

The Inside Track

A newsletter for members of Porcupine Ski Runners



President's Message

~Christine Dorion

Let's just say that this past season looked very different. There was a shortage of ski equipment for sale at the ski swap, snow was late coming and there was a smaller than normal amount of snow. And restrictions caused by the COVID pandemic caused us to change many things that we normally do. What a challenge but we made it happen. Many changes were required to ensure we could rent out equipment, maintain trails and have the chalet accessible. Day users and members did a great job following protocol - thumbs up everyone. The grooming crew was also put to the test but with their dedication and skills, the trails were in great shape considering the very little snow mother nature provided us. We also missed seeing the school groups and other groups come out but we did see a great number of new people enjoying both the ski and snowshoe trails this season. We hope to see you all again next season. The club is truly a amazing place to be in the winter; it's filled with friendly people, hard working volunteers and just a great place for the soul.

On a more somber note we extend our condolences to Alan Heino (Chair of Facilities, Chair of Personnel) and Ray Denis (Chief Groomer and Maintenance) whose wives passed away in the past few months. Neither of these was in any way related to the COVID pandemic but the loss is no less difficult.



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Executive:

President : Christine Dorion
Vice President: Rhys Lucas
Past President: Denis Charette
Secretary : Christine Adamson
Treasurer: Bev Beaven

Directors:

Angele Caporicci
Sylvain deLaPlante
Alan Heino
Germain Lauzier
Lorne Luhta
Sam Miron
David Vodusek
John Sullivan

**Spring/Summer
Issue**

June 2021

The Inside Track is distributed to the members of Porcupine Ski Runners to keep them informed about club activities. There are two newsletters issued each season.

Thank you to those who contributed reports and information. Suggestions and comments from members are always appreciated.

Editor: Kim Dorion

Annual General Meeting is scheduled for

September 14, 2021 at 7:00pm

**It will be held in the chalet at Porcupine Ski
Runners**

**All members are invited to attend and
participate Members who are at least 18 years
of age may vote at the AGM**

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Membership Report

~ Neal McNair

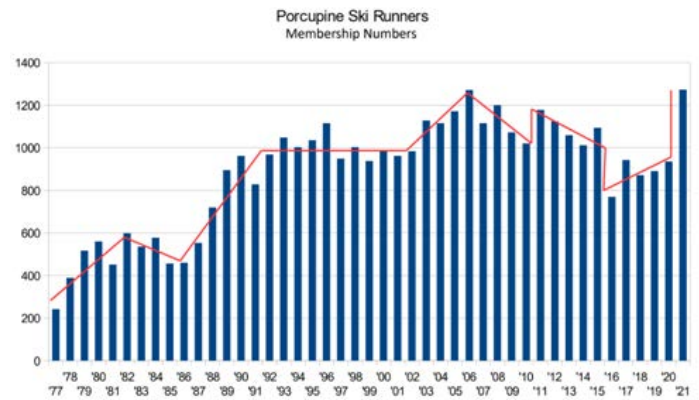
We had a total of 1272 members this season, which was an increase of 336 from last year, and set a new record for memberships, beating the old record of 1271 set in 2006. PSR was one of the lucky organizations that was able to continue operating throughout the various pandemic restrictions. In fact, the club clearly benefited from the increase in people looking for something to do. We would love to see these new members return next year even as we hope for a return to normalcy.

The PSR board, staff and volunteers did a fantastic job adapting our club operations to meet Provincial and health unit guidelines for safe operation, and our members deserve credit for following masking and distancing rules inside the chalet and locker room. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff who work so hard to offer quality trails, programming and customer service to the membership, and thank you all our members for their ongoing support and participation in the club's mission and vision.

