

# The Calgary Ski Club

## Business Plan

To meet the requirements and template of  
The City of Calgary, Community Vitality & Protection  
Lease & Licence of Occupation Manual

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### **3. Executive Summary**

The Calgary Ski Club is a volunteer-run, non-profit club with a long and proud history in the pioneering and development of both downhill and cross country skiing in the Banff and Lake Louise areas and also in Calgary. It was formed in 1920 and incorporated in 1935.

The Objectives of the club set out in 1935 are to encourage, promote and advance the sport of skiing in all its branches and allied sports, and to cooperate with other ski bodies for the advancement of skiing.

The Mission Statement approved at the 1996 AGM is to promote the joy of skiing in all its diversity and to foster healthy living and adventure year-round among recreational skiers and outdoors enthusiasts.

The club has deep and intertwined roots with both the ski industry and community having decades-long partnerships with 12 major organizations or groups including ski shops, ski areas, Canadian Ski Council, Banff National Park, Calgary Parks & Rec. and the Glenbow Museum.

The core business of the club is cross country and downhill skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing.

The club offers ski trips, ski lessons and coaching using professional instructors, many trained by the club. We also offer hiking in the summer and ski conditioning in the autumn.

We operate 2 major annual events: the New & Used Ski Sale since 1963 and the Lake Louise Loppet since 1979. We have provided cross country skiing for the public at Shaganappi Golf Course since 1992.

We have worked with the National Parks since 1979 to cut and later upgrade two major cross country ski trails at Lake Louise for the loppet but more importantly for the general public throughout the ski season.

Business goals and objectives include membership growth, obtaining more volunteers and directors to help run the club, training more members as ski instructors, coaches, race officials, tracksetters to help run the club and its programs and to train more members in first aid, avalanche awareness and leadership to offer safer club programs.

There are on-going needs to continue to develop the Annual Ski Sale, the Lake Louise Loppet and Skiing at Shaganappi Golf Course; also to expand ski lesson programs to introduce more Calgarians of all ages to the joys of winter outdoors as part of a healthy active lifestyle.

The market place for the Calgary Ski Club is Calgary and adjacent towns. We wish to attract customers of all ages who are active, or wish to be active in outdoor recreation, especially skiing in all its variety.

The club has been diligent in doing market research, including the 2000 report for Calgary Parks & Rec. on Cross country urban skiing at Shaganappi Golf Course and initiating the 2001 Calgary survey of cross country skiing, which was conducted in partnership with City of Calgary and Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation.

The club is constantly studying marketing ideas and programs developed in the USA and obtained from Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. for school kids and to encourage people with no family heritage of winter activities to try skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing.

The Calgary Ski Club occupies a unique position as the only club in Calgary to offer both downhill and cross country skiing for skiers and boarders of all ages. Also the club is a recreational ski club not a performance racing club. We are the only club in Calgary to operate a ski school offering recreational ski lessons, season-long cross country ski coaching and Learn to Loppet training.

The club has a long-standing viable model for achieving club goals with four officers, a board of directors and also an Advisory Council of senior members with knowledge, wisdom and experience in both the sport of skiing, business and club affairs.

The competitive advantage of the club lies in its lasting and proven track record, very strong finances, a history since 1996 of fund-raising for special programs, strong, well-developed connections to the ski industry and liaison with other organizations over decades, together with a core of passionate creative volunteer members.

## 4. About the Organization

### Club Objectives:

APPLICATION FOR INCORPORATION UNDER THE SOCIETIES ACT 1924.  
Registered MAY 9, 1935 The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies

WE, the undersigned, hereby declare that we desire to form a Society under the Societies Act 1924, and that

1. The name of the Society is "CALGARY SKI CLUB".
2. The objects of the Society are; -
  - (a). To encourage, promote and advance the sport of skiing in all its branches, and allied sports; to cooperate with other ski bodies for the advancement of skiing, and to further develop the friendship and good fellowship of its members.
  - (b). To purchase, take on lease, hire, or otherwise acquire and hold lands or buildings or any interest therein, for the purposes of park, sport, recreation, amusement and entertainment.
  - (c). To erect buildings on such lands or any of them for the purposes of skiing and other sports and amusements and entertainment.
  - (d). To use, convert, adapt and maintain all or any of such lands, buildings and premises for the purposes aforesaid, or any of them, with their usual and necessary adjuncts.
  - (e). To encourage and promote lawful amateur games and exercises.
3. The operations of the Society are to be chiefly carried on in the City of Calgary and surrounding district, in the Province of Alberta.

DATED at the City of Calgary, in the Province of Alberta, this 15th day of April. A.D. 1935.

## **History of the Calgary Ski Club**

The Calgary Ski Club is a volunteer-run, non-profit club with a proud history in the pioneering and development of skiing in Alberta and has been a major driving force dedicated to the promotion and evolution of skiing and the development of the Banff-Lake Louise area into a major skiing centre. The development of skiing at Mount Norquay, at Temple Lodge, Lake Louise and at Sunshine owes a lot to the trips and later ski trains organized by the Calgary Ski Club. In recent years, the club has assisted development of cross-country skiing at Lake Louise.

Since 1992, the club has trackset Shaganappi Golf Course and worked with Calgary Parks & Rec. to better develop and promote cross country skiing in central Calgary.

### **The beginnings:**

Founded originally in 1920 by a handful of enthusiastic skiers, the Calgary Ski Club organized a ski jumping contest near Christ Church, Elbow Park, in Calgary as one of its first events. The club in those days was an informal small group of skiing enthusiasts.

The Club was incorporated in 1935 thanks to the enthusiasm of a young son (John) of the Southam newspaper family who was transferred to Calgary to learn the newspaper business but brought his experience of setting up a ski club in Gatineau to Calgary. Immediately the club started organising trips to ski at the newly opened Sunshine, Temple and Skoki Lodges and at Mt. Norquay. Various downhill ski competitions were organised at this time by the CSC. The Calgary Ski Club hosted the Dominion Ski Championships at Mt. Norquay in 1937 and 1940.

