HIGHLIGHTS

- **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** New board members, 2018-19 financial report
- **TRAILS:** More than 875 groomers hours and more than 2,000 kilometers on grooming machines
- **MEMBERSHIP:** Almost 1,000 current members (211 new members)
- **JUNIOR NORDICS:** 330 students, 65 coaches
- **ADULT LESSONS:** 100 students, 6 coaches
- **FXC:** 66 athletes (19 new to program)
- **BIATHLON:** 35 new members
- **TOURING:** 71 sign-ups, 7 leaders
- **SPONSORSHIP:** Nearly $50,000 of pledged community support
- **COMPETITION:** Despite the cold, almost all scheduled events held (Besh Cups relocated)
- **EVENTS:**
  - Ski Your Age (106 skiers)
  - Backcountry Film Festival (160-175 attendees)
  - Candelight Ski (150-200 skiers)
- **SONOT KKAAZOOT:** Held as a “virtual” event due to the pandemic; 76 participated
Hello NSCF members!

We had quite a 2019-20 ski season! The season began and ended amid storms, real and metaphorical, and while we might want to forget some (such as the pandemic that cut the season short) we had lots to celebrate.

The season started November 2 when NSCF groomers packed a thin layer of snow at Birch Hill Recreation Area. A few days and inches later, we were ready to start! Then came wind strong enough to cancel the first sessions of Junior Nordics and Adults Lessons. November 13 brought the first Wednesday Night Race, but competitors fought the wind more than each other.

After that, we had a great season. Good, plentiful snow and warm temps. Until the start of one of the coldest climatological winters (December to February) in Fairbanks in more than 40 years. Lessons, races, and events were postponed (sometimes postponed twice) due to the cold! But things held together, and we all got to practice our classic technique!

Despite the cold, Fairbanks skiers were warmed by the results of local skiers competing in Europe. Kendall Kramer won a silver medal as part of an American 4 x 3.3K relay team at the Junior World Championships and a bronze medal in the 5K Classic at the Youth Olympic Winter Games. David Norris, Logan Hanneman, and Becca Rorabaugh competed in World Cup races, with David and Logan both scoring World Cup points and becoming the first Fairbanks skiers to finish the Tour de Ski. Maggie Druckenmiller also competed in the Scandic Cup in Sweden.

In domestic racing, Fairbanks names kept popping up in the standings, especially some outstanding performances by Kendall Kramer and Ari Endestad at Junior Nationals.

Finally, the temperatures warmed. Just in time for the COVID-19 pandemic, which cut the organized season short with the social distancing requirement and ban on group gatherings. Classes, races, and events were canceled, but the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot, went on in virtual form. Several late March storms brought lots of snow, so people could get out and ski, but the increased grooming made a dent in an already low grooming budget. However, local skiers did respond with donations to keep things going!

The NSCF board and staff are already planning for the next ski season. We hope it will be as successful as this past season (and maybe with fewer storms).

Sincerely,
Chris Puchner, NSCF President
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From the BOD

Each year the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks holds a general membership meeting at the conclusion of the Sonot Kkaazoot. This meeting is used to update club members on significant happenings over the past year, or plans for the year to come. In addition, this meeting is used to elect new board members. Concerns about the spread of COVID-19 led to the cancellation of this year’s event, and it has so far proven unsafe to hold the type of large, in-person meeting we’ve come to expect. NSCF bylaws allow the Board to add new directors throughout the year, to be approved by a vote of membership at the next general meeting. We will continue to add new directors this way until such time as we are able to hold another general membership meeting.

The current board of directors is:

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<tr>
<th>OFFICERS</th>
<th>MEMBERS-AT-LARGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Puchner – President</td>
<td>Helena Rueter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Hansen – Vice President</td>
<td>Davya Flaharty*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Jamieson* – Treasurer</td>
<td>Peter Delamere</td>
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<td>Eric Buetow</td>
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* sitting by appointment of the board

If you have any interest in serving on the Board of Directors, or in becoming involved in the club in any other volunteer capacity, please reach out to Chris at president@nscfairbanks.org.