The table below gives a detailed breakdown of our membership and related revenue:

Memberships and Revenue		
	Totals	Revenue
Total Members:	1272	\$124,745
Ski Memberships:	1129 (89%)	\$117,200 (94%)
Snowshoe Memberships:	143 (11%)	\$7,545 (6%)
Sub Categories		
Adult Ski	644 (51%)	\$86,670 (69%)
Senior Ski	201 (16%)	\$20,100 (16%)
Teen Ski	84 (7%)	\$4,620 (4%)
Youth Ski	166 (13%)	\$5,810 (5%)
Child Ski	34 (3%)	\$0 (0%)
Adult Snowshoe	81 (6%)	\$4,860 (4%)
Senior Snowshoe	55 (4%)	\$2,475 (2%)
Teen Snowshoe	2 (0%)	\$60 (0%)
Youth Snowshoe	5 (0%)	\$150 (0%)
Total Female Members	735 (58%)	
Total Male Members	527 (41%)	
Net Membership Related Revenue		
Gross Membership Revenue:		\$124,745
Gross Locker Revenue:		\$12,300
Donations:		\$4,999
Total Gross Revenue:		\$142,044
CCC Membership and Insurance:		(\$24,669)
HST (memberships):		(\$14,351)
HST (Lockers):		(\$1,415)
Total net membership revenue:		\$101,609

We have shown the graph of our membership numbers in previous editions of The Inside Track and here it is again. This time there is a series of red lines drawn that show certain trends over different periods of several years. Club directors are interested in knowing about trends in membership numbers because, to some extent, it gives an indication of how certain changes to facilities, trails and programs have affected the membership numbers. This thinking has to be tempered by the realization that weather and snow conditions in any given year will affect these numbers and we have no control over those factors.



For the graph above note that from '77 (meaning the season 1976-77) to '82 there was a trending increase in membership. The club was founded in 1973 but moved its operation from Kamiscotia to its present location in Schumacher in 1976. The increasing membership numbers in that time period seems easy to explain because the club was now located just 3 km from downtown Timmins so it was now close to the vast majority of our population. In addition the club was actively improving its trail structure and facilities. The downward trend from '82 to '86 is less easy to explain because these improvements were ongoing but there was a rather nasty recession in the Canadian economy in the early 1980s that may have had an influence.

The lighted trails project was undertaken in 2003-04 and that provided a means for people with a day job to ski at night. That seems to explain the change from a plateaued (flat) trend to an upward trend for the years '03 to '06.

There are 3 “vertical shifts” shown in the graph above. The first occurred in 2011 when the membership numbers took an upward shift and then resumed a slower downward trend. The new chalet was completed in early 2010 so that seems to explain the sudden reversal of a downward trend. In 2016 there was a surprising vertical shift with a drop in membership numbers and we are not sure why that happened. The third of these vertical shifts occurred this past year and it was the most dramatic of the three with an impressive one year increase in membership numbers. While many small businesses have suffered greatly during this COVID-19 pandemic, others have thrived quite nicely. It seems obvious that this pandemic has produced a vertical shift in a positive direction for the club's membership number.



Finance Report

~ Bev Beaven

This is a year that has tried all of us but we prevailed. We went skiing.

Our fiscal year is from June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021. While the information presented isn't to the end of May, it does provide a snapshot of how well the club is performing.

Total revenues this year were \$194,000. Included in this figure, are donations of \$5,000 for which we are very thankful. Our total expenses are \$108,000. The largest expenses were payroll and benefits at \$26,000 and insurance at \$29,000.

This year, Porcupine Ski Runners applied for the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan of \$40,000. This has helped the club to cover some of its lost revenues not earned from renting out the chalet during the off-season and from schools. Only \$10,000 has been included in our revenues for this year and is included in the above-mentioned revenue amount. If we pay the remainder of the loan of \$30,000 by December 31, 2022, we can keep \$10,000.

Have a great summer and see you next winter.



Events

~ Christine Dorion

No events occurred this season due to COVID restrictions.

No Loppet, no races, no Vets vs Rookies relay race, no 12-hour challenge. We didn't like all the "nos" and we are hopeful that next season will be better.



Jackrabbit

~ Christine Dorion

Jackrabbit season was quite different this year but we made the best of it. We managed to have some lessons but fewer than we have in a normal year. To compensate the kids were given different goals to strive for and activities to do.

The kids enjoyed the mild weather and this program continues to put smiles on all those little faces. We were able to have 62 kids in the program this season and we thank all the volunteers who helped make this happen.