After the War, the local Ski Patrol was started by members of the Calgary Ski Club to increase safety on the ski hills. Downhill ski lessons were started for both school children and adults. These were in partnership with the Calgary Herald (a legacy of John Southam) and were held at the club's facility in Bowness. By the 1950's, there were 40 registered club ski patrollers at the Bowness and Regal golf courses in Calgary and at the Turner Valley, Mt. Norquay and Temple ski hills.

Snow availability has always been a problem for skiers. One story and picture in The Calgary Herald of December 1948 describes Calgary Ski Club volunteers testing a grain blower on the municipal golf course. Snow was shovelled into the hopper and force-fed into a blower and thrown up to 60 feet. The plan was to collect snow from city skating rinks and other sources, truck it to the ski hill and spray it over icy or bare slopes.

By the 1960's the Club had a major Alpine racing program. This stimulated the Calgary Ski Club to play a major role in the various unsuccessful Winter Olympic bids prior to 1972.

Snow mountaineering was introduced and courses in "Snowcraft", including avalanche awareness and map-reading, were developed and taught by Russ Bradley of the Calgary Ski Club in the 1950's while in the 1960's assistance was given to the Alpine Club to construct some of its backcountry huts on Wapta Icefields.

### **The New & Used Ski Sale:**

The original New & Used Ski Sale in Canada was started by Jean Robb of the Calgary Ski Club in 1963, and with the cooperation of the local ski shops it became the model for similar ski swaps in Vancouver, Toronto and elsewhere.

The Ski Patrol joined the management in 1966 and the Lake Louise Ski Club joined in 1971, when Dee Read started the clothing sale and the Reads and their young family left the Calgary Ski Club to give the

family a better racing experience. Given the success of Ken Read, this paid off well for both skiing and the Ski Sale.

Starting small in someone's basement, the Ski Sale moved to the Calgary Tennis Club and then in 1965 to the Agriculture Building at Stampede Park, where it stayed until the Round-Up Centre opened in 1984. There it remained until 1996 when the Ski Sale moved to Max Bell Centre, with better parking and lower costs.

The Ski Sale did more than simply pioneer the consignment and selling of ski equipment and clothing; it was a pioneer of computer inventory control. In 1977, a deal was made to use a Wang mini-computer valued at \$250,000 and a new program to keep track of inventory. The very large mini-computer was wheeled into the Agriculture Building for the 4 days of the Ski Sale. Subsequent computer technology changes have led to the present 15-computer PC network with a custom program for inventory control and cash sales management.

The Ski Sale is proud of its long association with local ski shops and ski areas. Originally helped by Ozzie LaRue (Ozzie's Ski Shop), Ethan and Bruce Compton (Premier Sports), Al Compton and Hans Reinhardt (Sportsman's Ski Cellar) the tradition continues with Jean Hunt, Don Maher and Dan Russell (Ski Cellar Snowboard), Hans Deutschmann (Ski West) and Norm Person (Lifesport) and many other shops. For many years, Sunshine and Lake Louise ski areas have given good support.

Today it is still the largest all-volunteer ski swap in Canada. It is held in late October each year with some 7,500 items of inventory valued at \$900,000. In recent years we have sold some 65% of the items, worth almost \$600,000 in 2008. All this in 5 days at Max Bell! Thanks go to 300 volunteers working 800 shifts and a dedicated management team, some working 6 months of the year on the project. These CSC members include a succession of great directors – Al Ulmer, Graham Smith and Alasdair Fergusson; also key managers serving for many years including Larry Tibbitts, Helen Isaac, David Zdep, Kathryn Matzigkeit and Pat Kisman.

### **The Lake Louise Loppet:**

This is the oldest mass-participation cross country ski race in Western Canada. It was started in 1973 by the Alpine Club of Canada during the first great boom in the sport of XC skiing at that time. Lake Louise was specifically chosen to offer good skiing in the snow-belt of Alberta. The Calgary Ski Club took over the event in 1979 and has greatly developed the event and the trails since, with the cooperation of National Park managers and staff and local businesses.

The first 3 years saw the event held on the 1-A highway with skiers transported back to the start and their parked cars. Then a loop was developed using horse and other trails and the lake to offer a 15 km event that finished behind the Chateau near the old Brewster stables.

The event increased in popularity and 500 to 800 participants were recorded between 1975 and 1977. The trails had to be foot-packed by ski and snowshoe and trackset manually by skiers, as mechanical grooming was not allowed until 1980. It was pandemonium in many ways. One early participant described the scene after several hundred racers had crashed down various routes through the trees as "looking as if a herd of drunken rabbits on skis had taken off in flight down through the bush".

Today the event is a major part of the Alberta race calendar, attracting members of the National Ski team as well as families, kids and senior citizens. In 2003, we had our first 80-year-old participants.

Thanks to a good working partnership with National Parks staff and management, the trails have been upgraded and made much safer for all skiers during the ski season. This has included selective widening on

hills and bends and removal of stumps, low overhanging branches and brush cutting to improve skiing, especially in low snow-pack periods over the period from 2000 - 2009.

A few years ago, club experts gave advice to both the Lake Louise Rec. Board and the Chateau and later to the National Parks, which resulted in better grooming and tracksetting equipment being bought and used on the trails throughout the ski season. This culminated in 3 club experts giving a course to National Parks managers and staff and volunteers in both Tracksetting and also Risk Management of cross country ski area operations.

In 2007, the Park Superintendent asked Alasdair Fergusson, long-serving Loppet coordinator for a report on how the National Parks could “enhance the visitor experience” in cross country skiing. The resulting report recommended cutting some new trails, creating some shortcuts and widening the trails on the hills; all to give a better and more fun experience for beginner skiers. The National Parks have responded in 2009 with some safety improvements and by-passes on hills that they can develop without a major Environmental Impact Assessment.

In 2009, the club had meetings with the Lake Louise business community and Banff-Lake Louise Tourism to better market the cross country skiing experience in what is “Alberta’s Snow-belt”.

Credit must be given to the leadership and hard work of Bruno Struck, Len Gottselig, Alasdair Fergusson, Helen Isaac and Greg MacCulloch for their efforts over many years to maintain this piece of Alberta history and improve the cross country skiing experience in Alberta’s snow-belt.

