HIGHLIGHTS

- TRAILS: More than 1600 groomer hours; December/January storms
- MEMBERSHIP: Nearly 1,000 current members (347 new members)
- JUNIOR NORDICS: More than 250 students, more than 40 coaches
- FXC: Normal schedule of training, racing; 10 go to Jr. Nationals.
- FXC Masters: More than 80 Masters skiers
- COMPETITION: Normal schedule; cold winter; crazy February; new chip system
- ADULT LESSONS: 5 coaches, many students: 52 (session I), 27 (sess. II), 28 (sess. III)
- BIATHLON: New head coach; Arctic Winter Games Trials
- SONOT KKAZOOT: Non-virtual; all Birch Hill; 55 finishers (10K), 39 (30K), and 36 (50K)
- TOURS AND EVENTS: Several tours; Ski Your Age despite storms; Backcountry Film Fest
- SPONSORSHIP: Many events, many sponsors; many trail fund donors and sponsors
- OTHER CLUB ITEMS OF INTEREST: New PistenBully; new building plans; trail connection
- NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL: Fairbanks skiers take podiums, awards

John Estle photo: After a good dump of snow in late December, we had a rain event, which left a sheen of ice on the snow. That would have been challenging enough, but then we got another good dump of snow.
NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings NSCF Members!

Below please find a synopsis of the club’s programs and activities for the fiscal year that ended September 20, 2022. NSCF programs mostly returned to a more normal schedule of in-person training and racing, while the club remained financially sound. Membership grew slightly and participation increased or remained steady for most of our programs and activities.

Chris Puchner, NSCF President

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For many years the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks has held a general membership meeting at the conclusion of the Sonot Kkaazoot. This meeting was used to update club members on significant happenings over the past year, and/or plans for the year to come. In addition, this meeting is used to elect new board members; NSCF bylaws allow the Board to appoint new directors throughout the year, to be approved by a vote of membership at the next general meeting. Concerns about the spread of COVID-19 during the Omicron surge led to the cancellation of this event for the third year in a row, as we deemed it unsafe to hold a large, indoor, and in-person meeting. We will continue to add new directors this way until such time as we are able to hold another general membership meeting, hopefully this coming spring!

The current Board of Directors is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICERS</th>
<th>MEMBERS AT LARGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Puchner -- President</td>
<td>Dan Darrow*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Karns* -- Secretary</td>
<td>Pam Laker*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Jamieson* -- Treasurer</td>
<td>Peter Delamere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jon Denton*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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@nsfairbanks.org.

Unaudited Income and Expenses for the last fiscal year (ended Sept. 30, 2022) which would have been presented at the Annual Meeting follow. The NSCF finished the fiscal year $133,126 to the good, we anticipate allocating most of this cash to the Equipment Replacement Fund to cover the addition of a new PistenBully100 to the grooming fleet (purchased by the FNSB using American Recovery Act funding) and the decline in the value of the fund associated with the significant fall of the financial markets since the beginning of 2022.

Unaudited Income of $593,055 Allocated by Percentages per Category, Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 30, 2022

Unaudited Expense of $459,929 Allocated by Percentages per Category, Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 30, 2022
TRAILS

By Tom Helmers, Head Groomer

We (groomers Tom Helmers, Ken Coe, Bill Husby, and Travis Kulp) first started packing trails on October 2. The last day of grooming was April 24. Even though there was lots of snowpack left, it could not hold the weight of a Skandic snow machine.

The year started with skimpy snowfall. We hauled snow out of the lower parking lot multiple times and made snow for most of November for thin spots out on the trails and for under the Cross Country Ski Center bridge. We did not have enough snow to use the PistenBully until mid-December.

Then came the December-January snow-rain event. It took almost a month to get all the trails back to normal grooming after that. (Ed note: Last year Tom reported that we had a “lack of meaningful fresh snow for most of December through February.”)

While we did a lot of grooming this year, the grooming crew does more than just groom the trails. Our job duties include assisting with events, equipment maintenance, and summer trail maintenance. For example, a sinkhole developed on the White Cub trail in late May. The club got a grant to do trail improvements throughout the trail system this summer; work should start in mid- to late-August.

Here are some season numbers:
- 1657 hours of work (four groomers, from May to May, 2021-2022)
- Used 370 gallons of gasoline
- Used 1200 gallons of diesel
- Put in 7980 kilometers on the grooming equipment

Some other interesting numbers: The last day of grooming from the last few seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>April 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Three Musketeers of Birch Hill: Ken, Bill, and Tom. (Travis must be D’Artagnan.)
JUNIOR NORDICS
By Susan Schwartz, Junior Nordics Coordinator

We started this season by holding the Fairbanks Ski Fest with the UAF Ski Team on Friday, October 1. Our intention was to encourage membership for both NSCF and UAF Booster Club. We had in-person registration for Junior Nordics, and UAF offered a FREE dinner for anyone who was a member of NSCF and the UAF Ski Team Booster Club. The event was a big success and by the end we had 95 Junior Nordic skiers signed up. Online registration opened October 2.