The volunteer crew:

Peter Lanzellotti, Julia Vodusek, Marissa Pladizk, Kim Dorion, Richard Warriner, Dan Girard, Christine Dorion, Samantha Genier, Annabelle.

Chalet Summer Hours

During spring, summer and fall the chalet does not have regular hours of operation.

For assistance call:

Ray Denis 705-288-2253 (Primary contact)

Gerry McNair 705-264-9093 (Alternate Contact) Cell: 705-266-4213

Alan Heino 705-264-9107 (Alternate Contact) Cell: 249-361-6318

Robert White 705-268-0935 (Alternate Contact) Cell: 705-465-1554

www.porcupineskirunners.com

Personnel & Family Day Weekend

~ Alan Heino

For the 2020-2021 Season, Brent Cleverdon, our Lead Rental Room Attendant, was responsible for managing the rental room, waxing rental room skis and skis from members and guests, as well as performing janitorial duties including regular disinfecting of all surfaces in the chalet.

Our four student employees: Danielle Southcott, Nathan Lloyd, Keenan Cleverdon, and Kathryn Steinbrunner provided assistance with these duties after school and on weekends. Danielle provided team leadership to all of our student staff and managed the rental room, every other weekend, when Brent's was off. In addition, the students cooperated well in taking turns working as gatekeepers.

Christine Dorion and Gerry McNair provided great assistance to Brent and our students in implementing the telephone booking system required in order for customers to reserve equipment rentals during the province-wide lock down held from December 26, 2020 to February 15, 2021.

Collectively, the staff all did a great job providing rental room services for individual and family equipment rentals, and for some limited group rental activities held during the 2020-2021 season, while ensuring the safety of themselves, their customers, our members by closely following all of PSR's COVID-19 safety protocols.

We continued with our new Family Day Weekend promotion this year: 30% discount for equipment rentals and day fees, throughout the weekend (Saturday, Sunday & Monday).

Overall, the participation on the Family Day Weekend was good considering the cold weather we experienced throughout the weekend. Customers needed to reserve rentals one day ahead as we were still under the provincial lock down during this promotion.

Thanks to Christine Dorion for assisting me with recruiting our newest student Katie and taking the lead in scheduling their shifts throughout the 2020-2021 Season. And thanks to our Treasurer, Beverly Beaven, for processing the bi-weekly payroll submissions for our staff in a prompt and accurate manner.



PSR Race Team

~ David Vodusek, Coach

With the province wide cancellation of events this season, the PSR Ski Team focused on working on technique, ski specific strength and skiing as much as they could. Through it all, we were able to hold several team practices that helped the crew stay focused in anticipation of next season. 2022 will be our crew's first trip to the Canadian Championships that will be held at Whistler Olympic Park, the Nordic venue of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The team extends a big thank you to the club, grooming crew, coaches, trainers, waxers and race team parents for their countless hours volunteering and helping make our program as fun as possible year after year. In preparation for next season, the team continues to train throughout the summer months focusing on running, mountain biking, strength training and roller skiing.

Anyone with any questions about the program may email David Vodusek at psrrace@gmail.com.



Sprint Series

~ David Vodusek

In an effort to offer the ski community the opportunity to race this season, the race team organized a fun 1.25 km under the lights sprint series. The event was planned for March but due to mild weather and provincial restrictions, we were only able to host two events. In total, 31 participants took in the events held on March 4th and 18th. The fastest male and female times for the event were Erik Luhta with a finish time of 3:18 and Julia Vodusek with a time of 3:38. On behalf of event organizers, a huge thank you to Lorne Luhta Ski Sales for the draw prizes that were won by Emma Deschalet (pictures with her ski poles she won), Neal McNair and Julianne Wray. Thank you and congratulations to all participants for taking part in this fun event. The race team will host the event again next year following the same format.



Timmins Biathlon Club-BEARS and RACERS

~ Angele Caporicci

Timmins Biathlon Club members had a fun but challenging season this past year. While there were COVID-19 restrictions in place, the Bears had a great time learning new skills and enjoying the weather.

