

August 31, 2023

City of Prince George  
1600 Patricia Boulevard  
Prince George BC V2L 3V9

Dear Mayor & Council,

I am writing to express my endorsement for the request of a letter of support from the City of Prince George for the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club's application to expand its access to crown land in its operating licence.

I have been a member of the club since 1988 when I made Prince George my permanent home after many summers spent working here. Ironically at that time we lived on Catherine Drive, which is just beyond the western border of the trails. We couldn't believe our luck to live so close to such a beautiful facility that was clearly a labour of love and so well taken care of by a group of dedicated volunteers. It was affordable and accessible, and it remains so. Over the years I became more involved in the club – from Jackrabbits when our kids were growing up to becoming a race official and part of the organizing committee for the many ski races we have hosted over the last decade. I have had the opportunity to share the trails with local friends and international visitors alike – whether hiking, biking, berry picking, skiing or snowshoeing; there's something for every season, every age and every ability.

Naturally it's very exciting to share our facility with athletes and coaches from around the country and world when we have hosted big events. There is also no doubt about the financial benefit these events bring to our local and provincial economy. We have never received anything less than rave reviews for these races. Skiers love our courses, our facilities and our northern city and its setting. They can't believe that 20 minutes from almost anywhere you can be in these quiet beautiful woods and spectacular, well-maintained trails.

But more importantly is the value the club brings to the well being of our own community. On any day you will see several packed parking lots – winter, spring, summer or fall – people are out enjoying life - with their kids, their dogs, their friends and often just themselves. There is no doubt as to the benefits for our well being that exercise and being in nature provide – mentally and physically. On any winter weekday you will see many groups of school kids with big smiles on their faces – perhaps discovering this place in their own backyard for the first time. It is not unusual to cross paths with moose, deer, rabbits and bears. As the Covid epidemic and the ever-increasing impacts of climate change have shown us – building resilience close to home is important. Having a refuge like CNSC is important. And remember, it is a non-profit, volunteer run organization. The board of directors have always shown themselves to be respectful land stewards – whether doing pine beetle mitigation, protecting mature trees from the latest spruce and fir beetle infestations and careful and purposeful trail building. The board has almost always had more than one professional forester on its roster.

You really cannot underestimate the value of shared passions in how strong and caring communities are built. CNSC is a perfect example of this. I hope you will agree that an application for further access to the small remaining crown land parcels to mitigate the inevitable loss of trails on the private side makes good sense for the long-term health of the citizens of our beautiful city.

Thank-you,  
Annie Hayes  
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