

## **DRXC Annual General Meeting Minutes, 2021/22 Season**

**May 9, 2022, Balmer Bay Chalet**

### **In Attendance:**

**Executive members:** Bob Donders, Phil Davis, Diane Davis, Lindsay Dooh, Christian Kaiser, Dave Rhodes.

**Sub Committee members:** Doug Killey, Stuart Crag, Kevin McDonald.

**Others:** Bruce Heinmiller, Bruce Smith, Nick Cox, John Hefler.

**Apologies:** Helena Rummens, Marc Audet, Erik Hagberg Tom Holden, Aubrey Fletcher, Anne Murphy

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

Approved.

### **2. Approval of Minutes from the 2020/21 AGM**

Approved.

### **3. President's Report (Bob Donders)**

The DRXC had a successful season, despite many programs and facilities continuing to be affected by the ongoing Covid pandemic.

As always, volunteers allowed the club to offer a wide range of facilities and programs. On behalf of the members, thank you volunteers for your time and energy.

The condition of our trails makes or breaks the ski season. Again this year there was fantastic preparation of the trails in the fall, and excellent grooming during the winter. It was quite a cold year, so the groomers had to bundle up for some early morning trail grooming sessions.

There were a few issues with walkers on the trails early in the season. This was largely resolved by posting signs at strategic locations at trail access points, something we should plan on doing more of at the start of every season. The deer were pretty active at times, which did mess up the trails a bit, but they also provided some company on occasion.

Club membership was about 390, which is well above our average over the past 5 years. Club membership continues to benefit from the Covid situation, as cross-country skiing remained one of the few permitted activities, and some "snowbirds" stayed around this winter because of the travel restrictions.

Covid did negatively affect some of our programs and facilities. The chalet remained closed for most of the season, and programs like the Jackrabbits, equipment rental, the Silver Spoon race, moonlight skis, adult lessons, high school racing, and new member drop-in all had to adjust to the restrictions. In spite of the challenges, all these programs were able to operate in some capacity or provide alternatives. The Bass Lake cabin (ski hut) was able to operate at close to normal capacity.

The club had a good year financially, and we are well positioned to move ahead with some significant capital projects (short term: new bridges, longer-term: grooming headquarters, snowmobile replacement). We procured large aluminum I-beams for the upcoming bridge replacement project.

Fortunately this year there were no emergency incidents. The club did purchase an additional emergency rescue sled, which will be stored at the chalet. When skiing, please take precautions, and be aware of the club's emergency plan, available on the DRXC website.

The DRXC website now includes a page that describes the history of the club and the Four Seasons Sanctuary. It's an amazing story, and well worth reading.

#### **4. Financial Report (Dave Rhodes)**

The financial health of the club is excellent. Membership income was similar to last year and better than previous years. Expenses were much less than budget. Jackrabbits operated at a reduced level. Equipment rental was popular and equipment ran out. Unfortunately, investments decreased in value by roughly 8% in the last six months due to the Ukraine war and inflation worries. The club is making substantial investments in new bridges. We will be receiving roughly \$20,000 of assistance from the Four Seasons Conservancy as their contribution towards bridge replacement and paying for additional signage.

#### **5. Membership report for 2021/2022 season (Christian Kaiser)**

- The DRXC had the second highest membership in many years – **385 members**. Although compared to last year most of the age categories reduced in number, there was an increase in 31- to 40-year olds.
- We continued with the two new categories: Family and Young Adults.
  - **163 (44%) of our members joined through the Family category.**
  - 3 young adults registered – most members in this age group registered as part of a Family.
  - 12 students joined as part of the Mackenzie School Team
- The **Zone4 system continues to work well** – more than 95% of members registered through it.
  - This year we consolidated the Jackrabbits form into the main registration form for easier use.
- Some areas for development in next season:
  - Further refinements to the membership form on Zone4 to allow easier registration of families.
  - Remove the Young Adult category.

- Investigate automation of the welcome emails. The welcome emails were sent manually, which meant that they were sometimes delayed or irregularly sent.

