

# The Fernie Nordic Society(FNS)

## 2023-2024 Annual Report



A record breaking year of event participants, collaborative relationships and more!

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# FNS Board of Directors

All members of the Board of Directors for the Fernie Nordic Society are volunteers and also cross-country skiing enthusiasts. Thank you to our current Board of Directors for your commitment, dedication and year-round hard work creating exceptional cross-country ski trails, programming, events and more.

Megan Lohmann - President/Co-Chair Partnerships

Jennifer Heath - Co-Chair Operations

Mathieu Corriveau - Treasurer

Jane Stevens - Secretary

Mike DeJong - Director of Operations

Sam Sedlowsky - Director of Facilities

Johnny Shaw - Director of Skier Development

Laurie Bemi - Director of Membership



# Message from our President

Another amazing nordic ski season has come to an end. The Fernie Nordic Society was thrilled with expansive programming including a masters program, record breaking numbers of participants attending our events(69 skiers in the Flying Viking!), collaborative relationships with the Fernie Golf Course and the City of Fernie, gracious donations from The Guides Hut and our very own Fernie Nordic Racer bringing home the club's first ever podium medal(s) at 2024 Nordiq Canada Ski Nationals in Nakkertok, Gatineau, QC!



**President, Megan Lohmann and Family**

Operating trails at the Elk Valley Nordic Centre and the Fernie Golf Club, the FNS thanks the landowners that make access to the sport possible. Our organization continues to welcome new club members, finalizing our 2023-2024 membership to 907 members. With delayed snowfall and challenging temperatures our Elk Valley Nordic Centre trails opened limited runs on December 16th and were skiable until April 3rd. The Fernie Golf Course experienced an extra challenge with weather and the grooming team worked hard to keep trails open as much as possible. Thank you to both grooming teams for an awesome season of skiing.

Our Skill Development Program(SDP) offered instruction to 66 young skiers, coached by 16 coaches, 5 of which were our race team athletes. New this year was the combining of our Track Attack skiers with our junior race team which proved to be very successful. With our program's aging SDP rental gear, we were beyond grateful to receive \$3000 worth of junior nordic ski equipment from our partners and local business, The Guides Hut. Additionally, we teamed up with Nordiq Canada and set up a fundraiser seeking donations to be put towards even more rental gear for the children and youth's programming. That combined with our club's budget, we were able to purchase an additional \$2,5000 worth of new classic and skate equipment packages with sizes for children and youth starting as young as age three. The Fernie Nordic Racers 2023-2024 ski season was one of their most successful yet! The athletes competed in many different races over the course of the winter including the local races, Kootenay Cups, BC Cups, AB Cups and National Championships with two athletes, Louison Dubief and Wes Robinson-Shaw racing for BC Ski Team at the International Spring Series(B-Tour). Ella Fuller brought home Fernie's first ever podium medal(s) from 2024 Ski Nationals placing third in the U16-5km skate event and U16-7.5km skate race. Additionally, Ella came home as the overall aggregate winner for 2009 girls! Adult lessons were provided again this season with coaches Tarah Leggot, Emily De Freitas and Susan Smith sharing their expertise via private and semi-private lessons to adults through the winter. Lastly, under the guidance of Susan Rohn, Fernie Nordic Masters Club returned!

The Elk Valley Nordic Centre's warming hut and staging area was continuously maintained with the help of many volunteers keeping facilities top of mind. We recognize there are continued questions and uncertainty surrounding land ownership and access. We will continue to ensure our priority of providing the best experience for our members is front and centre in our engagement around land use decisions.

Thank you to our members, volunteers and Board of Directors for your continued support!

