

Board Responses to Members' Questions

The CNSC Board of Directors recently hosted two Zoom meetings with members to discuss concerns about trail development. The sessions generated about 90 comments and questions. Answers to these questions are in the pages below. These are our best answers at the time of the meeting but should not be read as an expression of formal policy.

All directors were asked to contribute to the answers we present in this document. For privacy, the names of those asking questions have been removed, and questions have been grouped where we felt one response would answer more than one question.

We have responded only to actual questions (as compared to comments or statements), but we thank you for your many suggestions and kind remarks.

It appeared we had one attendee who kept changing their Zoom display name while posing roughly 30 questions and comments. While we have not specifically responded to this attendee's questions or comments, hopefully we have addressed the issues at hand.

Your input is welcome at any time. The CNSC website has complete contact information and a form for feedback here: <https://www.caledonianordic.com/about-us/connect-with-us/feedback> . Future questions regarding trails can be submitted to new Trails Director Phil Mullins at TrailsDirector@calendonianordic.com. The board and the trails committee will be happy to respond to reasonable and respectful inquiries from CNSC members.

Single Track Trails

Q: Can you tell us what single track trails will be impacted by future road building? In addition, if single track is disturbed will the club help rebuild it?

A: The planned link between Terus-hi and Sawmill ski trails will intersect Missing Lynx and Tree Hugger. These trails start on CNSC property and extend onto Terus property, but are not sanctioned by either landholder. We will do our best to restore them to be serviceable for hiking and riding. These trails start on CNSC property and extend onto Terus property, but are not sanctioned by either landholder. We will do our best to restore them to be serviceable for hiking and riding.

Q: It would be nice to see the single-track trails on the maps that are showing all the ski trail expansion?

A: This map is in the presentation, excluding unsanctioned single-track trails that the club has not mapped. The four unsanctioned trails do appear in Trail Forks.

Q: Ridgerunner has damaged or destroyed portions of Espresso, Bad Dog, Broken Moose, Cross Hares, Treehugger, and Missing Lynx. When will the club restore these single-track trails? How much will restoration cost?

A: Except for Espresso and Bad Dog, these are unsanctioned single-track trails built in trespass on private lands that the club does not recognize. There is a 5m section of Espresso crossed by Ridgerunner that was very wet and muddy during last summer's rains. It can be stabilized in good weather this summer as a volunteer project.

With respect to the unsanctioned trails, the trails committee will be asked to make recommendations on their future use before any significant effort is put into them. They were mostly hand cleared of debris during construction except for areas with heavy debris that could not be manually managed. This will need to be done when there is equipment on the Terus trails work this summer.

Environmental Stewardship

Q: What is the plan for clearing the significant deadfall?

A: Clearing deadfall is far too great of an undertaking for the club, and couldn't be achieved without large-scale disturbance of forests. The costs are simply too great.

Our best bet is to ensure effective access, focus on prevention, and control sources of ignition (e.g., smoking, motorized vehicles, chain saws).

The city's fire abatement work this summer does not include the Otway/Miworth area.

Q: As a single-track user, there has been no discussion of shared user space. How do we work together to make this work? So far there has really been no voice for the bikers that use this space and are also members.

A: The forum for engagement on all trails is the trails committee. That is being restructured to better encourage advisory inputs from all types of users. Trails located upon land controlled by the club are recognized and endorsed as club assets, and have been brought up to standard from a liability perspective.

Q: Can you please explain the factors that were taken into consideration when the new trails were built? I ask this because some of the reading that I have been doing regarding trail construction is very detailed and covers a wide range of issues/factors such as: sensitive areas, wildlife, soil erosion, climate change, skier needs, user conflicts, capacity to groom/maintain new trails to name a few. It seems that some of these issues were dealt with 'after the fact'. I am especially wondering about how much snow there will be in the Terus-Hi areas.

A: This trail construction was undertaken on the same basis of consideration given to all existing trail work at Otway. Mainly these have been demand, physical, and economic feasibility considerations with some obvious environmental considerations such as water, nests, dens, etc. You have brought some environmental resources to light that may be useful going forward.

Q: How was the ministry able to burn beetle trees in Pidherny, yet apparently can't in Otway?

A: There was a short period where the city provided exemptions to the no-burn bylaw provisions in Pidherny. But, for the most part this burning at Pidherny is outside city limits.

Q: Jim - crown management means removing overhanging branches, right? What are the ways that is done on the tall trees?

A: The overhanging branches are generally on tall trees and the crowns cannot be reached with equipment for removing limbs. Trees need to be removed.

Q: Prince George winters are 4-degree warmer than pre-1950 levels. Larch Hills ski area has been completing a very thorough snowpack analysis of their ski area since 2007 <https://skilarchhills.ca/snow-depth-measurements/> What does the board think about collecting snowpack information and using it to help make decisions about ski-trail development and modifications (especially upper trails)?