More details are provided in the Appendix.

## **6. Emergency Planning and Response (Diane Davis)**

There were no major accidents this year. Barrels with first aid supplies were placed at the Balmers Bay Chalet, the bottom of M hill on the M loop, the junction of Sidetrack and Cabin trail and the Bass Lake cabin. In addition there were supplies in an olive barrel at the forestry as well as the top of the C loop.

There are 2 rescue toboggans: one at the cabin, and one with the barrel at Sidetrack Junction.

An additional used rescue toboggan was purchased. It is currently stored in the chalet waiting for some refurbishment work.

The first aid documents were reviewed in the fall and improved upon. Volunteers who were willing to help were contacted to see if they could help again. Renfrew Country does have a good rescue system, but it might take a long time to get to the injured person increasing the chance of hypothermia. We had one new volunteer and one volunteer unable to help anymore.

## **7. Sub-Committee Reports**

Sub-Committee reports are provided in the Appendix.

## **8. Reorganization of the Bass Lake Cabin Sub-Committee (Bob Donders, Erik Hagberg, Bruce Smith)**

Erik Hagberg is stepping down from most of his cabin duties, which he has carried out for 31 years. He will continue as treasurer for one more season and be part of a new Bass Lake Cabin (Ski-Hut) Committee.

Bob Donders made a motion to nominate the following members to the Bass Lake Cabin (Ski-Hut) Sub-Committee:

**President** - Bruce Smith

**Treasurer** - Erik Hagberg

**Member-At-Large** - Karen Colins

**Member-At-Large** - Hilary Veen

The motion was seconded by all in attendance (refer to attendance).

As no other nominations were received, all Sub-Committee Members were acclaimed.

## **9. Plan to replace the “Bishop Bridge” (first bridge on M loop) starting in late summer (Dave Rhodes)**

Dave presented photos on equipment that will be used, and what the bridge construction will look like.

Bob Donders: Out of the blue an opportunity came up, it will be challenging for the club to do this. Helena was speaking with someone in the Military, and there might be an opportunity for the Military to help out with the Bridge construction as a training exercise. Nothing has been committed to date.

Chris has spoken to the Town of Deep River and has received the okay to proceed with the bridges. A confirmation letter will be obtained to document. Will also speak with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Will confirm whether the bridges are on town land.

This is a major project for the club. Suggestion to have a bridge page on the website. This would make information available to all those that are interested or would like to be involved.

Grant - Four Seasons Conservancy, has money invested in the community foundation, and can access interest from those investments and disperse as a community grant. Four Seasons has committed to contributing about \$15,000 for the bridge expenses. Four Seasons has also put together a proposal for signage for the trails.

The aluminum beams are at the pumping station for all four bridges. The other materials can be accessed from Ottawa. The aluminum beams are custom built for the project.

## **10. Other Business**

None.

## **11. Election of Executive**

The following were nominated for the 2022/23 Executive Members:

**President** - Robert Donders

**Vice-President** - Diane Davis

**Treasurer** - David Rhodes

**Membership Secretary** - Christian Kaiser

**Secretary** - Lindsay Dooh

**Past-President** - Phil Davis

As no other nominations were received, all positions were filled by acclamation.

Bob Donders noted that the upcoming season will be his last year as President.

The Executive is interested in having a member-at-large (non-voting position) volunteering to be on the Committee.