Megan

# Membership

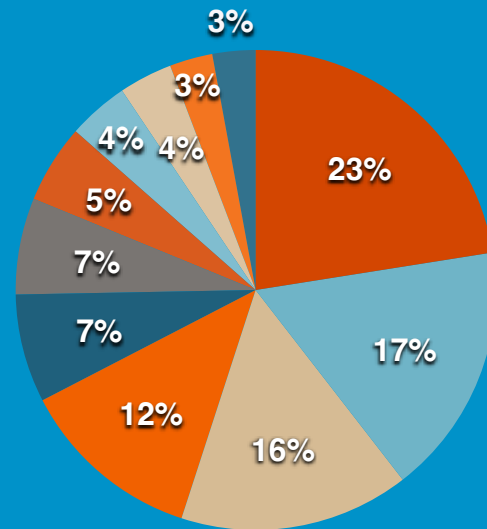
It was another great season with 907 members. You may wonder where your annual membership fee goes. Rest assured, you are supporting the Fernie Nordic Society's long-term sustainability. Even though a significant amount per membership goes to the provincial and national nordic organizations, the income from memberships is critical to our ability to expand grooming - for example, it costs \$350 each time we groom the Elk Valley Nordic Society, even with our large volunteer operations team.

## Specifics surrounding your membership fee:

FNS Annual Memberships and annual spending are driven by our 5 guiding principles: **Volunteer Driven** - the time our volunteers dedicate to the FNS allow us to keep membership and trail fees as minimal as possible and allow us to host a variety of events and programs. **Safety Conscious** - a percentage of every membership goes to insurance while you are using the FNS operated trails. Our volunteers update and maintain safety plans each year with the upmost care going into our trails.

**Welcoming** - when you purchase an annual membership, you are investing in the organization and the trails which we all love to ski. Our volunteers implement programming and host events to enhance your skiing experience including lessons and races. **Transparent** - when you invest in the FNS, we want you to know how your money is working including Cross Country BC and Nordiq Canada's administration and registration fees, grooming and costs of trail maintenance and improvement, plus infrastructure. **Affordable** - we have intentionally kept our membership and program fees as low as possible each year to remain inclusive for all to enjoy cross-country skiing in Fernie.

- Trail Grooming
- CCBC Registration
- EVNC Parking Maintenance
- Supplies and Portapotties
- Events
- New Trailer
- Maintenance Machines
- Administration and GST
- Insurance
- Volunteers
- Training



Thank you to all new and returning members, and all visitors for supporting The Fernie Nordic Society - an organization that works tirelessly year round to provide exceptional cross country skiing experiences inclusive for all.

# Grooming and Operations

It was certainly a tumultuous start to winter grooming with excessive rain in December, heavy snowfall in January, on to an Arctic Outflow with warmer temperatures off and on. The Elk Valley Nordic Centre (EVNC) trails opened limited runs on December 16, 2023 and were skiable right through to the Easter weekend closing April 3, 2024. The Fernie Golf Course trails were open off and on starting for a limited time in December. Jason Bryant and his team did an incredible job working with the snow they did receive making the trails a quality experience for our members and guests when open.

We received \$1,800 through Columbia Basin Trust's ReDi(Resident Directed) Grant to support the improvement of the Public Community Nordic/Multi-Use Trails Network Project. This funding went towards expanding grooming behind the golf course including the installation of a bridge across the wetland area in the North woodlot of the golf course permitting full access to another 1 to 2 km of forest multi-use. The FGC team, City of Fernie contractors and Fernie Trails Alliance did a wonderful job grooming the city dyke trails and back country multi-use trails behind the golf course.

In preparation for the Nordic ski season a lot of work occurred through the summer and fall at the EVNC. This included installing lights all around the staging area, cutting grass and weeds, stacking firewood next to the wood shed, cleaning up the wooded area behind the sea-cans, clearing trails and removing fallen trees and branches and even replacing a portion of the warming hut's roof due to a late fall windstorm that tore through the Elk Valley. Construction on the Galloway Lands commenced by Handshake Holdings in May. We've been assured our trails will be unaffected for the 2024-2025 ski season.

The EVNC grooming team is made up of one contractor and 10 volunteers. The Fernie Golf Course has a team of four volunteers that maintain their trails. FNS is very grateful to have such a solid and motivated team to manage the conditions and grooming of both locations.



THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE GROOMING AND OPERATIONS TEAM FOR A  
MEMORABLE 2023-2024 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING SEASON

## Skill Development Program(SDP)

The Fernie Nordic Society's 2023-2024 children and youth programming had a tremendously successful year despite the challenging weather conditions from frigid cold to tropical rain, seeing 66 children and youth participate in nordic ski lessons, providing low cost rental ski equipment as needed. The program ran for 10 weeks beginning in January with lessons being offered on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. New this season was the integration of our Track Attack skiers with our race team which was very successful and will continue for years to come.

SDP is entirely volunteer run and the club appreciates the coaching team, den parents and tail gunners for taking time each week to show up and pass on your love of nordic skiing to our children and youth. Our FNS website highlights all coaches via the 'Coaches Corner' page. For the first time this year, five of our Fernie Nordic Racers athletes helped coach our Tuesday and Thursday Jackrabbit groups. These very relatable athletes were a hit with the kids.

During the holiday break, the Fernie Nordic Racers hosted a kids camp on January 4th. Ten kids between the ages of 8 and 13 participated working on balance, agility and glide. Snacks and hot chocolate donated by Starbucks were enjoyed by all. Cost of the camp went to supporting our Fernie Nordic Racers competing at 2024 Ski Nationals.



THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE KIDS AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING TEAM(COACHES AND GEAR DISTRIBUTORS), INCLUDING DEN PARENTS AND TAIL-GUNNERS, FOR A SUCCESSFUL 2023-2024 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI LESSONS SEASON!

# The Guides Hut Sponsorship

A big part of offering nordic ski lessons to children and youth in our community includes access to gear. Our main objective is to offer a program that is accessible for all young families by keeping costs low. The Fernie Nordic Society follows through this initiative by offering ski rentals at a reduced fee for our Skill Development Program participants.

Our current rental fleet is about 10 years old and is starting to show its age. Ski technology has changed over the last 10 years transitioning from fish scales to skin skis. We'd love to not only update our fleet to keep rentals available for our programming, but also update our ski technology too. This update includes adding skate skis, which will help kids progress through the various skill levels and styles of nordic skiing.



Earlier this year, our friends over at The Guides Hut recognized this need and graciously donated \$2,000 worth of junior nordic ski equipment to our SDP rental fleet. Additionally, they promised to donate a portion of all nordic equipment sales during the month of February bringing the total donated amount of gear up to \$3,000! We cannot thank The Guides Hut enough for support our children and youth's programming. Their generous support helps us get as many kids as possible on skis and we are so appreciative.





# The Fernie Nordic Racers(FNR)

The 2023-2024 ski season was one of the FNR most successful yet. This was the second season the team trained together through the summer. Dry-land season began in May and thanks to a grant from ViaSport B.C., the Province and support from Kal Tire, the team added five new pairs of roller skis to their inventory. Off-season training included running, hiking, roller skiing around the FSS track and the city dyke trails, strength training, fitness games and dry-land camps throughout the province.

Once back on snow, the athletes found themselves at training camps in Vernon and Panorama. From there race season was in full swing with athletes competing in BC and AB Kootenay Cups, BC Cups, Alberta Cups, 2024 Ski Nationals and B-Tour. Many of these races involved a lot of travel to places both near and far including Kimberley, Panorama, Canmore, Vernon, Rossland, Prince George, Whistler, Salmon Arm, Quebec and U.S.A.

In addition to the athletes training and racing, a few athletes hosted two nordic ski camps during Christmas break as a fundraiser towards the 2024 Ski Nationals. One was an adult technique camp held over two days including a classic day and a skate day. The focus of the camp was to work on technique and improve nordic ski skills. The kids camp followed focusing on balance, agility and glide. Both, very well received.

