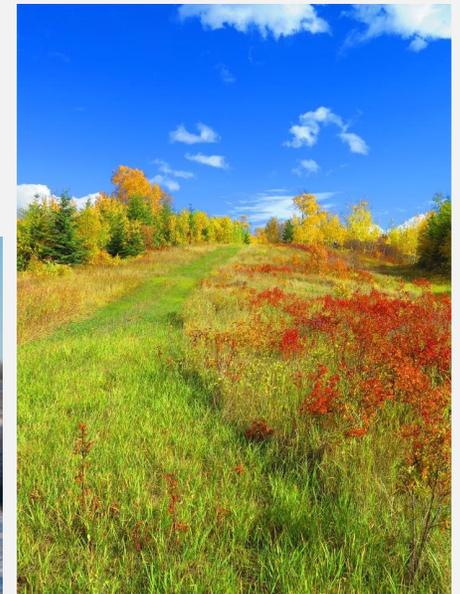




TAWATINAW  
VALLEY

## SEASON END REPORT 2018/2019



*\*Boundless recreational fun for everyone\**

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*“Very friendly staff, they really cared and wanted your time there to be enjoyable. You feel very welcomed. My daughter and I had a fun and relaxing day together skiing. Even with us being very different levels in skiing we both found routes we could take together but split apart to be more our level still in view of each other.”*

## Message from the Board President and Tawatinaw Valley General Manager:

Our ski area has a long history: the Tawatinaw Alpine and Nordic Centre was a centennial project, operated and funded for 40 years by volunteers. After a 10 year hiatus, the non-profit Board again assumed operations on October 1, 2019 under an operating agreement with Westlock County.

We had 75 days from when we signed the operating agreement to opening day. It was a huge challenge to get this done because the equipment, land and chalet needed work to get ready. We had many volunteers not just from Westlock, Athabasca and area, but also the surrounding regions including Sturgeon County and Parkland County.

In addition to volunteers we had tradespeople and professionals offer us their services for free or at discounted rates, plus donated the use of their equipment and supplies. We are very thankful to the community for the support we received to make it all possible, to Westlock County Council for their vision to move forward with the operating agreement, and to Westlock County administration and staff for their mentorship and direction.

The hill opened as scheduled December 15, helped by good early season snowfall and successful snow-making, using an additional two rented warm-weather snow guns.

Overall, we had a solid ski season, helped out by Mother Nature gifting us with great snow fall early in the year. Our good start was also helped by renting 2 snow guns which enabled us to make snow at warmer temperatures. We took a bit of a hit with the polar vortex, which settled very cold temperatures over the area for a few weeks. In spite of this, we were open a total of 69 days and welcomed over 8,900 skiers, snowboarders and tubers to the hill, including over 2,000 students and 30 school groups. We also hosted various activities and special events which contributed to the success of the season.

We are very thankful for a successful year and we are looking forward to planning for the future, including activities and opportunities for all four seasons!



