance	2,433
Debit machine	1,776
Depreciation	31,000
Equipment, repairs and maintenance	19,263
Electricity	2,331
Freight	0
Fuel for tracksetting	5,747
General supplies	1,204
Insurance	8,536
Misc	663
On line payment fees	3,770
Signs	1,241
Snow removal	3,360
Ski rental equipment	4,545
Telephone and radio system	1,051
Ticket booth supplies	1,008
Trail maintenance	935
Travel	5,698
Volunteer labour donations	21,630
Wages and benefits	46,251

<u>Total costs excluding labour donations and depreciation</u>	<u>\$111,667</u>
<u>Total costs including depreciation</u>	<u>\$142,667</u>

<u>Total costs including depreciation and labour donations</u>	<u>\$164,297</u>
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<u>net revenue <i>or net loss</i></u>	<u>\$8,558</u>
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## APPENDIX B

### Trail use by user category

#### 2014-15

Category	user days
Senior	976
Adult	4458
Student	60
Junior	670
Under 9	434
Night	1270
Disabled Adult	0
Disabled Junior	4
Unknown	1017
Total	8889

Snowshoe	676
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#### 2015-16

Category	user days
Senior	2236
Adult	9942
Student	129
Junior	1996
Under 9	923
Night	2753
Disabled Adult	
Disabled Junior	
Ski racers	740
Total	18719

Snowshoe	1696
Snowshoe racers	106
Total	1802

## APPENDIX C

### Photos from the Trails

#### Building the lit trail on East Cartwheel

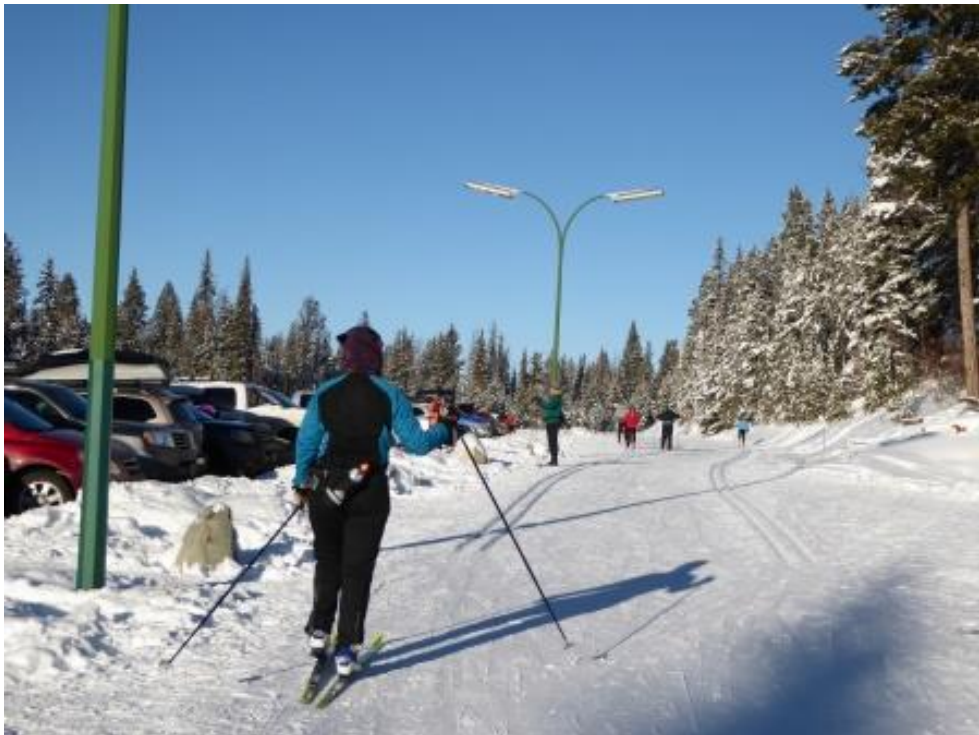


**Clockwise from the Top:  
digging the trench; laying the conduit; Sheldon, Luc and Matt on the job**

**Day lodge on New year's Eve**



**New Year's Day at the Trails**



**Looking North at the Parking Lot**



## Repairing the snowcat



Fred and the Allcat technician

## Dirty Feet Snowshoe Race



## Polarthon



by Kevin Bogetti-Smith



## APPENDIX D

### TRAIL FEES 2015-16

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.





**Sidewinder snow**

**Alan Vyse 2016**