A: Grooming staff have a reasonable knowledge of snow depths in recent years, but with climate change historical information is becoming less useful for predictions. The club doesn't have resources to formally research this question, but grooming records do provide some information.

Q: Terus Hi has many very wide, 20m plus, openings in the trees which appear to have been made to maximize the number of higher value trees which were removed. Does the board plan to replant on these extremely wide openings which significantly degrade the recreational and Nature experience?

A: There are no plans to plant any trailside areas at present. They will reforest naturally, as observed on our older trail systems. Right-of-way clearing was flagged at ~12m stem to stem. Width is less at crown level where snow interception occurs. There are wider open areas where natural openings are adjacent to the trail, and in one instance where some infested beetle trees were taken. A few large crown trees were individually taken outside the 12m corridor as well, if the canopy infringement on the 12m corridor was significant.

Q: From an ecological perspective, we know that wildlife species are not doing well on BC's broader landscape. We can no longer rely on the broader landscape to support species that are vulnerable to habitat loss due to timber harvesting, such as fishers. I have heard two accounts of fishers being seen in the vicinity of Otway. Can the CNSC board and trail committee commit to making conscientious provision for wildlife habitat integrity?

A: This will be a consideration going forward, but specific commitments cannot be made in advance of planning.

Need for Additional Trails

Q: With 1000 new members, what is being planned to address the needs of new members and novice skiers?

Q: What levels of trails are needed? The Terus lands are going to be green/blue? I believe Ridgerunner is a black or blue? If so what will we do to keep all these beginners happy? Is it possible to make more green trails? If so, where?

A: Most beginner trails are in the Pine Flats which is bounded by industrial sites to the east and west, and a significant hill to the south. We are not planning further trail development around Pine Flats. Every effort has been made to ensure new trails are inviting and enjoyable to the intermediate skiers, which would describe the majority of CNSC members.

The most effective thing that can be done to meet the needs of novice skiers and those who feel physically challenged by intermediate trails, is to expand and maintain tree crown encroachment on the upper trail systems so that intermediate skiers don't have to ski on the lower trails to have good snow conditions.

The Terus trails will be blue and skiable by most skiers that use the dog trails. More blue trails are needed to get intermediate skiers off the green trails. We need new trails and reduced snow interception that prevents them from being groomed.

Initiatives like the Grand Tour of Caledonia and group ski lessons have the potential to get more members to ski intermediate trails.

Q: Does the board have any idea about trails usage numbers with respect to intermediate to expert type trails? Does the club actually need more trails that climb onto the ridges?

Q: It seems like we have plenty of trails for Otway users for now and the foreseeable future; they are almost never crowded. Has the board measured the carrying capacity of existing trails? Has usage been tracked to determine if and when we will reach our carrying capacity?

A: The club has no specific statistics on ski trail use but does have a good general knowledge from grooming observations. Use of RFID chips on trail passes to monitor usage is not considered practical in our situation. We need to expand ski trails to accommodate growth, and there is no more room on the lower terraces.

Q: Thanks for the presentation and the valuable effort by staff, committee and volunteers. Did I understand properly that sections of Sawmill and Fir Thur Up [The Creek] will be retained and continue to be groomed? If so how much of the existing portions of will continue to be skiable?

A: All these trails will continue to be groomed, depending on snow. Some tree removal is needed on the upper trails to increase the amount of snowfall that reaches the trail.

Q: My question is about the amount of time and money being spent on intermediate and advanced trails when we have so many new skiers.

A: Time spent on intermediate trails this year is (significant) volunteer time. In fact, the club will get five kilometers of new ski trail from this year's volunteer efforts, at no cost to the club. We need to focus on getting more skiers onto intermediate and advanced trails as there is no room for additional beginner trails on the pine flats.

Q: Will the Terus Hi trail be part of the dog trails?

A: This is a possibility, but that decision has not yet been made. Given the higher speeds skiers may achieve on these trails, safety for skiers and dogs becomes a concern.

Q: Now that Ridgerunner will not extend across more single-track trails, it ends at a right-angle intersection with a high-speed section on Lynx. How will novice skiers get down from there, facing the steep descent down the Lynx canyon? Will Ridgerunner be safe as a two-way trail with skiers snowplowing down steep sections?

A: Ridgerunner was never intended to extend beyond Lynx, be a novice ski trail, or to be two-way. Anyone using Ridgerunner will need to go down Lynx. The intersection of Ridgerunner with Lynx is on a slight uphill with good line of sight up Lynx. There are examples of this situation on our current trails such as the junction with nightrider above the caretakers, which has not been a safety problem.