*Wendy Batog, President and Steve Kimpton, General Manager*

### Vision

- **Boundless recreational fun for everyone**

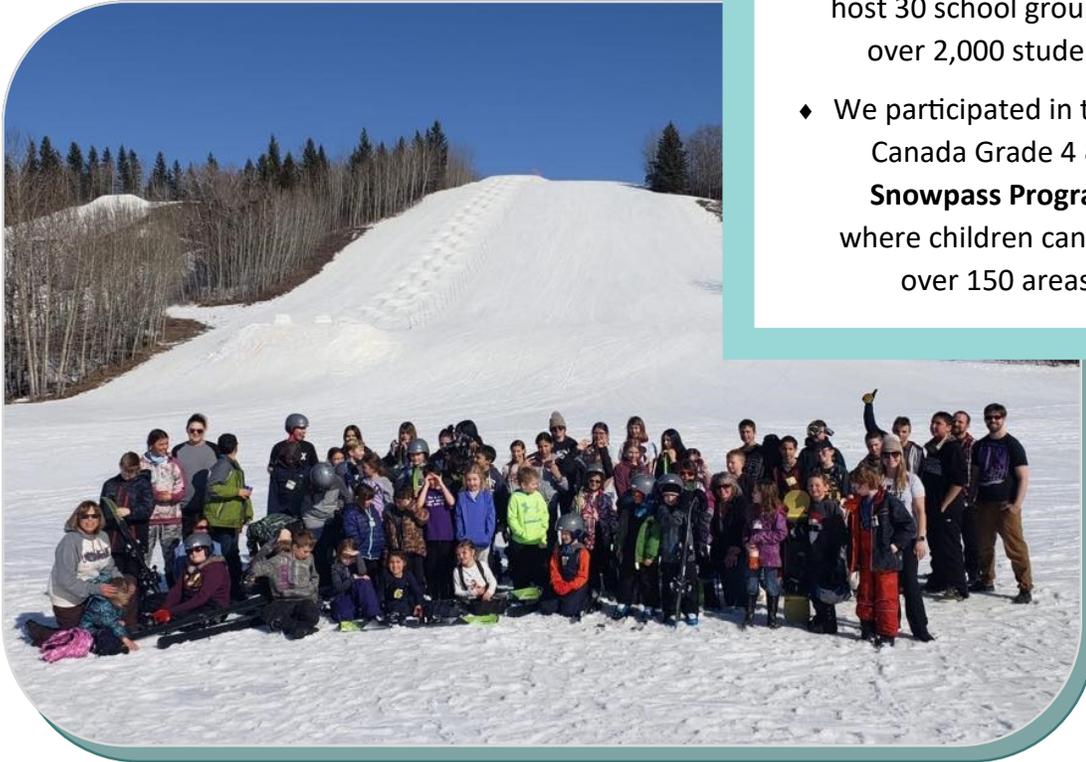
### Mission

- **Tawatinaw Valley promotes safe and healthy recreation for all ages and abilities by providing:**
  - high quality facilities and terrain
  - excellent customer experiences
  - innovative programming and learning

*“Tawatinaw is the best ski resort! I have been to Banff, Jasper, Colorado: Aspen, Mammoth, Big Bear... The volunteers are just amazing. They are very helpful and friendly. The place is very clean, new, no big lines, cozy; perfect fire place, food was delicious and free water...not over priced. Thank you so much for making us to feel at home. Happy New Year!”*



# School programs:



- ◆ We were very happy to host 30 school groups and over 2,000 students.
- ◆ We participated in the Ski Canada Grade 4 & 5 **Snowpass Program**, where children can ski at over 150 areas.

Our biggest program is our **“Learn to Ski”** school group program. Our school group sizes varied from 35 students to 180 students in a school group, so it was really important for us to have a good rental pool of skis and snowboards to accommodate them.

“Our Gr 4-9 kids had a fabulous day at Tawatinaw Valley Ski Hill. Great snow conditions, warm chalet, good food and awesome friends! Best ski day yet!”

### Schools that we hosted:

Westlock & area	Pembina North St. Mary School Westlock Elementary School Eleanor Hall School RF Staples School Westlock Homeschool Group
County of Sturgeon & area	Redwater School
Morinville & area	Morinville Public School GH Primeau School Ecole Notre Dame Ecole Citadelle
Slave Lake & area	St. Mary’s on the Lake Lakeside Outreach School Wabasca School Smith School



# Our Clubs:



Tawatinaw Valley also hosts the **Westlock Nordic Ski Club**. The Jackrabbits Club has **20 young skiers** from Westlock, Barrhead and surrounding areas.

- ◇ Members and families contribute by trail mowing and maintenance, as well as cross country trail grooming during the season.
- ◇ Cross country trails were well-groomed and kept in good shape and attracted increasing numbers of skiers (in December alone we achieved **64%** of budgeted visits for entire ski season).
- ◇ We also had visits from other ski clubs, including the Edmonton Nordic Club which brought a number of skiers out for a recreational ski.

March 9 we hosted a loppet which had **64 participants** from as far away as Edmonton and Fort McMurray. The loppet had to be rescheduled from its' original date due to very cold temperatures.