We had a total of 18 athletes this year, ranging from age 9 and up and including one Adult Master athlete. Due to the circumstances, we held mock individual and virtual races throughout the winter season; so athletes could at least feel the wind on their faces and hit some targets in the range. We held a virtual Treasure Hunt where the Bears, with their families, had to find prints on the trails, while maintaining the social distancing rules. The Bears ended their season on March 20th, 2021. The Racers are on the recovery month and will be starting up with their individual race training plans May 1st, 2021. The Bears program is set to re-start in December 2021.



1000 Kilometre Club

~ John Sullivan

Many of our members choose to record their daily distances skied on the large board located in the chalet. This is to help track personal goals or to provide encouragement. Either way, it's fun to see the kilometres increase. Despite a late start and an early end to the ski season this year, we had 19 members attain 1000 kilometres or more. This is an increase over last season, when only twelve skiers achieved this milestone. Rhys Lucas led the charge with a total of 1746 kilometres.

The following is a list of members who skied 1000 or more kilometres, and those who came close.



1000 km Club

Rhys Lucas 1746
Jane Schultz 1310
Claude Castilloux 1281
Kevin Montgomery 1232
Dave Mullen 1230
Claude Gagnon 1187
Lou Ann Visconti 1152
Dave Schultz 1075
Raphael Delli Quadri 1065
Gordon King 1044
Jan Deyne 1042
Pat Demarais 1025
Erik Luhta 1010
Nathan Tietz 1005
Peter Lanzellotti 1003
David Kapias 1003
Bill Shand 1001
Kim Wagner 1001
Stan Vasiliauskas 1000

Almost there

Neal McNair 913
Ray Denis 908
Alan Heino 817
Leah Fedat 734
Christine Dorion 700
Dave Kohtala 618





Trails Report

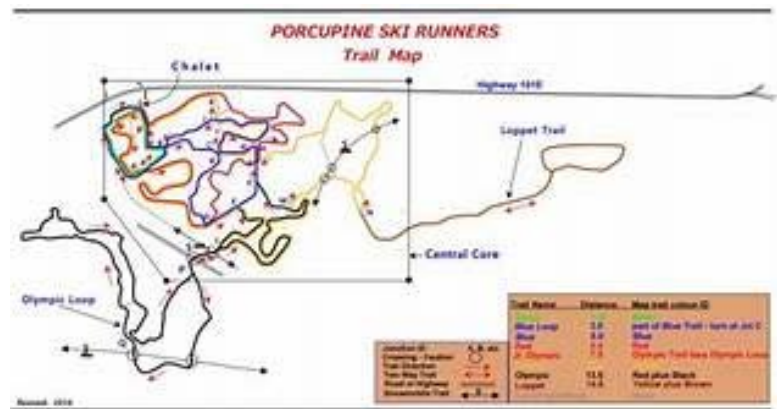
~ Lorne Luhta

This ski season was one of the shortest we have experienced since the formation of the club 48 years ago. Instead of skiing in mid November we began in December and stopped at the end of the third week of March instead of skiing into the third week of April. It also snowed very little this season. Thankfully all of our trail work over the years really paid off. The terrain on which our trails are located is very rough. Rocky in some sections and swampy in some others. Over the past many years in preparing our trails we had to blast some rocky sections, smooth out areas with heavy equipment – which included bulldozers and excavators and we put in culverts at a number of locations to improve drainage. We also covered most of the inner trails – which include the green, blue, red and part of the yellow with wood chips. All this work enabled us to ski early without waiting for a huge amount of snow. By the way, most of our trails were cut by volunteers with chain saws. All this didn't happen yesterday as it has been going on throughout the history of the club. During this off season we plan on putting in a few more culverts and bringing in an excavator to smooth out a few sections and to build up a few wet spots. To help beginners and seniors we may also work on improving a few tricky sections on some of the easier trails.

Our groomers were prepared for the small amount of snow we got this season. Over the last few years we have invested in grooming equipment such as the Alpina Sherpa which we call "the snow machine on steroids" and Ginzu grooming equipment which we used quite often this season since our big groomer, the Piston Bully, requires more snow. It should be noted here that the grooming equipment we have is the same as the grooming equipment that is used at all of the top ski areas in the world and all out of town visitors that come to our club are impressed with the quality of our trails.



