



ENSC 2020 Annual General Meeting – President’s Report.

I would like to begin this President’s report for 2020, in the same way I did last year, by saying “Thank You Volunteers”. We are grateful for every volunteer contribution.

Again this season, our club staff ensured our club is running efficiently, and I thank Melanie Scott, Karen Slater, Dave Storey and Ulf Kleppe. By the time of the AGM, both Melanie Scott and Karen Slater will no longer be on staff, and we wish them every success for the future. In addition, thanks go to our team of coaches in our biathlon and cross-country ski programs, and to our lesson instructors.

While we are always hopeful as winter approaches for an early period of cold weather, we were fortunate for this to arrive in mid-November and were able to get the snowmaking operations running full bore. Together with snow-farming in Goldbar and Capilano, we had excellent trail conditions by early December and were able to begin providing regular trail reports to the ski community. The other local ski venues didn’t fare so well, as the natural snow wasn’t very plentiful, and so we were the only local place to ski for a number of weeks in early season. Kudos to Dave for the 120+ hours he put in making snow during that period of just over a week, and ensuring the trails were well groomed.

The end of the season was supposed to be capped by a biathlon Calforex Cup race event in early March, and a cross-country Alberta Cup weekend in mid-March, with the latter as a tune up for Ski Nationals. However, COVID-19 arrived and while we had to cancel the Alberta Cup two days prior, we did manage to host a successful Calforex Cup with close to 200 athletes competing at the range in Strathcona Science Provincial Park. Not only was the Alberta Cup and Ski Nationals cancelled but also the Jackrabbits finale BBQ, and the remainder of our season programming and lessons.

The trails remained in great shape with a cold March and through the first half of April. With approval from the City and following Alberta Health Guidelines we kept grooming until the 11 April 2020, so the ski community had great trails to burn off some steam, while we all navigated the early days of the pandemic lockdown. We ended the season as we started, being one of few places in the region where skiing was possible.

Since the spring we have worked hard with Alberta Health and the City of Edmonton to develop COVID safe protocols, and are hoping to be able to offer a full slate of programs again for the upcoming 2020/2021 season. Some have already begun, and our Jackrabbits, Bears, and Lessons will be available for registration soon.

The City will again support our snowmaking and grooming operations as we enter the 2nd year of our 5-year agreement. This was a huge success for the club in acquiring this long-term support in late 2019, and allows us to provide a much higher trail grooming service level in Gold Bar, Goldstick and Capilano parks for the skiing community, as well as build a contingency for equipment replacement as it ages.

However, other regular sources of grants, as well as casino revenue, are currently uncertain as a result of the operational and financial effects of the ongoing pandemic. In addition, the elimination of the Alberta Lottery Fund by the Province in late 2019, is particularly damaging as this funding was key to the development of the biathlon range and the snowmaking projects, as well as many smaller ones such as the purchase of rifles for biathlon and roller ski fleets for summer training. We continue to await further guidance from the Province regarding the delisting of Strathcona Science Provincial Park and what new partnerships might look like. For the time being, and for winter 2020/2021, the status quo is expected at the biathlon range. Other defunding and delisting of Provincial Parks such as the elimination of ski trail grooming in Kananaskis, and the strong possibility that a similar situation is likely in Birkieland at Blackfoot has resulted in ENSC strongly supporting other Nordic ski clubs and organizations across the province to oppose these changes.

On a different note, for those of you who are missing the South Loop Trail, good news is that work began in early September 2020 and the realigned trail is expected to be ready for skiing this winter, while revegetation of the old trail is set to be done next spring.

To end, this will be my final AGM as President, following 3 years in this role, as well as a further 5 years volunteering on the Board prior to this. While I am sad to be leaving the Board, I am happy to say that we have a strong team of both continuing and new volunteers, committed to manage the business of the club, and I encourage all of our membership to volunteer to help make the club even more successful.