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

## Appendix - Detailed Reports

### A1. Membership report for 2021/2022 season (Christian Kaiser)

#### Highlights of 2021

- The DRXC had the second highest membership in many years – **385 members**.
- Although most of the age categories reduced in number, there was an increase in 31- to 40-year olds.
- We continued with the two new categories: Family and Young Adults.
  - **163 (44%) of our members joined through the Family category.**
  - 3 young adults registered – most members in this age group registered as part of a Family.
  - 12 students joined as part of the Mackenzie School Team.
- The **Zone4 system continues to work well** – more than 95% of members registered through it.
  - This year we consolidated the Jackrabbits form into the main registration form for easier use.
- Some areas for development in next season:
  - Further refinements to the membership form on Zone4 to allow easier registration of families.
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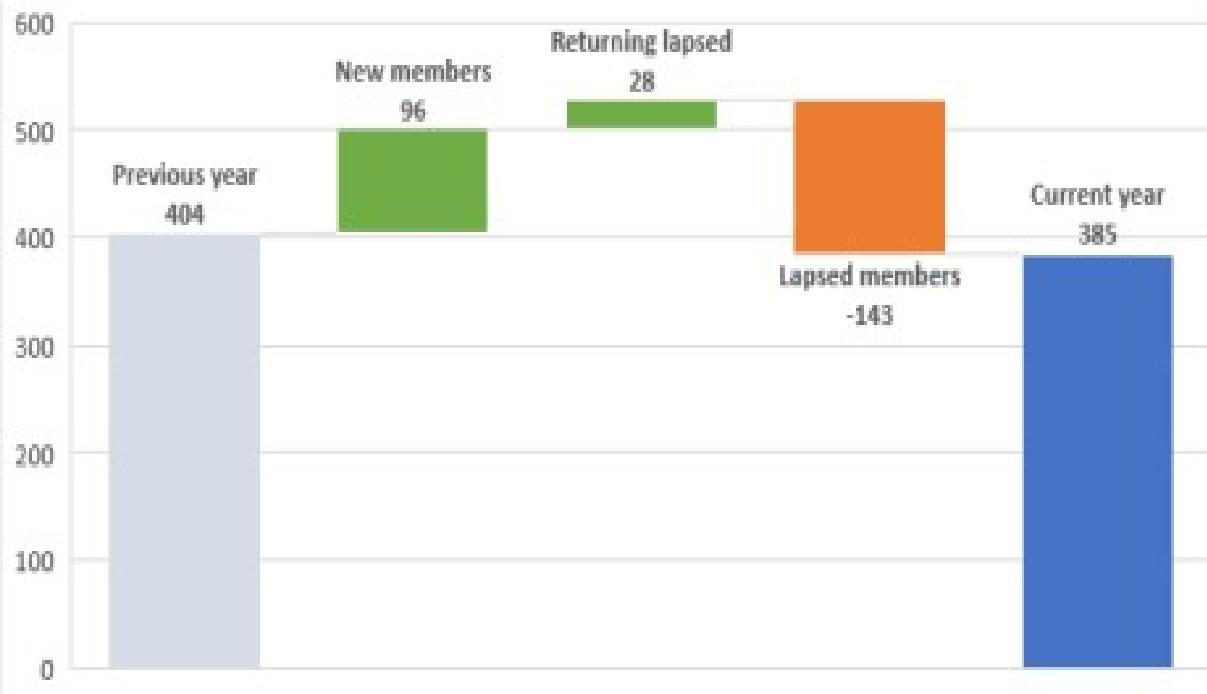
#### Current membership

- The total number of members registered for the 2021 / 2022 season has **decreased** from 404 to **385 members** (a 5% decrease in total membership).
- **96 new members<sup>1</sup>** joined the club.
- **65% of the 2020 / 2021 membership returned for this season**, while 35% of the 2020 / 2021 membership lapsed<sup>1</sup>their membership in the current season (**increase** from 26% in the previous season).
- **41% of new members in the previous season joined again for this season.**
- **28 returning lapsed members<sup>1</sup>** re-joined the club.

Category	Number of members	Percentage of total membership	Previous season
Adults (20 and over)	323	84%	86%
Youth and children (19 and under)	62	16%	14%
All new members	96	25%	32%
Male / Female	198 / 187	51% / 49%	54% / 46%