In addition to the regular class sessions, we also held the Candy Cane Romp (COVID version) on Dec 18. I had two sessions offered with 98 skiers participating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Skiers</th>
<th>Volunteer coaches</th>
<th>Parent helpers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>~250</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>~244</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3 (Spring)</td>
<td>~70</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMBERSHIP
By Rebecca Heaton, Membership Coordinator

As of mid-March, we had 963 current members in the NSCF. Despite the continuing challenges the Fairbanks community faces with the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and population decline, support for the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks remains strong and vibrant. We had 347 new members this season (including families and children). Though numbers are slightly down from 2020, we continue to see an overall increase in membership compared to life before the pandemic.
FXC

By Jeff Tucker, FXC Head Coach

After one-and-a-half pandemic-impacted ski seasons, we were able to return to a normal schedule of training and racing. This season, 60 skiers participated in year-round FXC Devo, Prep, and Comp programs. We had a full calendar year of practices, competitions trips, and plenty of adventures along the way.

Highlights from the summer training include soccer, obstacle courses, scavenger hunts, team hikes in the mountains, rollerskiing, and a rainy but adventurous training camp at Mount Prindle.

In December we went to Anchorage for the first two Besh Cup races.

After the holiday break, some athletes competed at the Senior National Championships in Utah, we also had the third and fourth Besh Cups races in Soldotna, and more Kinross Town Series races in Fairbanks. February was especially busy with NSCF hosting the RMISA Nanook Invite, Besh Cup races #5-6, and the ASAA State meet in rapid succession.

Ten FXC athletes qualified for the 2022 Junior Nationals in Minneapolis. Three FXC athletes earned all-American honors, placing top 10 in their age group; Abigail Haas in the classic sprint, Josh Baurick in the 10km classic mass start, and Wells Wappett in the 5km skate.

In late March, FXC hosted the Interior Youth Festival, sponsored by Conoco Phillips, at Birch Hill. More than 80 grade-school skiers participated in the sprint, ski cross, and mass start races. The event was staffed by FXC comp and prep athletes.

This season wouldn’t have been possible without assistant coaches Tjarn Bross, Jordan Laker-Morris, Warren Rosholt, and Tobias Albrigtsen. Additional thanks to parent volunteer coordinator Pam Laker, and the other volunteers who helped this season run so smoothly.
ADULT LESSONS

By Susan Schwartz, Adult Lessons Coordinator

We had more participants in 2022/21 than this season, but I now realize this was likely because people were not traveling last season due to COVID. In general things went well despite some challenges. In Session 1, several classes had to be canceled due to colder than normal temperatures. The coaches offered make-ups to their classes, so everyone got the opportunity to ski four times. I offered Intermediate Skate and Classic lessons during the spring session of Junior Nordics but had to cancel them due to not enough interest. I will continue trying to build enthusiasm for Nordic Skiing Adult Lessons next season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Skiers</th>
<th>Coaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FXC MASTERS

By Christina Turman, Head Coach, FXC Masters

We enjoyed returning to a more normal season, including in-person racing and larger class sizes. We increased our class offerings and held masters training seven times a week all winter. By offering an array of classes, we were able to better fit people’s needs and schedules.

Our weekly schedule included Women’s Strength Training; on-snow Strength, Agility, and Speed; Power Hour lunch workouts; Intro to Interval Training; Intermediate & Advanced Intervals, Advanced Technique; and on Sundays a Long-Distance Ski.

Thanks to our great coaches we were able to create a fun team environment for master skiers to continue to develop their cross-country ski skills, improve their fitness and strength, and build community. We look forward to continuing training together come June. FXC Masters will

FXC Masters enjoying the sunset at the University of Alaska Fairbanks ski trails. Photo by Christina Turman.
offer interval training and strength training classes throughout the summer.

FXC Masters by the numbers:

- Number of FXC Masters Skiers: 83
- Number of coached sessions this season: 115
- Number of coaches: 4

COMPETITION

*By John Estle, Competition Events Director*

We compensated for the lack of in-person racing last season due to COVID with a busy season in 2021-22.

November-January was basically a normal race schedule, with four Kinross Town Series Races, the Beaver Sports Turkey Day Relays and two of three Frank Soos Distance Series races. However, almost without exception we had cold days for racing. Of those race days, only one was warmer than +6F.

February was crazy with UAF-hosted collegiate races, Besh #5 and #6, Region 6 Championships, Distance Series #3, and the ASAA Championships. The cold weather continued and resulted in one canceled race – Besh Cup #6.