Tawatinaw Valley is pleased to host a number of clubs, including the **Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders Club**, which includes **50 skiers**.

- ◆ The club draws members from a large area, as far away as Edmonton, Parkland County, & Slave Lake
- ◆ Club skiers all purchase season passes
- ◆ Club also pays a usage fee to Tawatinaw Valley
- ◆ Club families contribute volunteer labour to build the public terrain park and mini-park.
- ◆ Freerider families were also among our most supportive volunteers during fall work bees to ready the hill for the season.

March 1-3 we hosted the Freestyle Provincial Club Competition. In spite of the extreme cold temperatures, there were over **100 participants** registered, and the weekend of the competition we averaged **260 public visits** per day for the hill.



Two more clubs are under development:

- Canadian Adaptive Snowsports (CADS)** in collaboration with the **Westlock Accessibility Committee**, is setting up the **Tawatinaw Zone CADS**, a program for better access for skiers with disabilities and we hope to begin offering activities in our 2019-2020 season.
- The **"Kids Club"** is a program geared towards young skiers and snowboarders who are looking for a little more time on the hill but are not old enough or quite ready to join the Freeriders club.



# SPECIAL EVENTS:



## PARTICIPANTS

We held a number of special events throughout the season and had great attendance.

- ◇ Old Fashioned Christmas Party– **100 diners**
- ◇ Grand Re-opening– **250 ski visits**
- ◇ Family Day– **183 ski visits**
- ◇ St Patrick's Day Supper– **68 diners**
- ◇ Slush Cup– **32 participants**
- ◇ Never Ever Days– **32 new skiers/ snowboarders**

**In addition to skiers, these events attracted a number of other visitors who came to watch, enjoy a meal, and have fun!**

“We attended our second Canadian Freestyle Club Competition this weekend here with Central Alberta Freestylerz and absolutely loved the facility! Even with the frigid temperatures the athletes never got cold due to the close proximity of the gorgeous lodge. Viewing of the runs were great from inside and out. The food was fantastic and can honestly say this was a great comp. put on by Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders.”



*“St Patrick's meal was great with homemade biscuits and dessert”*

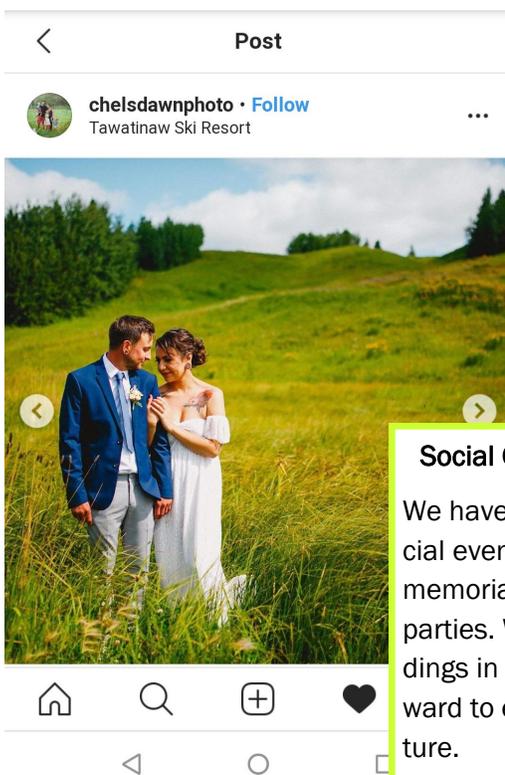
*“The St Patrick's day dinner was great. I loved the scones.”*

# New Programs and Offerings:

## Seniors/Grade 3 Class Day- Intergenerational Program

- ◇ **21 seniors** spent the day with **75 students**, including lunch, crafts, history of the area, tubing and a gymnastics visit
- ◇ Busing was sponsored by Carl's Auto, Westlock
- ◇ Volunteer coordination by Alberta Health Services, with support from Family and Community Support Services
- ◇ Event coordination by Tawatinaw Valley Staff and Volunteers

*Teacher: "Loved the day, the interactions between youth and seniors- the best day of teaching in 29 years!"*



## Snow Fun Day

- We also piloted a new program called "**Snow Fun**" for K-3 groups who don't ski yet.
- Over **30 kindergarten children** attended.
- They participated in activities and crafts based on enjoying the snow and the outdoors, including: tubing, snow painting, snow playground, creating a marshmallow craft and tree paintings.