### **Shaganappi Golf Course:**

Club volunteers have groomed and trackset this city golf course since 1992 in partnership with Calgary Parks & Rec. A total of 8 km of trails has been developed to offer good skiing (when there is snow) and avoid sensitive areas. Volunteers have translated this experience into a proposal to Calgary Parks & Rec. in 2000 to upgrade the skiing experience to include snow-making, snow-farming, lighting, teaching area and an adventure playground for kids. It would include sharing the golf course clubhouse as a day ski lodge with heated indoor washrooms for skiers, which would double as a clubhouse for the Calgary Ski Club.

The stimulus for improvements came from skiing at 75 cross country ski areas in Western Canada and the USA and attending 14 Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. annual conferences. It was at the Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. Nordic Congress in 1999 in West Yellowstone that a demonstration of a snowmaking gun connected to a city fire hydrant showed the possibilities for Shaganappi to a group of 3 CSC members.

### **The Calgary Ski Club today:**

Today the Calgary Ski Club is "The Club For All Seasons" with an active summer hiking program to complement the extensive Alpine and Nordic ski programs, which include day tours, weekend trips and the Alberta Loppet Series.

The club started to encourage cross country ski lessons and discovered a shortage of ski instructors and ski schools compared to downhill skiing, a situation that continues to 2009.

Statistics from the Canadian Ski Council in 2008 illustrate the continuing problem:

	<b>Total Canadian skiers or boarders</b>	<b>Total instructors</b>	<b>Total instruct / skiers &amp;boarders</b>
Downhill Skiing	2.4 million	23,000	106 skiers / instructor
Snowboarders	1.4 million	10,000	142 boarders / instructor
Cross country Skiing	1.4 million	550	2,707 XC skiers / instructor

In 1996, a Head Coach for cross country skiing was hired and coaching and ski lessons for all levels of ability from beginner to racers was started; a process repeated in 2002 for downhill skiing and snowboarding.

In 2003 the club started a family cross country ski program to develop skiing skills in both kids and parents in response to requests over the years from former members and others.

In addition there are a variety of social events for its active membership of 300, including Guess-who dinners, BBQ's, and other events depending on the season.

**Public Service & Advocacy:**

Public service is important to the Club. The Calgary Ski Club has been an active member of the Canadian Ski Association and Cross Country Alberta since 1982. It is also an active member of the Calgary Area Outdoor Council. In 1988, many members of the Calgary Ski Club were volunteers and staff for the Calgary Winter Olympics. Many members assist each year in charity fun races and similar fund-raising events.

Volunteers have worked hard since 1979 grooming cross country ski trails in both summer and winter at Lake Louise with the approval of Banff National Park.

More recently, since 1992, winter grooming and tracksetting has been undertaken for the City of Calgary on 3 of its golf courses, subject to availability of volunteers.

Club volunteers have been active since 1982 as advocates for skiing and outdoor recreation. They have participated in meetings with government departments, submitting detailed reports and hosting public forums to maintain access and better develop facilities and trails for both downhill and cross country skiing and hiking in National and Provincial Parks, and to do it in an environmentally sensitive way.

**Fundraising:**

In 1996, Calgary Parks & Rec. suggested that Cross country skiing was no longer a core activity for the City and if Cross country skiers wished to continue at skiing at Shaganappi and other City golf courses, the Calgary Ski Club as operator of Shaganappi should start fundraising to pay for this public service. The club has been very successful in obtaining grant and casino funds to pay for both tracksetting and also ski club programs of ski lessons and expanded kid's programs.

Between 1996 and 2009, the club has raised \$250,000 from grants and casinos plus another \$150,000 from the Annual New & Used Ski Sale.

## **Mission Statement, Vision & Values of the Calgary Ski Club**

Approved unanimously by the members present at the A.G.M., April 24, 1996.

### **Mission Statement of the Calgary Ski Club:** (The reason for our existence)

To promote the joy of skiing, in all its diversity, and to foster fellowship, healthy living and adventure year-round among recreational skiers and outdoor enthusiasts.

### **To advance its mission, the Calgary Ski Club holds the following values:**

(These values will form the basis for ALL decision making)

1. We recognize excellence in skiing as the primary goal to which our members aspire. We are committed to helping skiers of all abilities improve their skills.
2. We strive to offer high quality programs and services year-round to our members by developing and retaining knowledgeable and resourceful leaders.
3. We listen to our members and respond to their needs and desires while promoting a spirit of innovation and adventure.
4. We strive to offer our members value for money.
5. We appreciate the fellowship of people who share our passions and interests. Therefore, we strive to make all our members feel welcome, and encourage social interaction as a vibrant part of club activities.
6. We support our volunteers, and recognize their vital contribution to the club.
7. We encourage healthy lifestyles, promoting care and preservation of the environment and the safe pursuit of outdoor activities. We support other outdoor groups and programs that share our values.
8. We value community involvement, recognizing that we draw goodwill for our organization from both the local and outdoor communities and from the ski industry at large. We seek to give back to the community that sustains us.
9. We endeavour to ensure that the club will serve future generations of skiers.

### **Products and Services:** (What we offer).

Our product is skiing in all its variety, and other activities year-round that support a healthy lifestyle and good fellowship.

We foster depth of knowledge about skiing and breadth of opportunities for people to develop existing skiing skills and to experience other forms of skiing.

Since 1920, our passion has been to seek the best in skiing and to promote knowledge of skiing. We know snow.

**Vision:** (The "big picture" view of our preferred future).

### **1. Team Vision:**

We are a volunteer organization run by the members for the members.

We value the contribution of our members and will recognize their efforts.

We encourage members to enhance their leadership skills and to experience fellowship with other members of the club. We foster self-improvement within the framework of shared interests.

### **2. Customer Vision:**

We strive for excellence in our programs to suit our members' diversity.

Through our knowledge and experience, we earn the respect of the ski industry and community at large.

We provide opportunities for life-long adventure.

## Partnerships of the Calgary Ski Club:

Through these 14 partnerships the CSC is able to provide the benefit of our skills and knowledge to a much larger segment of the community thereby increasing accessibility and benefits to all Calgarians. The roots of the CSC run deep and are intertwined with the roots of the ski industry and the outdoor recreation community in Calgary, Banff and Lake Louise.