Q: Why not revitalize the old hickory wing trails at Tabor? I thought that was an excellent idea, why it hasn't happened?

A: Caledonia has no land tenure to utilize at Tabor, and left Tabor for Otway where better facilities and access can be offered.

The Tabor Recreational Society operates from the former Caledonia base utilizing some of the former trails. Skiers are welcome to use that facility.

[Need to Consider Impact on Neighbours](#)

Q: CORRECTION: The residents of Catherine drive took the time and effort to submit their concerns to the club in writing and requested that they receive a response in kind (in writing) which the club refused. Does the club have any plans to respond as requested?

A: The club has responded to the Catherine Drive residents offering to meet and discuss any concerns.

Q: There was considerable flagging behind Catherine Drive and along a large sensitive wetland area. What was the intention of this flagging?

A: Without more specifics, we assume this reference is to flagging that was part of general reconnaissance for potentially suitable ski trail development areas.

Q: Thank you for the presentations. I am a property owner on Catherine Drive.

This is from a CNSC Newsletter (sent to me by a member): "We have a conceptual plan for 15 km of new ski touring trails on scenic terrain on the back of Cranbrook Hill. Ski touring is most often thought of as backcountry skiing with no track but can be whatever the membership wants it to be. We envision a trail 5 to 6 meters wide similar to Fingers in width, to minimize snow interception and to enable use for a Loppet course."

Two questions: 1. Where are the trails mentioned in the newsletter located?

A: There are no actual trail locations planned, but there is enough reconnaissance done to support a feasible conceptual planning exercise.

Q:2. Was the CNSC board promising the trails to the club without contacting Catherine Drive residents?

A: No.

Q: CNSC members might not realize that motorized use of these trails by recreational vehicles would be permitted. So the Ski Club was planning (applying to build) trails in the beautiful mature forest behind our homes and promising the trails to ski club members, without having a conversation with us.

A: No, this is not the case. Should the club decide to proceed with plans there will be opportunities for public input.

Club Governance

Q: The bylaws require directors to be elected by the membership at a General Meeting. When will the meeting be?

Q: How will the new director be selected? Will they be elected by the membership?

A: Elected board members are elected at Annual General Meetings, normally held in the fall. In between AGMs elected board members can appoint new directors to fill board vacancies.

Q: What is the process through which single track trail development (and ski trail dev) is planned and approved?

A: Up to this point there has been no planning or approval process for single-track trail development. The single-track trails at Otway were built by volunteers without club-sanctioned plans or approvals. Ski trail development is approved at the board level, normally through the fall budget planning process but also can be done throughout the fiscal year.

It is the intent of the board to require all future trail development on club managed land to be board approved.

Q: Why is contact information for directors not provided on the club website? How is the membership to communicate with the directors?

A: There is a “contact us” directory on the website with key contact information and a feedback link for your written message.

Q: Can the club relationship with Nordic Forest be explained, is this still the wood lot relationship?

A: Nordic Forest is a Limited Liability Company held in trust for the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club.

Q: How much money if any has the club spent on the trail development on the Terus Lands.

A: To date this year, the club has spent no trail development money on Terus Lands. Time spent on intermediate trails this year is (significant) volunteer time that is not billed, and costs have been covered by a generous donation from Terus Construction Ltd. In fact, the club will get five kilometers of new ski trail from this year’s volunteer and donor efforts, at no cost to the club.

Q: There is a Sustain Otway report that compiles concerns received from a group of 130 members and makes constructive recommendations. When and how will the board publish the Sustain Otway report so all members can be informed of these concerns?

A: Caledonia Nordic Ski Club will not be publishing unsolicited third-party reports on its website.

Q: given the expansion, do you anticipate an increase in annual fees?

A: No annual fee increase is planned for trail development, but there were voluntary donations for advancement of a touring trail system.

Q: Are there any plans to charge for non-winter use of the trails?

A: This has been discussed numerous times with no clear outcome. There is obviously value to users as evidenced by the full parking lots over the summer months, but we do not have the capacity to financially administer a fee system that differentiates members from non-members.

Q: What process will be used to select trails committee members.

A: This is not yet decided. However, it is a board priority.

Q: Is there any timeline on how soon the trails committee will become active?

A: This will evolve once the trails director is in place, and terms of reference have been approved. There is no fixed timeline, but it is a board priority.

Q: The CNSC strategic plan ran from 2016-2020. When will the development of a new plan begin?

A: We intend to begin a strategic plan update process this spring/early summer.

Q: My questions have to do with information given to board members and about board decision-making processes related to the Terus land development. Were all of the board members fully informed about the scope of this Terus development project including the access road and the width of the right-of-way? Were they given an opportunity to review maps?

A: The board was informed of plans and provided with location maps.

Q: Does the culture of the board currently foster healthy debate?

A: Yes.