## Social Gatherings and Special Event Rentals

We have been proud to host a number of special event rentals including birthday parties, memorial gatherings, and family Christmas parties. We were excited to host three weddings in the summer of 2019 and we look forward to expanding these offerings in the future.



# NEW ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES:



*“My children tubed this season and had a great time.”*

*“Great equipment rental and helpful staff. Fun for the whole family.”*

## TUBING

- ◆ Tawatinaw Valley was very happy to be able to introduce tubing this season, due to great corporate and community partnerships.
- ◆ We were very fortunate to have our entire tube fleet of **30 tubes** purchased with a collaborative donation from Westlock’s vehicle dealerships (**Brown’s Chrysler, Westlock Motors, and Westlock Ford**)
- ◆ **Westlock’s Servus Credit Union** sponsored free tubing on Sundays, and this was well-attended, with over **650 visits** over the season on Servus Sundays. The tube run opened on Dec. 22 and the first **Servus Credit Union Sunday Free Tubing** was held on **Dec 23**.

## Ski, Snowboard and Helmet Pool

With a significant donation by the **Westlock Rotary Club** and additional support from **Westlock Elks** and **Westlock 100 Women Who Care**, we can now offer a safe and quality rental fleet, which is critical to offering our school programs, as well as ski lessons and public rentals

- ◇ 232 pairs of skis
- ◇ 297 pairs of ski boot
- ◇ 38 snowboards
- ◇ 48 pairs of snowboard boots
- ◇ 215 pairs of poles
- ◇ 200 helmets



**Mini-Terrain Park Opened January 5th**

# Staff and Volunteers:

## STAFF

- ◇ It is important for us to provide a quality and safe experience, so our instructors all are certified through National Ski and Snowboard Instructor Associations.
- ◇ **6 staff** are CSIA certified ski instructors and **2 staff** are CASI certified snowboard instructors.
- ◇ We have instructors for our school programs and we have had very positive feedback from schools on how they work with the school-children who attend.
- ◇ We also provide scheduled lessons for the public on the weekend and we can provide private lessons if requested.
- ◇ **All rental staff** have been certified as ELAN Alpine Ski Binding Technicians.



Paul and Audrey



Chuck and Donna

## VOLUNTEERS

Tawatinaw Valley has had over 53 active volunteers since start up, logging over 5,000 hours of work

Start-up work included everything from chalet and grounds clean-up, mowing, equipment repair, logo design, DJ-ing, website design and social media, building and installing rental shop shelving, preparing for equipment installation, helping in food services and guest services.

During the season, volunteer cross country trail grooming occurred as needed and volunteers maintained the terrain park on a weekly basis. Indoors, volunteers helped out at the Guest Services desk and in Chalet on weekends.

Board members also served as active volunteers in a wide variety of areas.

*“I am just learning to snowboard and this is a great place to learn! “*



# SKI PATROL:



## We also want to highlight the contribution of the Canada Ski Patrol- Pembina Zone:

- ◇ They are volunteers and they have yearly training and courses in Advanced First Aid, which is accredited by the Canadian Government.
- ◇ They are a registered Society which raises significant capital through casinos and that money is directly invested back into the Ski Hill for First Aid Supplies and safety equipment.
- ◇ They currently have 18 members patrolling at Tawatinaw Valley.
- ◇ Each member will put in a minimum of 60 hours of volunteer time per season, as they refresh their training every year, and dedicate at least 6 days of shift work each.
- ◇ They encourage interested volunteers to contact them about becoming members; new members are always welcome.