A big thank-you goes out to our groomers Ray Denis, Rob White and Denis Brûlé who handled all of the grooming. This included getting up sometimes at 4 A.M. to get the trails ready for the day. We will be calling on volunteers to help with brush cutting this fall, an ongoing task that requires cutting new growth on the trails with brush cutters which the club owns.



Ski Trail Signs

Trail signs aren't really needed for members and visitors who are familiar with all the trails. But these signs are needed for beginners and visitors for whom the trail system is not well known. We need to have sufficient signage to provide information that can guide a skier back to the chalet. And we also want to have signs that will give a warning of any challenging sections of the trail system. In the past few years some new sections of trails have been put into service – such as the Loppet Shortcut. We think that we need to provide some additional trail signs to give better guidance for these new sections. And we have increased the amount of trail that is now 2-Way, meaning that skiers may ski in both directions. This works best if skiers adhere to the "Keep Right" rule. We plan to provide more signs for these 2-Way sections of trail. We are also hoping to make it clear that not all trails are 2-Way and we do not expect skiers to take the liberty of skiing in the wrong direction on a trail that is not 2-Way.



Facilities Report

~ Alan Heino

In our eleventh season in our new chalet, we continued to manage our facilities well. Unfortunately due to the continuation of the pandemic throughout the ski season, we were unable to host any club competitions at PSR. We however benefited from increased membership and demand for equipment rentals during the ski season and continued to hold some weekly events. We also had our highest number of ski waxing requests from our members and guests throughout the season, which were fulfilled by Brent.

For our day-to-day operations, the rental room opened for business on the weekend of December 19-20 and continued with weekday rental room hours: 3pm to 7pm and full day rental room hours on the weekends: 10am to 6pm. We held our Christmas period (December 19, 2020 – January 2, 2021) equipment rental promotion (30% discount on rentals and day fees) and Family Day Weekend rental promotion. The Christmas period rental promotion did particularly well and rentals continued to exceed expectations throughout January and most of February. Hopefully, many of this year's rental equipment users will consider purchasing memberships next year. With the shorter ski season this year, we closed the rental room effective March 22nd.

This year, we closely followed the PSR COVID-19 safety protocols throughout the ski season to maintain the safety of our staff, members, rental room customers and the public at large within the chalet. COVID-19 screening signs were placed at the entrances of the chalet, hand sanitizers were installed in the lounge and change rooms, floor markers were placed in the chalet to remind everyone of the physical distancing requirements and level 2 masks were purchased for staff to wear while working in the chalet. Occupancy limits were posted for the lounge, change rooms and locker room. Staff performed regular sanitizing of table tops and surfaces during their shifts. We also revised the layout of the rental room by creating two separate areas in order to keep incoming customers and outgoing customers safe as well as our staff.



The chalet was officially closed from: December 26, 2020 to February 15, 2021 to comply with the requirements of the province-wide lockdown held during this time. The chalet lounge, change rooms, washrooms and rental room were closed to the public during this time. All ski and snowshoe trails were kept open during. Equipment rentals were allowed, however, they needed to be booked in advance by telephone and rentals needed to be picked up at the back of the chalet. Sale of items like waxes was allowed to continue, however, customers had to call in their orders in and pick them up at the back of the chalet. PSR members who rent lockers were permitted access to the locker room only for the purpose of storing and accessing their equipment during normal operating hours. Following the conclusion of the lockdown, the chalet was re-opened with strict COVID-19 safety protocols in place in order to comply with the Porcupine Health Unit area moving into 'Orange – Restrict' category of the COVID-19 Response Framework effective February 16th

During the off-season the Porcupine Ski Runners lounge will be available to rent for interested parties that can meet or exceed all of PSR's COVID-19 safety protocols. To date, we have bookings again this year from Marc Tessier for his Brace and Artificial Limb clinics to be held on May 12-13, June 16-17 and July 21-22 with additional bookings anticipated. Additionally, Glencore has booked an Advanced First Aid Training Course on June 8-11.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other valued members of our Facilities committee: Gerry McNair, Ray Denis and Robert White, as well as all of our staff for all their contributions in managing the facilities in a first class manner.