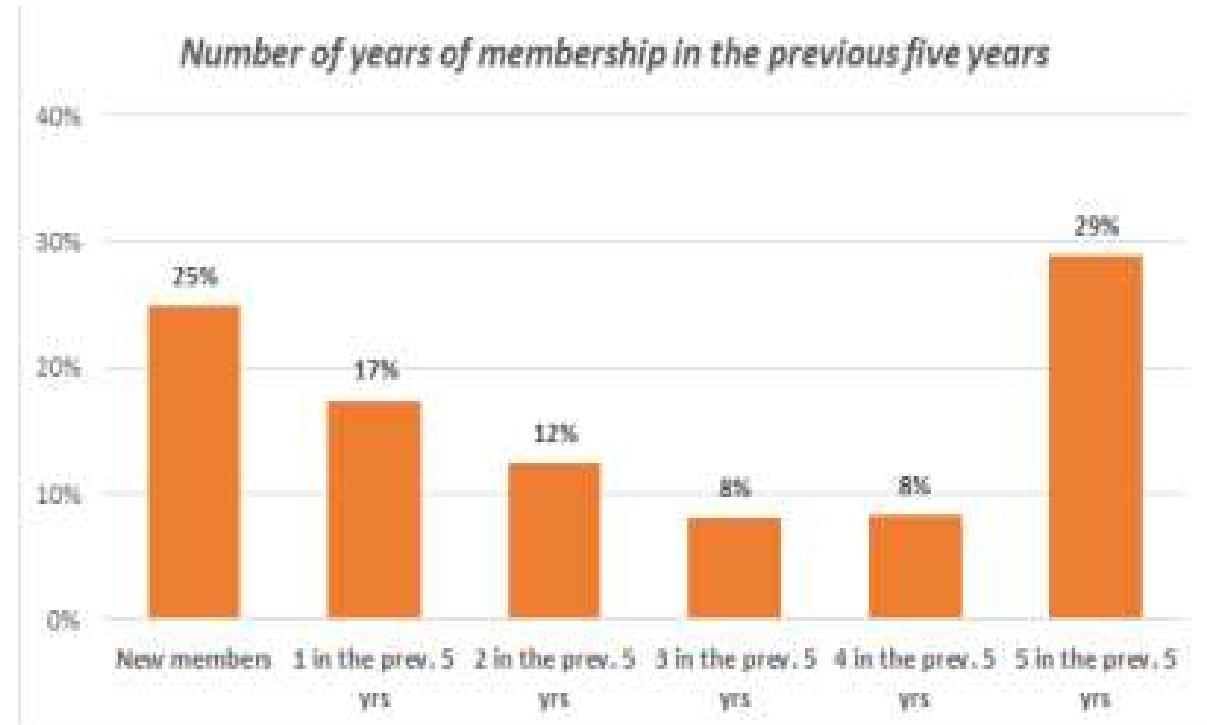
<sup>1</sup> See Notes and Definitions section for definition of *New Member*, *Lapsed Member*, and *Returning Lapsed Member*.