## Our Mountain Champions

We are very proud of our ski patrollers, at a CSP 50th Anniversary Mountain Division First Aid and On Snow Competition at Sunshine Village Ski Area Banff, our teams took home the following awards:

- ◆ Bronze medal– Toboggan Handling
- ◆ Silver medal– First Aid
- ◆ Gold medal and trophy– Toboggan Race

All events took place in the Mountain category.



On Family Day CSP proudly honored one of their longest serving Patrollers by dedicating their Patrol room in his memory.

**Dignus Kakabeeke** was a member of the Ski Patrol for 38 years and received multiple awards and recognitions for his service.



# Customer Survey:

At the end of the ski season, we conducted an on-line customer survey to help us learn about what we did well, what we can improve on and what activities people would like to see us offer in the future. We had 47 people respond and they offered great feedback and suggestions.

## How satisfied were you with your skiing experience?

70% very satisfied      23% satisfied

## How satisfied were you with your tubing experience?

66% satisfied or very satisfied      34% neutral

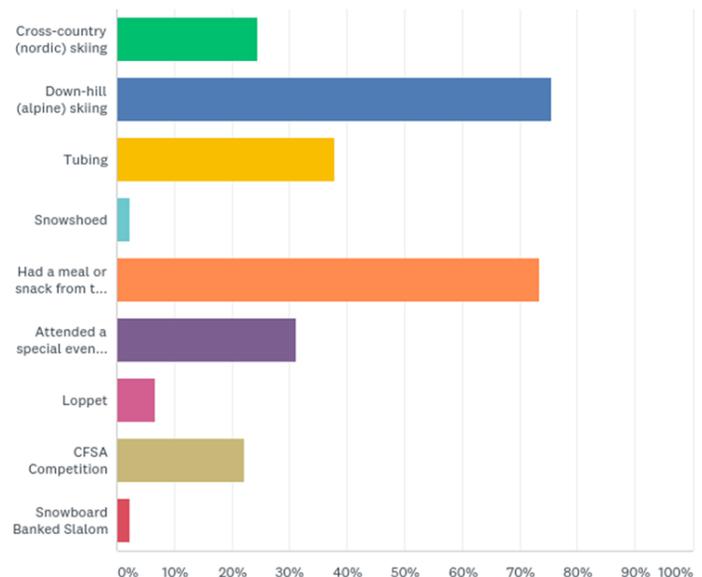
## How satisfied were you with your meal or snack?

64% very satisfied      27% satisfied

## How likely are you to recommend Tawatinaw Valley to a family member or friend?

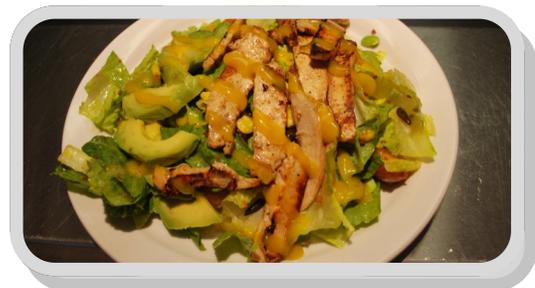
84% very likely      13% likely

## What kind of activity did you do?



## How satisfied were you with your special event dinner or experience?

56% satisfied or very satisfied      29% neutral



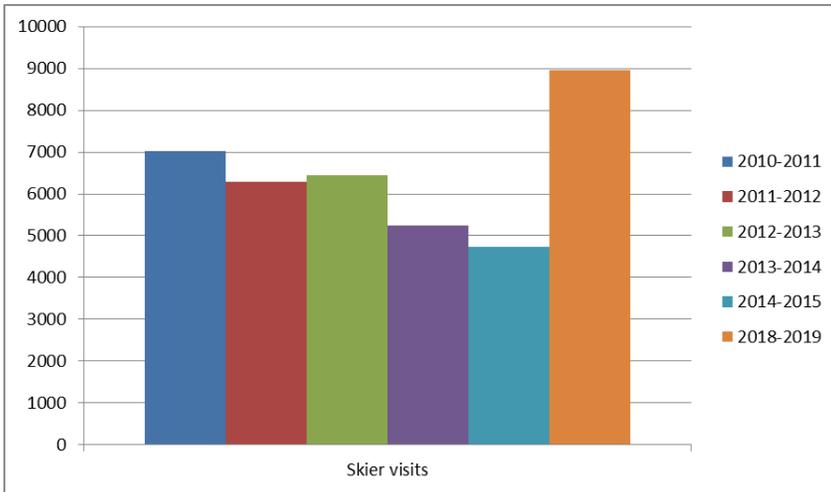
## What did you like most about your visit to Tawatinaw Valley?