The 2018-19 financial report follows on the next page.
TRAILS

From Tom Helmers and Susan Sugai

Our trail groomers (Tom Helmers, Ken Coe, and Bill Husby) put in lots of hours and grooming kilometers to keep all our wonderful snow in great shape for skiing. Most of the work was done at Birch Hill Recreation Area, but “Bad” Bob Baker also put in many hours to prepare the Chena River for the Sonot Kkaazoot. (The Chena cooperated but not for long!) We also had many wonderful donors and sponsors, who helped these guys keep the machines out on the trails making for great skiing!

Here are some numbers (as of late March):

- More than 875 hours for Birch Hill grooming
- More than 840km on the PistenBully
- More than 1,300km on the five snowmachines used for grooming
- More than 40 hours by Bad Bob Baker preparing the Chena River for the Sonot
- More than $33,000 in individual donations to Birch Hill Trail Fund since October 1, 2019
- March Fairbanks snowfall (from National Weather Service): Normal — 4.9 inches, Actual — 27.5
- First day of grooming (Nov. 2, 2019), last day (Apr. 29, 2020)

MEMBERSHIP

From Rebecca Heaton

We started the ski season uncertain of how the state’s current fiscal crisis would impact membership in our club but I’m happy to report that membership remains strong with almost 1,000 current members. Despite the overall decrease in our borough population, budget cuts at the local level, this being the coldest winter we’ve seen in 44 years, the NSCF welcomed 211 new members to the ski club this season, many of whom were first-time skiers.

Many of our new members benefited from the REI grant program that allows us to make skiing more accessible by
offering free gear for beginners of all ages. This has been a huge boost to our club’s membership.

The ski club also established a new Masters program, led by Nick Crawford and Christina Turman, which has really been a wonderful addition to our club. We saw quite a few new members take advantage of high-quality classes such as women’s strength training and Interval classes. The adult lessons program continues to thrive as well, under the direction of Shelly Soderstrom.

NSCF staff are working hard to reach out across the community and diversify our membership by offering a wide range of family-friendly events and activities. Our Town Series races, the Candlelight Ski, and our Junior Nordics program are prime examples of this outreach. There truly is something for everyone.

I’m remaining cautiously optimistic that we will continue to see the same growth in the coming season. It’s been a great year and I’m already looking forward to next season… with hopefully, slightly better skate skiing conditions.

JUNIOR NORDICS AND ADULT LESSONS

From Shelly Soderstrom

We had about 330 kids through the winter season, and unfortunately, of course, we had to cancel spring. I ended up with 65 coaches, that is not counting the subs that stepped up to help out as well.

For adults we ended up with about 100 registered in the lessons, with a total of 6 coaches.

FXC

From Åsne Hoveid

- Number of FXC skiers overall: 66 athletes
- Number of FXC skiers new to the program: 19 athletes
- Number of FXC in the different programs: 20 athletes in COMP, 12 athletes in COMP BRIDGE, 34 athletes in DEVO
- Number of FXC sessions: Too many to count
- Number of FXC athletes qualifying for AWG: 4 athletes
- Number of FXC athletes qualifying for JN’s: 13 athletes

Photo by Eric Engman: FXC alum Ari Endestad with parents Sally and Audun after winning the UM20 10K classic at Junior Nationals
BIATHLON

From Hilary Saucy

Biathlon has had about 35 new members since September! We've served 55 kids and 10 adults during our programs this year, (although some have done multiple programs hence the 35 new member number.). We offered 8 unique programs throughout the season including both youth and adult options. 38 sessions total.

We’ve held one novice race so far that drew around 20 participants, roughly half of which were brand new.

“It’s been a really fun season rebuilding the Biathlon program in Fairbanks! We started off by offering a 4-wk fall program where interest exploded. I capped the class at 12 and had a waitlist of at least that many! We had no idea the level of interest out there. The following sessions also filled nearly instantly to capacity.