### City of Calgary Parks & Recreation since 1992

- Shaganappi Cross country Skiing since 1992
- Preparation of a comprehensive report in 2000 to improve the skiing at Shaganappi including lighting, snowmaking and use of the golf course clubhouse in winter as a day lodge.
- Leisure Learning & successors – Cross country ski lessons & skill development
- Stimulated the development and implementation of a comprehensive demographic survey of Cross country skiers and their needs & wants in 2001
- (This was the first comprehensive survey of Cross country skiers in Alberta since 1976)

### Calgary Ski Retailers since 1940's

- Annual New & Used Ski Sale est. 1963
- Public seminars on Downhill & Cross country skiing
- Promoting Skiing in all its variety
- Advice to the club in marketing, management as well as ski equipment & clothing

### Calgary, Banff, Kananaskis ski areas & resorts

- Display booths at New & Used Ski Sale
- Encouraging ski lessons & skill development of both members & public
- Advocacy by very knowledgeable members in support of skiing and other recreational activities like hiking at public hearings in National Parks & K-Country
- Having Banff Park cut new cross country ski trails at Lake Louise in 1979 & 1982 and then continuous widening and upgrading since 1989 by CSC volunteers with Banff Park approvals.
- Presenting a report at Banff Park request to improve the visitor experience by cutting more easy cross country ski trails at Lake Louise in 2007.
- Working with Lake Louise area hotels and lodges and Banff-Lake Louise Tourism to better promote and develop Cross country skiing at Lake Louise, the snow-belt of Alberta.
- Working with Lake Louise Downhill ski area to understand the competitive advantage of proximity to great Cross country skiing similar to competitive ski resorts in BC such as Silver Star, Sun Peaks.

### Calgary Area Outdoor Council

- Active Member since CAOC inception in 1983.
- Participation by knowledgeable members in forums and planning meetings affecting recreational access summer or winter in Nat. Parks or K-Country.

### Canadian Ski Patrol System

- Annual New & Used Ski Sale since 1966.
- Joint promotion of skiing and ski area development
- Advice on ski safety issues.

### Cross Country Alberta

- Active member since CCA created out of Canadian Ski Assoc. (Alberta Div) in \_\_\_\_\_?1992
- Organized training courses for CCA
  - Learn to Loppet

- Tracksetting & Grooming courses
- Avalanche Awareness
- Wilderness First Aid

#### Canadian Ski Council

- Exchange of statistical data on skiers in Calgary & Alberta with national data & trends since 1982.
- Organized a forum on recreational ski clubs at the Canadian Ski Council national symposium in Kananaskis in 1996.

#### Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc.

- Active member since 1994
- Participant in education on Tracksetting, ski area management & operations, Risk management and marketing
- Access to a network of over 100 cross country ski areas across North America for advice and information on cross country ski area operations and made good contacts with managers of 25 or so ski areas.
- On organizing Committee of annual conference to be held at Lake Louise in 2012. This will include a Nordic Congress, last held in 1999.
- The program is being designed to include a “technology transfer” of the best practices in design, construction, operation and marketing of cross country ski areas and the promotion and development of cross country skiing in general.

#### Banff National Park

- Development and continuous improvement of cross country ski trails at Lake Louise since 1979
- Participation in public meetings and focus groups to enhance the visitor experience of recreational participants both winter & summer
- Presented a course on Tracksetting & Grooming of cross country ski trails and Risk Management in operating a cross country trail system to National Parks managers, staff and volunteers
- To learn more about the frozen lake in winter, key loppet volunteers brought their professional skills to design and operate a pioneering Ground Penetrating Radar Survey across Lake Louise to try to measure water depth and Ice thickness in comparison with a conventional survey by the Water Survey of Canada and the University of Calgary Geophysical Dept.
- While digging tree roots to help widen and smooth the cross country ski trails, CSC volunteers identified a band of grey ash at the base of the rotted root mounds. This has led to the collection of ash samples for radio-carbon age dating.
- Active participant at Annual Management Plan meetings since 2000 to lobby for better facilities and services for cross country skiing, downhill skiing and outdoor recreation in general while meeting the needs for ecological integrity of Banff National Park.

#### University of Calgary Outdoor Programs

- Various leadership and safety courses for Cross country ski trip coordinators
- A joint Learn to Loppet Program for 2009 - 2010

#### Banff-Lake Louise Tourism

- Advocacy by club members to promote and develop both Downhill and Cross country skiing in the Banff, Lake Louise and Yoho areas by developing maps & brochures, magazine adverts, etc
- This has included ideas on marketing XC skiing in Alberta’s snowbelt gained from skiing and attending XC ski conferences in Tahoe, Aspen, Breckenridge and other ski areas.
- Promote & develop the competitive advantage of Lake Louise as a mecca of both Downhill & Cross country skiing.

#### Banff Heritage Tourism

- A new partnership suggested by Heritage Tourism to publicize the history of cross country and downhill skiing at Lake Louise with brochures, maps and displays.
- Develop the opportunity to help promote the wooden ski and historic costume event at the Lake Louise Loppet

#### Glenbow Museum

Partnership to document the history of skiing in the Calgary area. This includes

- Research and publishing a history of Calgary Goes Skiing – The History of the Calgary Ski Club.
- Collecting of old photos, papers and memorabilia from club members past and present. Providing copies to the Glenbow.
- Collecting old ski gear for future display to document the social history of Calgary and to show the historical evolution of ski gear & skiing.

## **5. The Business of the Calgary Ski Club**

### **Core Business:**

The core business of the Calgary Ski Club is Cross country & Downhill Skiing but also includes Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, Telemark and Backcountry skiing when membership demand exists and willing volunteers can help.

Our core business offering includes ski trips – both day and weekend as well as occasionally week-long trips In addition we offer pre-season fitness classes for members in Ski Conditioning/Dryland training

Ski Instructors & Coaches are hired as required to deliver club programs.

In addition we encourage members to advance their skiing skills to become ski instructors or ski coaches. We want to develop coaches to Level 3 to become Certified Course Conductors for the club and Cross Country Alberta needs.