### *Change from previous year's membership*



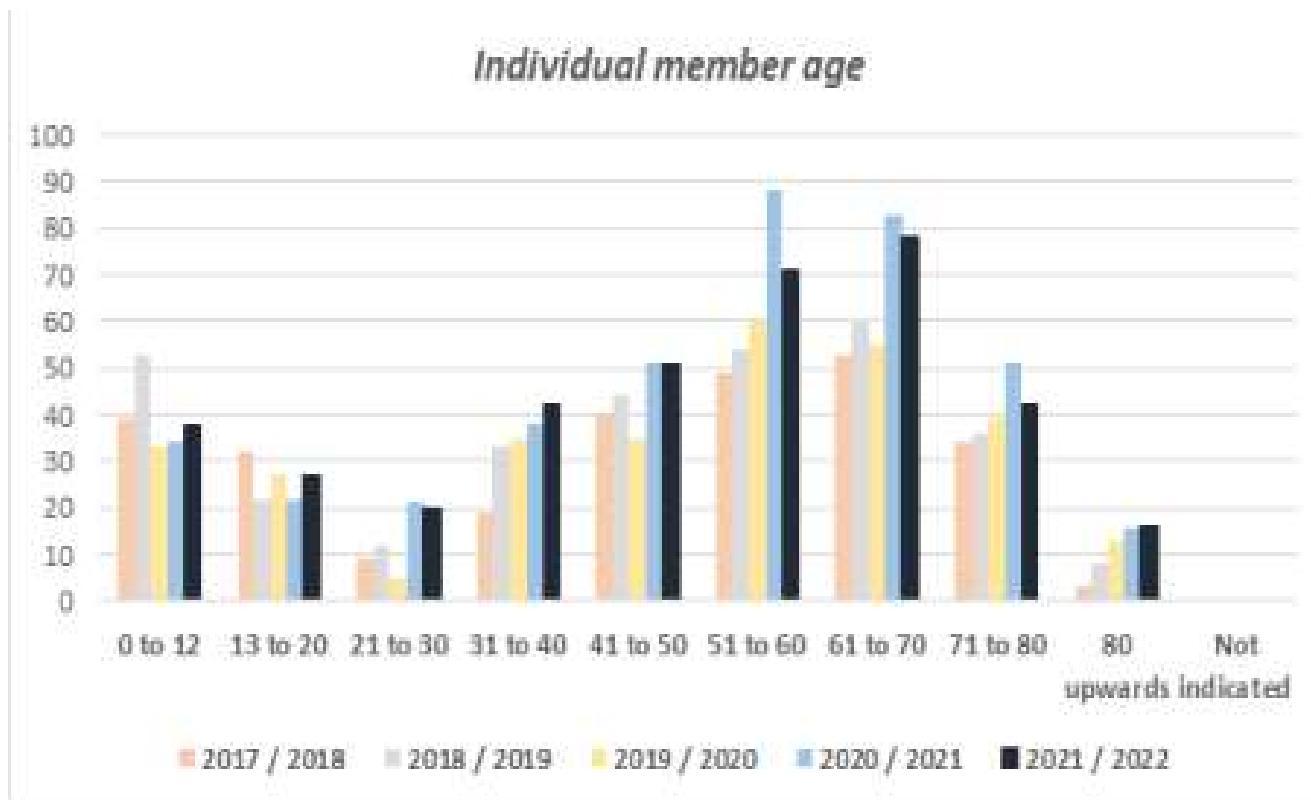
### **Membership persistence**

- **45% of members** have 3 or more years of memberships in the previous five years (this is similar to last season's result).



## Age breakdown over time

- In this season, most adult membership numbers *maintained* some of the gains achieved last year, except for the 51- to 60-year-old category.
- Note the *increase* in child membership and 31- to 40-year-olds.
- The Jackrabbits program was reintroduced in 2022, with a resulting increase in 0- to 12-year-olds.
- The median age for adult members has *decreased* to 53 years old, down from 58 years old in the 2020 / 2021 season.



Age of adult members	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022
Average	57.0	56.8	55.8	57.7	<b>56.5</b>	<b>48.6</b>
Median	58	57	56	59	<b>58</b>	<b>53</b>

## **Registration over the season time**

- Similar trends are visible over the past few seasons:
  - Approximately one third of members join in the first four weeks of the season (these tend to be returning members).
  - The remaining members tend to join once the snow has set in well.



## **Notes and Definitions**

### **Notes**

- All analysis is based on the membership data as captured in the Zone4 database. This is reliable from the 2015 / 2016 season, but not complete prior to that. For this reason, there may be some discrepancies and small errors.
- There were some limited instances of individuals registering as members more than once in a season. This has been accounted for as far as possible but may result in slight differences in total values.

### **Definitions**

1. **New Member:** An individual who has not been members in the last five years
2. **Lapsed Member:** An individual who was a member in the immediately previous season but did not renew their membership for the current season.
3. **Returning Lapsed Member:** An individual who was not a member in the previous season but had been a member in one of the previous five years; previously.

## A2. Trail Maintenance (Stuart Craig)

An average trail clearing effort was required for the 2021/22 season. We had a few minor wind storms bringing down as many as a dozen trees at once over the Silver Spoon trails. These were quickly cleared by our volunteers. We continued to have a full complement of Trail Captains and trail-clearing volunteers. A special thanks to Brock Sanderson who, this autumn, stepped-in to take the R-Loop Trail Captain position.