The team said good-bye to two graduates this year, Louison Dubief and Wes Robinson-Shaw. Both Louison and Wes are incredible student athletes who have also supported the Fernie Nordic Society contributing several hours of service including volunteering at the club's events, coaching SDP and hosting adult and kids camps to name a few. Both athletes concluded their season being chosen to represent the BC Ski Team at the International Spring Series(B-Tour) racing in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Sun Valley, Idaho. It was an incredible opportunity to be able to represent BC in the United States with high level competition. Louison will go on to join the Alberta World Cup Academy in Canmore, AB and Wes will ski for Carlton University in Ontario. Good luck to both Louison and Wes!

Throughout the year, the athletes supported many of the Fernie Nordic Society events including the Annual Pumpkin Hunt, Community Fun Race and the Flying Viking. Thank you FNR athletes. Your membership, Society and community appreciate your involvement and support.



The Fernie Nordic Racers are a volunteer run team and their success has a lot to do with the amazing contributions by the volunteer coaching team, team manager, wax technicians and many parent helpers. Because of this, the team can provide an affordable quality programming developing exceptional athletes. Nordic skiing is an incredibly fun way to develop multiple aspects of fitness and physical literacy. These young athletes are developing physical and mental skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives.



# Annual Pumpkin Hunt

Bringing the community together is at the heart of the Fernie Nordic Society's core values and the 7th Annual Pumpkin Hunt on October 21st proved to be a great success. The picture-perfect day included many amazing costumes, marshmallow roasting, hot dogs, photos and of course, pumpkins.



This popular event is a great way to kick start the 2023-2024 season and the Fernie Nordic Society recognizes the many volunteers and sponsors that make this event possible. We would like to thank Save-On-Foods, Teck and Starbucks for their sponsorship and support. In addition, we thank Murray S. For getting the BBQ on site, Mark F. For transporting the pumpkins to the site, The Fernie Nordic Racers and their coaches for restocking pumpkins for each time slot, Grow Children's Boutique for selling tickets, Emily Park Photography for spending the day capturing all the fun, Starbucks for donating hot chocolate and everyone for helping set up and clean - up. It takes a village!



# Community Fun Race

The Fernie Nordic Society held its 10th Annual Community Fun Race at the Elk Valley Nordic Centre on February 24th. 45 skiers hit the trails with spectators and volunteers cheering them on. Along with the races, volunteers had set up a playground area near the warming hut to offer fun challenges to younger skiers. Older skiers, teens and adults chose either the 3 km or 7.5 km course to ski or race with their friends. The staging area was busy with skiers, spectators and volunteers enjoying some hot chocolate, crepes and other goodies. Cookie medals and prizes were awarded to the participants. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies and provided prizes. Our sponsors included: Le Bon Pain, Island Lake Lodge, Fernie Brewing Company, Mugshots, Fernie Starbucks, Giv'Er Shirt Words, Vogue Theatre, City of Fernie and Fernie Chiropractic Inc. We also want to thank Alex with Fernie Wilderness Adventures for taking all the photos, the Fernie Nordic Racers for hosting the SDP Ski Playground and to all the coaches who helped support the skiers.



