



August 29, 2023

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

Mayor and Council,

On behalf of Industrial Forestry Service Ltd. (IFS), please accept this letter of support for an expansion of the areas managed by the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club (CNSC). IFS has been a part of the Prince George community since 1952. Our staff have had the pleasure of enjoying CNSC trails and facilities since the ski club opened at this location in 1984. A number of our staff have served as members of the club, volunteered for both winter and summer events, and have utilized the CNSC facilities for in-house Health and Wellness Days amongst our employees.

CNSC has gained a reputation across Canada and Internationally as being a world class facility. As a race volunteer, I can not count the number of times I have received compliments and praise from elite, competitive skiers regarding the conditions, the facilities, the trails, and the people of the CNSC club and Prince George as a whole. The trail network has been set up in such a way that race organizers can adjust the difficulty and challenge of any given race from extremely easy, to some of the most challenging courses in North America. As a result, CNSC's reputation is undoubtedly going to attract bigger and more prestigious cross-country skiing and biathlon events that will benefit all of Prince George – if the facility can be maintained at its current level of service and if possible expanded.

In recent years there has been an expansion of the Lafarge Gravel Pit into the extremely popular dog trail ski network. This part of the CNSC trail network is part of a private land use agreement between CNSC and Lafarge. It has been very generous of Lafarge to enable trail development on their property; however, this generosity was never expected to last forever. To ensure the quality and size of the trail system at the CNSC continues to be of international caliber, it is imperative that this loss of terrain be replaced. The simplest way of doing so appears to be through a new Licence of Occupation (LOO).

In January 2023, IFS conducted a site assessment of proposed LOO areas and found the location to have terrain that is well suited for trail expansion. Generally speaking, the proposed LOO area consists of a large mix of coniferous and deciduous trees. There is evidence of old, selective harvesting in the area where loggers harvested the spruce trees and left the Douglas fir. As a result, the trees in the region have ages ranging from 70 to 150 years (i.e., only large, merchantable trees were measured; not the younger regeneration growing in the understory), with some areas containing a sparse scattering of

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older Douglas fir trees. The majority of the proposed LOO area is not considered “Old Growth” based on current definitions advocated by the BC Ministry of Forests. However, the excellent growing sites often make trees in this area look older than they actually are, as some of their sizes are quite large. The proposed LOO areas are in beautiful, vibrant, and diverse tree stands that could easily be made more accessible to the general public by the ecologically-friendly expansion of cross-country ski trails.

During our field assessment of the site, some forest health concerns were noted - especially regarding the presence of Douglas fir and spruce beetle, and a noticeable increase in recent windthrow. Expansion of the CNSC trails into the proposed LOO areas would enable the club to potentially carry out fire smart activities in areas that are beginning to experience higher tree mortality and a buildup of dry fuel on the forest floor. In addition, a ski trail network would provide improved accessibility to the area in the event of a wildfire.

In summary, CNSC is a facility that Prince George residents, can be extremely proud of. However, efforts to maintain its international reputation and status requires diligence on the part of mayor and city council to ensure complacency does not prevail. The benefits of this club to the community reach far beyond its economic value. The facility is accessible, affordable and does a great deal towards promoting physical health, mental health, stress relief, and offers a sense of community and belonging to all who partake in what the club has to offer. It is for these reasons that IFS supports the expansion of the facility into the proposed LOO areas.

I confirm that this Letter of Support may be published to the online Prince George City Council meeting agenda.

Sincerely,



Paul Schuetz
Vice President – Forestry Operations



Rob Schuetz
President