The general public, our community as well as Calgary Ski Club members benefit from the following ski-related ventures:

- Annual New & Used Ski Sale
- Shaganappi Cross Country Skiing
- Annual Lake Louise Loppet
- Working with the National Parks to cut and upgrade the Cross country ski trails at Lake Louise to exploit its location in the snow belt of Alberta.
- Providing input to K-Country on their plans and improvements we seek for improving hiking and skiing opportunities for our club members and the general public.

Hiking is a major summer activity and also cycling when member interest and willing volunteers are available.

### **Ancillary/Non Core Services:**

Social activities to cultivate camaraderie and good fellowship amongst members are important to the club. This includes golf, tennis and other activities as members request and provide volunteers to organize.

### **Support/Infrastructure:**

The club maintains a permanent office and has done so for over 40 years at various addresses At present the office is located in rented space at Rosedale Community Hall, 901 – 11 Ave. NW There is a part-time paid administrator to support the operations and administration requirements of the Calgary Ski Club.

The office contains computer, photocopier, voicemail system and club files.

Off-site storage is maintained in a rented storage garage due to lack of space at Rosedale Hall.

Ski program related gear is stored in 2 storage sheds at Shaganappi Golf Course, 1 storage shed at Confederation Park Golf Course and 1 storage shed at Maple Ridge Golf Course.

This gear includes 3 snowmobiles, assorted Tracksetting & Grooming equipment, shovels, rakes, signage etc used in operating and developing Cross country ski trails or a Cross country ski area. In addition there is a large fleet of rental ski gear for a proposed school ski program. There are also 2 club trailers used for towing snowmobiles and tracksetting equipment and race supplies as needed. These are stored at Shaganappi.

Professionals such as preferred ski shops, the snowmobile dealership, a tire store and welding shops carry out repairs and regular maintenance as necessary.

Volunteers serve on the board of directors responsible together with their respective volunteer committees. They can, and are encouraged, to obtain advice from managers of ski shops, ski areas and other relevant businesses with whom the club has a long-term working relationship.

The club hires, or develops from within the membership, professional coaches to operate the Cross country ski program. We encourage all coaches to advance their skills and certification and the club pays for such training and certification from Cross Country Alberta (the provincial sport governing body).

The club encourages interested members to become certified by Cross County Alberta (the sport governing body) as race officials or tracksetting volunteers to help with the Lake Louise Loppet and Shaganappi.

### **Business Goals & Objectives:**

1. Membership growth  
From Strategic Plan sessions in 2006, we set a goal of growth to between 300 – 400 members
2. Obtaining more volunteers to run the club and organize events  
From the increased and stable membership, we have reviewed policies to encourage more volunteers to run the club including rewards of “CSC Dollars” to be redeemed on education, training or ski trips.
3. More volunteer directors  
The club is working to develop more “bright sparks” to become directors of the club and assist our succession planning
4. Training more ski instructors and coaches from within the club membership. To meet program projections and demand, our targets are 1 or 2 Downhill ski instructors and 5 or 6 Cross country ski coaches per year  
This will solve a major problem in Cross country skiing both locally and nationally:
  - a. There is a shortage of nordic ski instructors and ski schools - only 550 nordic ski instructors across Canada so the club must develop its own nordic instructors & coaches
  - b. Training and developing more senior instructors and coaches (Level 2 or 3)
  - c. Training more coaches to be able to conduct training of new coaches
5. Training more members in First Aid, Avalanche Awareness
6. Training and certifying more Race Officials to Level 2 and 3 to operate the Lake Louise Loppet to ensure succession planning.  
The club has an advantage in that one member is already a Course Conductor certified by CCA.
7. Training and certifying more members in Tracksetting & Grooming by attending Cross Country Alberta courses. This will ensure succession planning at Shaganappi and the Lake Louise Loppet. The club has an advantage in that 2 members are already Course Conductors certified by CCA.
8. Developing senior coaches and other certified members to become certified Course Conductors to help train CSC members desiring to become coaches.
9. Continue operating and improving the Annual New & Used Ski Sale as a public service to Calgarians started by the club in 1963.

- a. Continuing the business arrangements with local ski shops.
  - b. Keeping abreast of changes and improvements to ski gear.
  - c. Identifying potential new markets e.g. selling warm ski jackets to non-skiers.
  - d. Developing booth space at the Ski Sale to help promote DH & XC Skiing, ski areas, Winter is Fun, Total Wellness and other concepts.
  - e. Working with the management of Max Bell Centre to gain access to the second arena as the Ski Sale continues to grow.
  - f. Identifying potential sites for off-site parking for Ski Sale visitors.
  - g. Developing and training a new generation of Ski Sale volunteers for succession planning.
10. Continue developing the Lake Louise Loppet, operations and organization of which was assumed by the CSC in 1979 by the following:
- a. Continuing to work with National Parks approval to improve the Cross country ski trails.
  - b. Lobby the National Parks to cut more trails and loops suitable for beginner skiers.
  - c. Developing partnerships with Lake Louise businesses to better publicize Lake Louise as “The Snow-belt of Alberta”.
  - d. Lobbying the Lake Louise businesses to start “taking ownership” of the wonderful Cross country ski resource that is the Cross country ski trail system developed by Calgary Ski Club volunteers near the Chateau.
  - e. Educating the hotels of the opportunities of advertising the loppet to their hotel guests and convention groups to encourage staying an extra night to participate in the loppet.
  - f. Developing more and better publicity for the Loppet with support from Lake Louise businesses and Banff-Lake Louise Tourism including calendars of events.
  - g. Working with Banff Heritage Tourism to promote the wooden ski and historic costume event at the Loppet and help educate and entertain Loppet participants after the race and before the awards ceremony.
  - h. Working with the Lake Louise Downhill ski area to understand the competitive advantage of creating a better world-class skiing destination with both great Cross country skiing and Downhill skiing together such as Sun Peaks, Silver Star, Aspen, etc.
11. Continue developing Cross country skiing at Shaganappi Golf Course, organization and operations of which was taken over by the CSC in 1992 through:
- a. Working in consultation with Calgary Golf Course Operations to develop a better skiing experience for all Calgarians.
  - b. Installation of a vehicle counter at the entrance to get better estimates of skier usage.
  - c. To better guarantee snow for skiing, develop a pilot project for snowmaking to determine feasibility and any potential damage to the golf course.
  - d. Developing an “adventure playground” to attract and encourage kids to become Cross country skiers.
  - e. Improving the available terrain and trails for teaching beginners to ski.
  - f. Copying programs from Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. for kids or for people with no family heritage of Cross country skiing and perhaps winter.
  - g. Developing trail lighting in selected areas for night skiing, especially teaching areas.
  - h. Increasing PR to the schools within easy access (30 minutes drive) to Shaganappi.
  - i. Increasing PR to youth groups, senior citizens and other groups.
  - j. Developing of programs of ski instruction for kids in schools and youth groups
  - k. Developing of programs to offer ski instruction to school teachers and youth leaders leading to those leaders becoming ski instructors with modern knowledge of Cross country skiing.
  - l. Purchasing additional ski gear for schools programs as the need arises.
  - m. Working with Golf Course Operations to develop a new multi-function golf course clubhouse that would serve as a day-lodge for skiers in winter with rental skis replacing golf equipment in a suitable facility.