Regarding equipment, the club battery-powered chainsaw saw quite a bit of use on all of the local-area trails. The 2020 Stihl brushsaw has run trouble-free; however, due to considerable use, a replacement wear-surface for its harness has been purchased. Thanks to the Trail Improvement work on M-Loop this trail can now be navigated with a large-wheeled mower. The old lawn-mower style “weed whacker” was brought out of storage and used on this loop.

## A3. Trail Improvements (Helena Rummens)

The following projects were completed during fall 2021.

**M Loop** - Corduroy was cut and laid in a large muddy area (M loop, just past Bishop’s Bridge).



**M loop** - Sand was spread over a rocky rise (far M loop, just past King's Farm Road).

BEFORE



AFTER



**King's Farm Road** - The trail was trimmed on the sides (between hydro line and far M loop).

BEFORE



AFTER



**R loop - B** gravel was spread over a bumpy area (R loop, in cedar grove).



Proposed projects for 2022 (so far – we're open to suggestions):

- Helping with replacement of Bishop's Bridge on M loop.
- Continuing with drainage improvements on R loop.

Any ideas let Helena know.

#### **A4. Grooming (Marc Audet)**

This past season was a challenge for grooming because of the limited snow. It pushed us to apply techniques that made the best of what we had and so we gained some good experience from that. The grooming implements worked well and none were damaged because of the marginal snow base in places. The 2 snowmobiles continued to run fine, but with a few electrical glitches and one no-start because its battery was weak due to age. The seven groomers forming our team were sufficient for sharing duties. All in all, it was a good year. The snowmobiles will be put into storage condition and the implements moved into storage by April 15.

#### **A5. Chalet (Doug Killee)**

Once again, chalet operations were substantially affected by pandemic restrictions during the 2021-2022 winter. In particular, the requirement that chalet users provide proof of vaccination (or provincially-approved exemption there from) made it possible only to open for organized groups until the beginning of March 2022 when that requirement was suspended. The club was again fortunate to have a group of volunteers to open and close the chalet when it was possible to do so, and thanks to them all. As in 2020-2021, the chalet roster had 7 members, but we will look to re-establish a 14-person rotation when we can return to opening for the duration of the ski season. Once again, I'd also

like to thank Stuart Craig and Helena Rummens for cutting, splitting, and stacking chalet firewood, and Stuart for supplying the fencing materials.

Apart from replacing the short section of fence along Balmer Bay Road in front of the chalet there were no significant maintenance issues over the past year. No substantial investments for the chalet and associated facilities are expected to be required in the year ahead.

## **A6. Bass Lake Cabin (Erik Hagberg)**

The cabin had quite a good year. During the winter the Ontario COVID-19 pandemic rules for indoor gatherings were relaxed in stages. As the winter wore on, the cabin usage kept going up and March was very good. As a result, the cabin was used for 17 nights and a total number of 63 person nights.

As the Cabin Fiscal year ends on June 30, the financial report is not final. The last half of April and the Months of May and June are based on forecasts. With this in mind, the revenue for the year was \$834.24 and the expenses were \$1,120.43. We thus ended up with a loss of \$ -283.19. We are still in decent shape as we have about \$2,800 in liquid assets.

The expenses were quite large compared to other years due to capital improvement spending on the cabin, something that does not happen often. The capital improvement was the installation of a solar-powered system to provide interior lighting of the cabin. The project was initiated by Bob Donders, with Stuart Craig and Bob doing most of the procurement and installation. It consists of an 80W foldable solar panel and a 480 Whrs battery. The lighting is provided by four linear LED panels of 6W. All necessary items have been bought and delivered. Wiring, switches and electrical boxes have been installed in the cabin. The panels, LED lights and batteries have been tested in Deep River. Final installation in the cabin is expected in May.

Each party staying overnight at the cabin will bring out the solar panel and install it in a mount just outside the porch, facing Hut Lake. When the cabin temperature has gone above zero, the battery charging will be switched on. When the party leaves the charging will be switched off and the panels moved back inside. Helena put together instructions for cabin users to follow.