## Annual Flying (and Mini) Viking Challenge

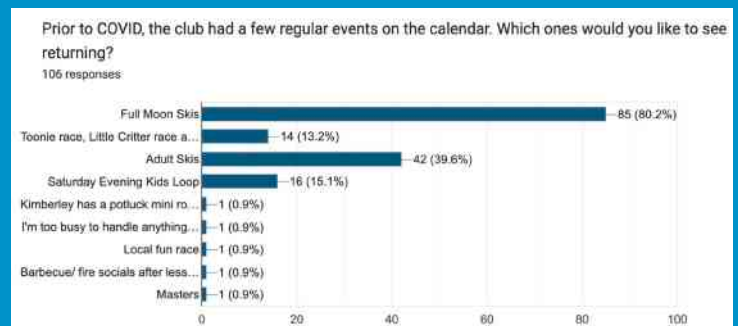
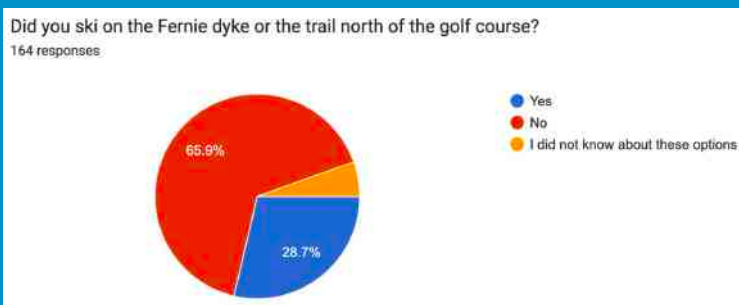
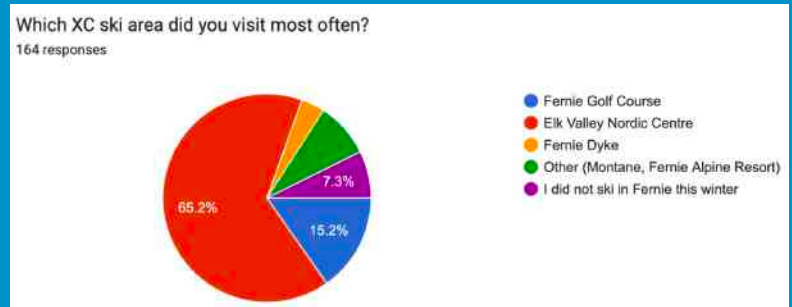
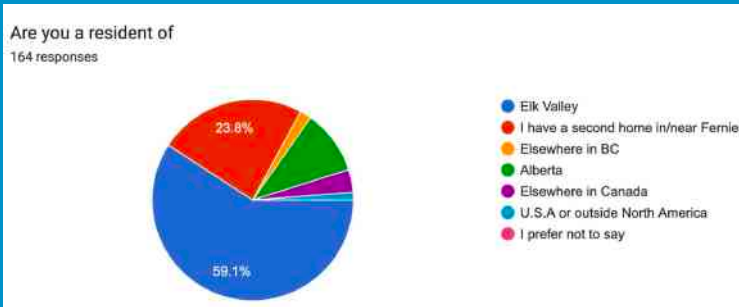
Our 5th Annual Fernie Flying Viking Challenge was held on March 24th at the Elk Valley Nordic Centre and was by far, our most successful yet! We had a whopping 69 participants this year, most competing in the 25 and 50 km events, along with a mini-Viking group skiing the 1.4, 3.5 and 7.5 km courses. The weather was great and provided for a perfect day.



Thank you to all the volunteers, organizers and participants for closing out our season in such incredible style. We also want to give a shoutout to our friends from Kimberley who made the trek over. Thank you to Fernie Alpine Resort for making a special exception for our Vikings to take the lift over to the resort trails. Lastly, thank you Save-On-Foods for providing some of the snacks and food items.



# 2023-2024 Survey Results



"As a groomer, we had a very difficult year with the conditions. I thought we did amazingly well!"

"It's an amazing club doing a lot with very little terrain and limited grooming equipment!"

"First winter with the Bunny program and we were really impressed by the teaching and involvement of the coaches!"

"We visited from Edmonton and had a great few days of skiing at the start of your season. You have a beautiful set of trails and we met one of your ambassadors(an 80+ lady who was so nice to us)!"

"Grooming team did an excellent job keeping the trails in great shape through the tricky winter!"

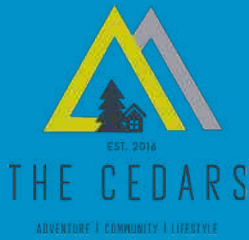
"I took a beginner Skate lesson one Saturday. It was fabulous! Would highly recommend to others!"

"Nordic skiing in Fernie is one of my favourite pastimes. The trails are varied and always brilliantly groomed, the scenery is wonderful and the people you meet are friendly and happy!!"

"The ski trails have transformed my life from training to racing, so thank you!"

"Great job everyone - groomers, ambassadors and admin! Thanks!"

Thank you to all of our generous sponsors, partners and land owners.  
We appreciate your support!



Mugshots Cafe