- n. On completion of the West LRT, exploiting the ease of travel to downtown to attract skiers during lunch hour.

### **Operational Overview:**

- Promote outdoor recreation as a major component of a healthy lifestyle and total wellness.
- Promote participation in skiing as a fun outdoor activity in winter in Calgary and area.
- Develop the Calgary Ski Club as a centre of excellence in recreational skiing in Calgary for both Downhill and Cross country skiing.
- Develop a group of ski instructors and coaches and other certificated leaders to develop the sport of skiing in Calgary and so grow membership in the Calgary Ski Club.
- Improved skiing services & facilities for the public at Shaganappi.
- Advocacy for improved facilities & services for skiing and hiking in National & Provincial Parks for the public using the skills and experience of key members.

### **Deliverables:**

- Organize Ski trips for both Cross country and Downhill skiing/Snowboarding, Snowshoe trips and Hiking trips to interesting destinations.
- Skill development by offering ski lessons and season-long coaching and pre-season conditioning to attract and retain members.
- Education & Knowledge by offering courses in first aid, avalanche awareness, total wellness Tracksetting and Grooming of Cross country ski trails.
- Increase the certification of Race officials, ski instructors & coaches and Tracksetting.
- Develop 2 Course Conductors for coaching to add to the existing course conductors for tracksetting (2) and for race officials (1) within the club.
- Growth in skiing participation and ski lessons at Shaganappi from our best estimate of 10,000 skier visits in good snow years.
- Growth in consigned goods, public attendance, sales and as a result profits for the New & Used Ski Sale to distribute the 3 partners – Calgary Ski Club, Lake Louise Ski Club, Canadian Ski Patrol
- Growth in participation in the Lake Louise Loppet from 280 to 400 participants

## **6. Marketing Strategy**

### **Market Description:**

The City of Calgary and adjacent towns is the target catchment area.

The customers we wish to attract are people of all ages who are active, or wish to be active in outdoor recreation especially skiing in all its variety.

The ideal target segment are those individuals with a high fitness motivation and a high outdoors motivation coupled with a desire to increase participation in skiing and a desire for self-improvement.

The comprehensive CSC Report delivered to Calgary Parks & Recreation in August 2000 “Cross Country Skiing Close to Home – Urban Skiing at Shaganappi Golf Course – A wonderful convenient resource for cross country skiing” presented City of Calgary data with maps, demographic and income statistics for communities across the City.

A total of 15 copies were supplied to Parks, Public Education & Programs for distribution and also 3 to Golf Course Operations.

For Cross country skiing, the 2001 Calgary Survey was conducted in partnership between City of Calgary, Calgary Ski Club and Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation.

The report was prepared by the City and presumably was widely circulated within relevant City departments.

Operational surveys, demographic trends and marketing information have been obtained since 1992 from Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. reports, also from presentations at their annual conferences and the landmark 1999 Nordic Congress. This information has been incorporated into club plans.

More recent surveys of Downhill skiers & boarders from Canadian Ski Council & Canada West Ski Areas Assoc. were conducted in 2003 & 2008. These have been incorporated into club plans.

We can supply copies of these comprehensive reports if required.

Club membership survey 2006 provided information on how members heard about the club, why they joined and what they wanted to do with the club.

Copies of this comprehensive report can also be supplied if required.

### **Business Environment and Demographics:**

The population of Calgary keeps growing. New arrivals have the same ideas and attitudes as previous generations seeing the mountains, cold weather and snow and skiing as a great unknown to be solved by joining a skiing club and meeting people with similar interests, skiing abilities and fitness levels.

The sport of skiing is affected fundamentally by factors beyond our control – the economy and good snow. When the economy is booming and people feel “rich” they are more willing to spend money on skiing. Good snow in the mountains at our favourite ski areas, both Cross country and Downhill, is essential. However the presence of snow in Calgary adds enthusiasm to ski purchases or ski trips.

A frequent problem for skiing has been described at Canadian Ski Council conferences as the “Californiaization” of Canada – a growing fear of the cold and snow and driving in winter. This is accentuated by the frequent radio and TV comments about “the roads are bad so you should stay home!”

Many studies over the past 10 – 15 years obtained from Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. suggest that the greatest limitation on all forms of recreation is lack of time:

- Many people feel stressed.
- Women are driving twice the distance they did 20 years ago as they ferry the kids to school and activities. There is a problem with both distance and time to go to ski areas.
- There is a shift to front-country activities rather than backcountry.
- Some USA studies have suggested that people plan their life in 4-hour time blocks.
- Golf is now reported in the media to be having problems related to the lack of time available to play a round of golf.
- The Baby Boom generation is aging creating both problems and opportunities.
- There may be a shift from Downhill skiing to Cross country skiing to minimize knee and other problems but they still want to remain active creating opportunities for Cross country skiing.