The cabin trail system was maintained last fall. Another trail captain informed us that it would be the last season that they would do their assigned trail. Thus, at least one replacement is needed for next season

## **A7. Rental Equipment (Phil Davis)**

COVID continued to cause problems with the rental program since it limited when we could get into the curling club. But the club was accommodating to the extent possible and we were able to reclaim most of the equipment that was out in the community in the spring of 2021. Only 7 individuals failed to return their skis, which is pretty good considering that some of the equipment had been out for two years. The curling club allowed us to use their clubhouse for fitting sessions in the fall of 2021. 142 individuals were outfitted and all but 4 have returned their equipment. 48 of the households we rented to were members of the club and 33 were non-members.

We took in \$4585 in rental fees and spent \$530 on boots and \$1040 for renting the curling club. This gave us a surplus of about \$3000 for the year. We tried to spend it on new equipment but it was just not available in the stores. We gave a wish list to Gearheads that they put through with their order to their suppliers, but we don't have a lot of hope.

There are a number of issues that we will have to address at some point in the not-too-distance future:

- Waxless skis: At the moment we have a number of waxless skis in our collection but we don't identify them in any way, so it's difficult to find a pair if someone asks for them.
- Skate skis: We have only a few skate skis and boots. Should we try to build up our inventory of these?
- Non-members: Should non-members be treated the same as members in terms of rental fees or access to the collection?
- How should we accommodate the shift to NNN as Salomon equipment is being phased out?

Likely to build a new structure for grooming headquarters to store the skis, need to be mice proof and to avoid any mold growth. This new structure won't occur for 4 years, approximately, as the current priority are the bridges.

## **A8. Jackrabbits (Kevin McDonald)**

26 jackrabbits. And a good core of coaches, with 5 groups. The numbers have dwindled year to year. The youngest ones had to cancel at -15C (4 classes were canceled). The jackrabbits are canceled at -20C (one class was cancelled). The chalet was heated in case the kids needed it. Kevin has a replacement for himself, Melanie Grant (organizer) and Jamie Hopkins (consultant), and Kevin will help as needed.

## **A9. Adult Lessons (Tom Holden)**

There was again a strong demand for beginner cross-country ski lessons in 2022. Twenty-one people signed up for lessons on the 9th and 16th of January. Three people dropped out for various reasons. Lesson plans were suggested for the two lessons to ensure uniformity of coverage of the material. In accordance with last year's feedback the lessons were limited to 90 minutes. Because of the covid restrictions, the group size with each instructor was again limited to three and the arrival times at the chalet were staggered to ensure physical distancing. The weather was favourable and the groomers again did a wonderful job in setting tracks on the hydro line. On February 20th there was a make-up lesson for those who could not manage the earlier dates. There was a strong call for intermediate lessons and these were also offered on February 20th to work on downhill technique and cornering. There was an initial take up of seven people but because this was the weekend of family day, three dropped out. Those who took part were very enthusiastic about what they had learned. If the intermediate lessons were planned earlier in the season to cater for those who took beginner lessons this year the intermediate lessons would be more successful. A waxing demonstration was held at the DRXC open house in the chalet on January 30th but only four people attended. Next year it would be

better to have the waxing demonstration to start the beginner lesson as was the case before covid restrictions.

The skiers were polled as to their perceptions of the lessons.

Did the lessons cover your needs? "Both lessons gave me the basics I was looking for to get started.", "I was there for the first lesson and it was a great experience."

Was enough time given to the basics? "The allocated time was spot on", "Both of our groups covered material to tackle climbing, descending, and moving both fast and slowly in a safe manner across a myriad of trails. Both groups capped off with a small tour of the M trail to build confidence and tie the skills together."

Did you feel more comfortable on skis afterwards? "Definitely", "Absolutely! We can move around, we have drills to practice and can tackle the various trails in the area. Even the workout we get is better now that we can move more fluidly!"