The huge amount of volunteer hours required to produce those events was crammed into less than four weeks. Without our great crew of volunteers, pulling off a race calendar like that would not have been possible.

In addition, we were learning how to use our new Zone4 chip timing system and the Zone4 photo finish camera that we purchased along with the chips and the other hardware. (See story on the timing system in the April Alaska Nordic Skier.)

The biggest highlight of the season was hosting, for the first time ever, the Nanook Invitational collegiate races featuring Rocky Mountain Intercollegiate Ski Association (RMISA) teams from the universities of Colorado, Denver, Utah, Montana State University, and UAA, not
to mention the host Nanooks. The visiting teams were very happy with the Birch Hill facility and trails, and with the quality of race organization. Another highlight was having the temperature finally get above about 0F for the ASAA Championships.!

Looking at next season, our calendar will be back to normal through February. After that, we will host the 2023 Junior Nationals.

Excerpted from a longer report by John. See the full report here: https://tinyurl.com/4vn9rf3e

**BIATHLON**

*By Jim Pasek, Biathlon Director*

We had our usual six-to-eight-week summer, fall, winter, and spring sessions for youth and some fall and spring masters sessions. One highlight this season was the addition of our new head coach, Warren Rosholt. Warren’s background is with the National Guard biathlon team, and he has raced many international biathlon races.

The big highlight of the season was hosting races 3 and 4 of the Arctic Winter Games Trials. This occurred the first weekend of April and was the largest biathlon race event in at least 10 years at the Birch Hill Biathlon Range. The weekend brought in 33 biathletes from Anchorage, Galena, and Fairbanks. For many of the Fairbanks racers it was their first-time racing, and they did a fantastic job representing Fairbanks!

Thank you to all the volunteers, coaches, parents, and biathletes for a great winter season. We thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to more clinics and racing in Fairbanks. And thank you again to Tom Helmers and the other groomers for the amazing job they do for our program and the NSCF!
SONOT KKAAZOOT

By Eric Troyer, Alaska Nordic Skier Fairbanks Editor

After two years of being held in a virtual format, the Denali State Bank Sonot Kkaazoot was finally held in-person again! However, because the Chena River ice is no longer predictably safe due to climate change, the race was held entirely at Birch Hill (and will be in the future). When that happened in the past, Race Director Bad Bob Baker shortened the courses to make up for the added elevation gain. However, this year the races were full-length (10, 30 and 50K), making the Sonot probably the toughest 50K in Alaska.

Unfortunately, it also marks the first time no SCUM member finished the 50k course, including SCUM Mother Susan Sugai. However, Susan did finish the 30k course, keeping up her streak of doing every Sonot.

For this, the 35th Annual Sonot Kkaazoot, we had 55 finishers for the 10K, 39 for the 30K, and 36 for the 50K. Galen Johnston and Rosie Fordham won the 50K version. Meredith Schwartz and Kieran Kaufman won the 30K version. And Elias Engman and Hannah Delamere won the 10K version. See the full results here: https://sonotkkaazoot.org/results/

Note for next year: World Masters in Austria next year conflicts with the Sonot Kkaazoot so Bad Bob will be looking for someone to direct the Sonot during the week of the event. If you have any interest in helping with this, contact Bob at: bobandsharonbaker@gmail.com

TOURS AND EVENTS

By Eric Troyer, Tour Coordinator

We held several tours and events, though all were still affected by the pandemic. The Rat Ponds Ski Tour was again a do-it-yourself affair, with signs and grooming. It proved to be popular with many people taking it. A handul of regular tours were offered. The Skiathon tour/race, on the UAF trails, was also DIY. As was the Backcountry Film Festival.
The Annual Moose Mountain Sunrise Tour kicked off the touring season in December with 32 attendees. Though it was under cloudy skies, the conditions were excellent. Other in-person tours included the Skarland Ski Trail Tour (9 participants), Tour de Pearl Creek (5), Rosie Creek Ramble (15), and Two Rivers Elementary School.

Ski Your Age in Kilometers was delayed after back-to-back snowstorms (with rain) and was finally held on January 1 under less-than-ideal conditions. It was based in the Warming Hut, instead of the Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center which was closed due to the snowfall, and temperatures for the event hovered around 20 below. Despite all that, more than 50 skiers participated, cranking out more than 900 kilometers and raised more than $850 for FXC.

The Backcountry Film Festival was virtual once again. However, this time participation was down considerably from the year before (10 individual and 13 household tickets sold). Despite that, the event still earned the club just over $500 and entertained those who watched.