The Nordic Congress organized by Cross Country Ski Areas Assoc. in 1999 provided a major influence in club strategy by pointing out major problems of public perception of the sport based on previous marketing errors by the cross country ski industry as follows:

- “It is as easy as walking on snow”.
- “It is easy...you do not need a lesson”.
- “It is cheap”.
- Ski racer images used in adverts are intimidating to beginner skiers.
- There is a major disconnect between elite racers and recreational skiers.
- The “extreme” image of backcountry skiing and its avalanche risk is intimidating to beginner skiers.

Facts to be used in advertising to dispel these perceptions by the public were suggested:

- New Nordic Skiing is faster and more exciting than the old.
- There are better facilities, trail design and tracksetting than in the past.
- No longer do you “start halfway into the wilderness and then ski further”.
- You no longer have to trudge through a tunnel of trees or walk on snow on cheap (and poor) gear.
- New skis, boots and bindings give superior comfort and control.
- New clothing and fabrics give good comfort and style.
- Trail grooming, tracksetting and facilities increase fun and exhilaration.
- Modern, well-designed trails reduce or eliminate steep hills that require herringbone technique.
- They also offer vistas and features that provide good rest and regrouping places for skiers.
- Ski Lessons are important. One lesson is not enough. They should be marketed as 3-pack or 6-pack.

Many studies reported in the Calgary media tell of the growing problem of inactive adults and kids and a growing problem of obesity.

The cost of gasoline and the cost of driving to the mountains are being seen in many parts of North America to lead to skiing at areas closer to home and also to the opportunity for bus trips.

There are opportunities to copy marketing ideas developed in the USA to promote skiing to non-skiers e.g. Winterkids program for school kids in Maine and programs developed for ethnics and others in Colorado to encourage people with no family heritage of winter activities to try skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing.

## **Market Position/Niche:**

The Calgary Ski Club is the only club in Calgary to offer both Downhill and Cross country skiing for skiers and boarders of all ages and abilities.

- We are a recreational ski club not a performance racing club.
- We are the only ski club in Calgary to operate a Cross country ski school offering recreational ski lessons, season-long Cross country ski coaching and Loppet training.
- We wish to expand these lessons to Downhill skiing in cooperation with Downhill ski areas
- We organize the Lake Louise Loppet, the oldest mass-participation Cross country ski race in Western Canada and offer coaching such as Learn to Loppet for our members.
- (Loppets are the winter equivalent of a summer fun road race. While they may attract Olympians, the main target is the recreational skier and their families desiring a challenge in a safe environment in a well-organized event).

The Canadian Ski Council Stats & Facts 2008 have identified considerable cross-over in participation that encourages the Calgary Ski Club to continue offering both Downhill and Cross country skiing and boarding.

- 38% of Cross country skiers also Downhill ski
- 17% of Downhill skiers also Cross country ski
- 20% of Cross country skiers also Snowboard
- 16% of Snowboarders also Cross country ski

The Ski Council states that the decline in Cross country skiing over the years 2004 - 2008 has been primarily seen in those who exclusively Cross country ski (19%) but the number of those who both Snowboard and Cross country ski has increased suggesting that younger snowboarders may be taking up Cross country skiing.

We have identified Total Wellness programs as being something we can provide to the Baby Boom generation as well as younger generations with high motivation and interest in both the outdoors and fitness. Therefore, we wish to attract these adults as well as their families.

These various market niches are important since skiing develops core strength and flexibility as well as coordination, weight shift and balance. Many news articles suggest that these are critical factors in an aging population to prevent serious falls and other injuries.

There is a great opportunity to cross-sell the Calgary Ski Club programs with customers to the New & Used Ski Sale.

The operation of Cross country skiing at Shaganappi since 1992 as a city-centre ski area with a future LRT station close to the entrance creates a major opportunity to promote and develop Cross country skiing by expanding Calgary Ski Club programs of instruction and coaching for all ages, adults and kids. The club has already bought a fleet of Cross country ski gear for both our Jackrabbit programs and a planned program for local school kids and youth groups.

For comparison, recent stats from other Cross country skiing clubs offering comprehensive programs on a club-operated ski area show Edmonton Nordic Ski Club with some 800 members and Sovereign Lake Ski Club at Vernon with 1,500 members.

## **Pricing Principles & Strategies**

The club is no different than any other organization – we need to cover all our costs. The long-time objective has been to offer “Best value for money” to our members and to our participants. This means that we will not be the cheapest but can offer better value for better quality.

Better quality ski trips cost more money – 2 persons to a room is more expensive than 4 but over the years our members have shown that that is what they want.

Coaching and ski lessons cost money. Hiring more experienced coaches and instructors and having fewer participants in a class costs money. However we have discovered that better quality instruction in smaller class sizes results in happier participants.

The Loppet costs money to put on, but after many years, we were able to raise our prices to avoid losing money. Again a better quality event attracted more skiers. If we could attract another 50 or more skiers, we could recompense our loyal hard-working volunteers by paying for their cost of driving to Lake Louise or perhaps their hotel room.

The Ski Sale costs money to put on.

The only benefit that the required 300 volunteers receive is better quality food, both hot meals served at set times and lots of cold drinks, fruit, cookies and Halloween candy. A lower profit payout results but we get a loyal volunteer group who return for many years and do not require on-the-job training each year.

We have a moderate admission fee that includes parking to encourage bargain-seeking families and others to come to the largest consignment sale of ski equipment and clothing in Calgary.

We always worry that in a bad year, not only do we not have a profit to distribute to the 3 partners, but we may not cover our costs, which total over \$80,000.

The only “loss-making” venture is our Jackrabbit program where we offer free rental ski gear to encourage participation and to help grow the sport of Cross country skiing.

These free skis were bought using casino funds as a public service to encourage participation and hopefully the start of a lifetime of participation in skiing

Related to this is our policy to offer free ski lessons for parents while their kids are in the Jackrabbit program. This is to encourage all family members to ski together on future trips.

Shaganappi Skiing is free. The annual costs of servicing snowmobiles, buying gas, making maps and signs and otherwise operating a ski area at Shaganappi are low and easily covered by casino funds and occasional grants.

Indeed the casinos were originally applied for in 1996 to replace City of Calgary Parks & Rec. annual funding at the suggestion of Calgary Parks & Rec. staff.