“I think the most rewarding part of rebuilding the Biathlon club has been seeing the enthusiasm of so many young athletes. At one session early on I had split the kids into two groups, a ski game group and a shooting group. At the end of the session one young participant asked me, ‘Are we going to do this every week? (Playing games and shooting)’. My response of yes was met with an emphatic ‘sweet!’ It doesn’t take much to put a smile on a kid’s face!”

Photo by Jim Pasek from March 2019

SPONSORSHIP

From Chel Ethun

The 2019-2020 Fairbanks ski season can be summed up in one word: memorable. As many know by now, Fairbanks experienced record cold for a record number of weeks. It was a tough time to be a skier when the mercury never seems to get above -20. That said, the Fairbanks community embraced winter in all its glory. Local community sponsors were no different. This year the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks saw nearly $50,000 of pledged community support for events such as the Turkey Day Relays, Town Race Series, Distance Races and Trails Support. Sponsors were flexible and worked with the club when event dates were adjusted to accommodate the cold.
New sponsors for this year included Walter and Marita Babula’s support of the Junior Nordic program by helping to provide every Jr. Nordic skier with a neck warmer, which this year, seemed to be an essential gear item. Wedgewood Resort, who has been a long-time supporter of NSCF events, became the race sponsor for Town Race Series 3. The trails program saw two new supporters: Subway of Alaska sponsored the Terrain Garden and Recon LLC became a trails supporter.

TOURING

From Eric Troyer

Despite some stumbles, the ski tour season was a success. The River Park Trails Tour at Chena Lake Recreation had to be rescheduled twice because of the cold, but it was finally held on Feb 22. One tour by Phil Marshall in the Fox area had to be moved because of an unbroken trail, traps near the trail, and wolf tracks! Fortunately, Phil found another place to hold the tour. And the pandemic shortened the season a bit, so the below numbers surely would have been bigger.

- Tour sign-ups: 71 (some people went to more than one tour)
- Number of tours: 9
- Tour leaders: 7 (Phil Marshall, Stan Justice, Lisa Stuby, Joel Young, Bob and Sharon Baker, Steven Hansen)

Photo by Eric Troyer: Bad Bob and Sharon Baker’s Moose Mountain Sunrise Tour

COMPETITION

From John Estle

It was a very long, cold season. The cold temperatures produced the greatest number, by far, of postponements, re-scheduled events and relocated events in the approximately 25 years that I have been organizing competition events.

We did end up holding all of our scheduled events in the Town Series, Distance Series and Turkey Day Relays, as well as the Region VI Championships. The Besh Cup races were relocated to Southcentral – one day at Kincaid Park and one day at Government Peak Recreation Area.
EVENTS
From Jen Delamere, Carrie Dershin and Lisa Druckenmiller

- Ski Your Age in Kilometers: 106 skiers (22 skied their age); 1424 kilometers skied
- Candlelight Ski: 150-200 skiers
- Backcountry Film Festival:
  - Attendees: Packed house with chairs into the hallway. Estimated 160 to 175 people.
  - Financial: Net $1,709 (also, a $200 trails donation)
  - Volunteers: Peter Delamere (1.5 hrs); Pat (4 hrs) and Lisa Druckenmiller (6 hrs).

Photo by Carrie Dershin: Candelight Ski

SONOT KKAAZOOT
From Eric Troyer

Due to the pandemic, the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot could not be held in its traditional format. However, thanks to organizer Bob Baker with help from Susan Sugai and Eric Troyer, we were able to hold a “virtual” event, with people submitting times, distances and reports.

In the end, 76 people participated. Some people did multiple versions of the race. Below is a breakdown by category:

- 50k: 11 entries
- 40k: 12 entries
- 20k: 41 entries
- Creative: 25 entries

That’s it! See you on the ski trails next season!