Q: Has the club ever had a volunteer co-ordinator?

A: Yes, but not for all activities and not recently.

Q: you need a nominating committee to get more board members

A: This is a condition of the By Laws. The board is to appoint a three-person nominations committee at least one month prior to the AGM. This is normally the role of the executive.

Member Engagement and Communication

Q: Thank you for the presentation. Can you please explain why the trails committee, the club membership, and the single-track stakeholders were not consulted in the design of Ridgerunner, Terus-hi and Hair of the Dog?

A: The trails director role was not filled at that time and as such the trails committee was not fully functional. While it is likely not practical to involve the membership at large in the planning, future trail development will be advised on by the trails director and a trails committee that works to engage members.

Q: Many club members do not agree with Jim Burbee's viewpoints on environmental stewardship. How will the board reconcile these differing values?

A: There is undoubtedly a broad range of values and opinions within the membership. Understanding differing viewpoints on trail development impacts will be part of trails director and committee discussions. However, we feel reconciliation of differences is not the role of the board of directors.

Q: communication and engagement are different. communication is telling people what you are going to do. Engagement is getting input as to what you should do. what is the engagement strategy.

Q: This is a lot of information and I do agree this deserves more discussion. I too am questioning where to bring our expanded thoughts on tonight's discussion.

Q: I would suggest that the controversy could have been avoided if club members had been given the opportunity to review and comment on a draft operational plan that showed proposed new trails and existing trails. Will that happen in the future? Too much emphasis was put on the results of the survey.

A: The board recognizes that members expect more opportunities for communication and engagement in trail development. The board is and has committed to engaging with the membership in several ways outlined in the recent meetings and elsewhere in this document. This will be part of the trails committee mandate.

Recruiting and appointing a trails director and assembling a trails committee are steps that will further that objective.

Surveys are an important tool for getting information. The board is committed to using surveys in ways that are appropriate and transparent.

Q: I think it is important to recognize that overall, the officers and directors of the club are doing a good job of managing a world-class facility. I agree with Jeff about the opportunity to review and comment on proposed new trails, and I would like to see a more in-depth environmental assessment of planned expansions.

A: This is the intent going forward.

Q: Was there any effort made to engage the wider cycling community when seeking input on trail changes?

A: No. The board's responsibility is to CNSC members. While anyone can ride at Otway, trail development is CNSC business.

Q: Can the website have a specific place for members to message the new trail committee.

A: There is a "contact us" tab in the directory on the website under the "about us" link with key contact information, including the director of trails. We expect this may be refined to a Trail Committee link.

Q: please avoid continuing to use the trails survey as a justification for the work that was done, it was far from a correct and valid survey. moving forward if we continue to use surveys then we need them to make sure they are scientifically valid

A: We intend to continue using surveys to get feedback from members. The survey confirmed strong support for a touring trail. We recognize that more detail is needed for larger specific projects.

Q: Will the board provide written responses to all the questions that don't get answered at these Zoom meetings?

Q: will you answer questions after the meeting that have not be answered?

A: Yes.

Q: Given that many members cannot participate (because they don't have computers or Zoom), does the board consider these two Zoom meetings adequate consultation of members and the public before proceeding with these road and trail developments?

A: This question has been previously answered.

Q: When will the club publish the answers to open questions and complaints on the trails survey that have not been reported?

A: Open questions were posed to solicit anonymous feedback. We will not make these responses public.

Q: Will the board start publishing board minutes as it previously decided to do and as most other clubs do?

A: This will be taken under consideration, pending club priorities and finite resources.

Q: What will be done to increase the club's transparency to bring it on par with other clubs, e.g., making newsletters easy to find on the website, posting all board and general member meeting minutes (as other clubs do), posting detailed financial information (as other clubs do), posting reports, surveys, and their complete results, committee membership, etc.?

A: We will take this under consideration. This level of disclosure requires resources and we are a volunteer board with plenty of work to do. We encourage members to attend the Annual General Meetings and review newsletters on the club website.

Q: The club website so hopelessly convoluted, incomplete and out of date. When will it be fixed?

A: Website redesign is a big job. We will work toward improving it where appropriate as time and resources allow.

Q: On communication and engagement, for this call during Q & A it would be nice for people to be able to type in chat - or if they like to speak & explain their concerns and thoughts respectfully (identifying themselves, not taking too much time or too many questions, and using respectful language). Would allow clarifying and sharing feelings - hear people's voices - I think that's what a number of people are looking for. Perhaps that's possible?

A: With a large group this is likely to become unwieldy. This is probably more suited to smaller groups.

Q: Can the club set times to do walks through the Otway areas for members to attend and weigh in on issues

A: This is an interesting idea for some situations but could be unrealistic on a large scale. Some opportunities may be manageable through the trails committee.