Costs associated with a proposed pilot project of snowmaking have been budgeted for casino funding and approved by Alberta Gaming in 2006.

If this pilot project proves successful, increased capital and operating costs would require assessment and the need for an adequate user fee would need to be implemented.

## **Advertising & Promotion**

- We are marketing to major employers, health professionals, yoga studios and similar targets as well as to the general public.

- We are developing partnerships for joint promotion with University of Calgary, ski shops, ski areas, hotels at Lake Louise for club programs.
- We are developing material for articles in newspapers and magazines.
- We are at present (Sept 2009) rebuilding our club website to be more attractive and inviting to prospective members.
- We purchase advertising for special events such as the Annual Ski Sale, Open House, Cross country Ski Fest at Shaganappi.
- With more volunteer resources we are planning to increase club exposure in Calgary. We will also exploit our position as operator of Shaganappi Cross country skiing and the Annual New & Used Ski Sale.

## **7. Human Resource & Management Strategy**

### **Structure of the club:**

The club has at present a long-standing viable model for achieving club goals with

- Four officers and a Board of Directors, the Council, whose number and duties can be changed as required.
- In addition there is an Advisory Council of senior members with knowledge, wisdom and experience in both the sport of skiing, business and club affairs.
- Coordinators are appointed for trips, events, programs and so on to report to the respective director.
- Train and certify coaches and key volunteers
- Ideas and advice are sought from our long-time friends & partners in local ski shops and ski areas.
- A former club director is available to help with any legal advice.

### **Competitive Advantage of the club:**

The 2006 Strategic Plan for the club identified the following:

#### Strengths identified:

- Strong finances and a history of fund-raising for special programs
- Professional coaches and a strong coaching program
- The club has a lasting and proven track record
- Experienced members with interest and skills
- Diversity of membership
- Dedication and enthusiasm of members
- Good connections to the ski industry
- Liaison with other organizations such as Cross Country Alberta and Calgary Area Outdoor Council
- Club name and history

#### Opportunities identified:

- Coaching program – growth
- Calgary is a large market with a growing population
- Opportunity to introduce newcomers to the City to the outdoors in the mountains in winter as well as summer.
- Certification to raise the standard of our members (instructors, coaches, first aid, etc)
- Exploit 2010 Olympics to create new excitement in skiing
- Exploit the opportunities with growing public interest in Total Wellness
- Exploit a new website and new technology to improve communication with members and the public
- Become the first stop in the public's searching for info on skiing

#### Challenges identified:

- Lack of willing volunteers
- Philosophical differences between members
- No common meeting place or clubhouse for social activities

#### Threats identified:

- Inconsistent weather (lack of snow or extreme cold)
- Environmental lobby restricting or closing access, preventing improvements or raising costs

- Decreased public participation
- Competition with indoor sports, pursuits and entertainment
- Costs increasing

The 2009 Short Term Action Plan identified the following goals:

- Upgrade the CSC website and content
- Promote the value of being a club member
- Engage members, especially new members in club activities
- Increase the variety of ski trips and destinations
- On-line registration for programs and trips
- Provide skill development
- To attract new members and increase the total membership

The club will devote more resources in volunteer help to maintain, develop and improve

- The Annual New & Used Ski Sale founded by the club in 1963
- The Lake Louise Loppet taken over by the club in 1979
- Shaganappi Cross country skiing, taken over by the club in 1992

## 8. Financial Strategy

The club has very strong finances.

We have accumulated some \$300,000 in the Building Fund, established in 1979 to acquire a replacement clubhouse in a central Calgary location defined as between 16 Ave. N & 17 Ave. S, Crowchild Trail & MacLeod Trail.

We have obtained grants from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation and the Community Lotteries Board since 1996 for capital or special projects in the past and will do so as needed in the future. These grants have been used for the purchase of Tracksetting & Grooming equipment, storage sheds and for the operating costs and upgrading of tracksetting & grooming equipment, signage and other costs associated with ski area operation at Shaganappi.

The club has also since 1996 held charitable fund-raising casinos.

This has paid for the purchase of rental Cross country ski gear supplied free to participants in the Jackrabbit program and the purchase a fleet of Cross country ski gear for a proposed school ski program for Calgary schools taking ski lessons at Shaganappi. This schools program has been delayed due to lack of reliable snow. The casino also pays for the operating costs of providing Cross country skiing at Shaganappi.

Total funds raised from grants and casinos since 1996 are approx. \$250,000.

At present (October 2009) we have some \$180,000 in the casino account of which \$100,000 has been previously approved by Alberta Gaming for the pilot project of snowmaking at Shaganappi.

In addition the club receives a 40% share of the profits of the Annual New & Used Ski Sale, held in partnership with the local Canadian Ski Patrol System and Lake Louise Ski Club.

In 2008, Ski Sale profits received by the club were \$25,000.

Since 1996 when we left the Ski Show and moved from Stampede Park, the Ski Sale has gone from strength to strength. Sale revenues have increased from approx \$200,000 to almost \$600,000 in 2008 while profits to be paid to the 3 partner organizations have risen steadily.

Total profits received by the Calgary Ski Club since 1996 are approx. \$150,000.

Club programs are budgeted to break even after administrative overhead and other expenses are calculated. Membership fees are kept competitive with other outdoor and skiing clubs to attract and retain members.

At present there is no need for user fees for public Cross country skiing at Shaganappi as costs annually are minimal and are covered by the club's casino revenue.

However if the club found operating costs of a snowmaking system and any costs associated with use of the new golf course clubhouse were too high, user fees would need to be introduced.

The club is proud of the fact that since 1996, when we were informed that Calgary Parks & Rec. no longer considered Cross country skiing a core activity, we have raised from grants and casinos some \$250,000 to pay for our skiing operations and a proposed snowmaking pilot project at Shaganappi.

## **9. Implementation/Evaluation**

This plan is currently being implemented

The plan is evaluated annually by the Board of Directors of the club as well as at an annual Strategic Planning update that will include interested members

After every Ski Sale and Loppet, we have post-mortem meetings to discuss how we can improve these events in subsequent years.