Did you think that we left out any aspects of technique? "I would say no. For me it was great since I got the benefits of having two different instructors".

Was the group size about right? "The group size was perfect. The coaches could rotate through students as they practiced skills. This ensured everyone got pointers and directions on how to implement the various drills.", "I felt I got some good explanations of the basic techniques and have been able to practice since and feel much more confident".

There were some quite complimentary general observations. "Everything was wonderful. I am more confident on the trails now with a goal to apply the techniques we learned.", "The trails are beautiful and the club is very well organized.", "First of all, we really enjoyed the lessons and they took us from doing the awkward walking version of skiing that many rookies do to actually gliding and striding. It's been an excellent way to get out and explore/enjoy our winters."

One skier commented "I would have liked more direct feedback on whether one was executing the manoeuvre correctly or not (ie. you're leaning too far forward or not bending knees enough). But I understand you just need to try and do the thing and practice till you get it!! "

Similarly there were positive comments about the intermediate lesson: "I thought it was great. I learned a lot. It's something I'd be interested in doing every year.", "The instructor did a great job providing feedback and tailoring to each of us in the lesson.", "The lesson was helpful! It was good to review the things about my form that needed fixing. More lessons at this level would be awesome.", "My instructor taught me all the key points on the basic skills, and anything else I asked. She also evaluated my skills and told me what needs to be improved.", "The lesson covered the diagonal stride technique in good detail and I got some good feedback on what I was doing wrong. There was some focus on downhill skiing and control. I think at this point, I just need plenty of practice."

I would like to thank all the instructors for their time and expertise, Adrian Cecco, Nick Cox, Phil Davis, Diane Davis, Martin Koslowsky, Bob Donders, Ann Murphy, Audrey Hagberg, Jamie Hopkins, Ewan Craig and Fabrice Guerout.

## **A10. Junior Racing (Aubrey Fletcher)**

We had dryland training in November and part of December. At which point all extra-curricular activities were shut down.

Things didn't start up again until early Feb.

Students practiced and had one race at PAXC in early March.

In total MacKenzie Community School sent 3 teams and one individual to the race.

- 1 junior girl
- 4 junior boys
- 4 senior girls
- 4 senior boys

We are hopeful that next year will see a resumption of a "more normal" season for our MacKenzie Community School skiers.

## **A11. Silver Spoon (Anne Murphy)**

The 50th Silver Spoon ski (and snowshoe) event was held January 29 to February 6 , 2022 :

- 8,539 km travelled by the participants over nine days.
- With the Silver Spoon Committee pledging \$0.50/km, that leads to a fat cheque of \$4,270 to the Four Seasons Conservancy, a local charity that owns and manages forested land in the Deep River east end.
- Participant ages ranged from 20 months to well over 80 years.
- A total of 89 skiers and snowshoers.
- Jamie Hopkins skied the most kilometres. She went a total of 536 km (that's 60 km on average each day!) and Bill Graham snowshoed the most kilometres (116 km), skied an impressive distance, AND reached the "Odyssey" goal (see below) for both activities.
- In the team event, the Melcalfe Mob team of four totalled an astounding 1,153 km. That was greatly helped by the herculean effort by Ailsa Eydinson and her nephew Keir Plaice, who did 100 miles (162 km) in a single 17-hour day by skiing R, X, and C loops 21 times. AND "most km snowshoed by a team" goes to the Slow Unsteady.
- The "Odyssey" goal consisted of skiing or snowshoeing all the Silver Spoon or Four Seasons trails, all the Petawawa Research Forest trails, and the trail to the DRXC ski hut (a 15 km round trip). Ten skiers and four snowshoers completed all of these trails.
- Other SPECIAL AWARDS: The "best outfit" brag goes to Diane Wensel , "Best photo" goes to Susan Butler, "Best story" goes to Hugh Boniface, "Oldest equipment" goes to Andrew Toomey
- Many thanks to the DRXC groomers, some of whom got up in the wee hours of the morning to create impeccable skiing tracks and lanes for the participants.