SPONSORSHIP

By Michelle Ethun, Sponsorship Coordinator

This season was a welcome return to normal with in-person competitions, events, and programming, albeit with a few Covid mitigations. Thanks to our competition season sponsors and their dedication, we were able to host the full Town Race Series, Distance Series, and annual events such as the Golden Heart Trail Run, Turkey Day Relays, Ski Your Age in Kilometers, Interior Youth Festival, and Sonot Kkaazoot. Sponsorship for major events helps to offset the costs for the quality grooming, staging, and timing. The Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks values these local business partnerships:
• Town Series Race Sponsors: Kinross Fort Knox (series sponsor), Fairbanks Youth Sports, Goldstream Sports, Fountainhead Hotels
• Frank Soos Memorial Distance Series: Chris Puchner, Bruce Jamieson, Owen Hanley, and Eric Buetow
• Golden Heart Trail Run: Dr. Kate Carey
• Turkey Day Relays: Beaver Sports
• Ski Your Age: Wentz Orthodontics and Chris Knott, Edward Jones
• Interior Youth Festival: ConocoPhillips
• Sonot Kkaazoot: Denali State Bank

Trail donors and program donors contributed over $55,000 throughout the season. We rely on individual and business donations to cover programming costs for Junior Nordics, Biathlon, Adult Lessons, FXC, and trail grooming. This year we started a new program to allow program donors to renew annual donations via a mailer; we will continue this option each fall. We would like to acknowledge the local businesses who donate to the programs and trail grooming fund: Recon, L64 Design, North Pole Physical Therapy, Interior Women’s Health, The Woodway, North Pole Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Andrea Earnest DDS, Three Tier Alaska, and HB Rueter Engineering.

OTHER CLUB ITEMS OF INTEREST
By Eric Troyer, Alaska Nordic Skier Fairbanks Editor

In addition to the program reports above, several other things happened this past season that are important for club members to know.

TRAIL FORKS
Many local ski trails, including those at the Birch Hill Recreation Area, are now on Trail Forks, which has a website and an app. There is a free version of the app, which you can get from a variety of app stores. To use it, search for a trail or an area, such as “Birch Hill Recreation Area,” or navigate using the map. Select “Nordic Ski” under the activity type dropdown menu. Thanks to John Estle for doing most of the work on this project. See the Trail Forks website at: www.trailforks.com/
NEW PISTENBULLY GROOMER

At the request of the NSCF Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Rec. obtained funding to purchase a new PistenBully groomer this summer for the club’s use.

To be able to purchase the equipment, which cost a little over $300,000, NSCF volunteers – especially super volunteer Bruce Jamieson – worked with Fairbanks Borough personnel to use some of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds available to the borough.

The club’s current PistenBully is 10 years old. A second one is needed if there are mechanical issues with the current machine. In addition, a second machine will speed up and allow more frequent grooming of the current trail system. It will also permit the NSCF to expand grooming of any additions to the current trail system (see story below on the possibility of a Birch Hill-ADMA connection).

BIRCH HILL ADMA CONNECTOR

Efforts are continuing to connect trails at Birch Hill to trails in the Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge and the ADMA trails.

At least three important components would make this connection possible: an underpass or overpass to cross the Steese Highway, creation of a protected area of land between the Steese Highway and the Creamer’s refuge, and military permission because the preferred option for connector trails would run through Fort Wainwright land.

Alternative connector trails are also under consideration.

Several government agencies have officially expressed support for this concept. The plan would be about more than just trails. If successful, the effort would have the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchase 25 acres of land at the northwest corner of the Steese and Johansen highways, where it would build a new office facility and interpretive center, and trailhead.

On the east side of the Steese, the proposed trails would need to go through the edge of undeveloped Birch Hill Cemetery land and onto Fort Wainwright. The non-motorized trail portion would connect to the non-motorized Sunnyside Trail, already on Fort Wainwright.
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

By Eric Troyer, Alaska Nordic Skier Fairbanks editor

While not part of club events and programs, we do like to keep track of Fairbanksans on the state, national and international stages. Here’s a recap of what we kept track of:

Becca Rorabaugh was named the SuperTour Sprint Champion; Owen Hanley, Sr., was named to the U.S. Masters Team (and won bronze in his age class in the World Masters 10K classical race); Shalane Frost set an overall course record at Minnesota’s Arrowhead 135 (miles) race (she also won the ski divisions of the Chena River to Ridge, Tanana River Challenge, and White Mountains 100); UAF won the Alaska Nordic Cup over UAA and took seventh place (third among cross-country teams) at the NCAA Ski Championships; Logan Hanneman and David Norris competed on the World Cup circuit; David Norris won the Tour of Anchorage, took second in the American Birkebeiner (narrowly missing the win), and took second in the 30K freestyle in the US Cross Country Championships (aka Senior Nationals); and both Hanneman and Norris were named alternates to the US Olympic Ski Team (though they ultimately did not get to participate).

That’s it! See you on the ski trails!