- ◇ We had many people respond that their favourite thing about their visit was the **warm, homey, relaxed family atmosphere**
- ◇ We had many comments about our **friendly staff** and volunteers and the welcoming **feeling of community**. People liked that it was run by a volunteer board and thanked them for their efforts to keep it open.
- ◇ People liked that it is **close by** for them to access and that the chalet allowed for **good views of the hill**. They liked that they could watch their kids and the **safety** of the programs and facility.
- ◇ They highlighted the **beautiful, clean and well-kept chalet** as an asset. The **food** received many positive comments.
- ◇ The **scenery, terrain and hills**, as well as the **short lift lines** were also appreciated.



# Reporting on Results:

Number of Skier, Snowboarder and Tuber Visits



Note: data not available for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18

Overall, Tawatinaw Valley had a solid ski season. Our season passes were **112%** more than what we expected and alpine day passes were **107%** higher than expected. Notably, Nordic day passes were **199%** of budget (we sold double what we were projecting). The rope tow passes were

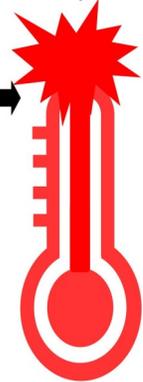
**155%** of budget.



Stalwart Electric and their team donating their services & equipment to help us with lift maintenance, with Grant Bacon from Sunridge Ski area

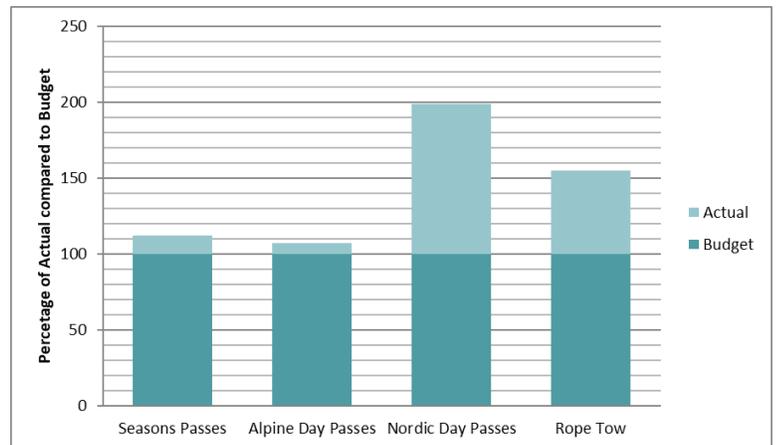
March 31– 8,964 visits!!

Our goal: 8,000 visits



We did it– thanks to all of you!

*“Had a blast enjoying the weather and great grooming. I loved the variety of scenic trails especially ‘Little Secret’ “*



Donation of equipment and services, as well as use of volunteer hours when appropriate and safe, helped us keep our repair and maintenance costs down. On average, **we came in nearly 40% under budget in this area by season end**, which we will be putting toward expected summer maintenance and upgrading needs.

**We were successful in opening all four lifts during the ski season.**

# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP:

The Club has accessed a variety of supports and resources to develop a sustainable financial, human resources and marketing plan, including:

- ◇ Community Futures Tawatinaw
- ◇ Tourism Business Development, Business Development and Investment Attraction Branch | Tourism Division, Government of Alberta
- ◇ Travel Alberta, Experience Development Team

As well, we have benchmarked our expenditures and budget against similar small to medium-sized ski areas in Alberta.

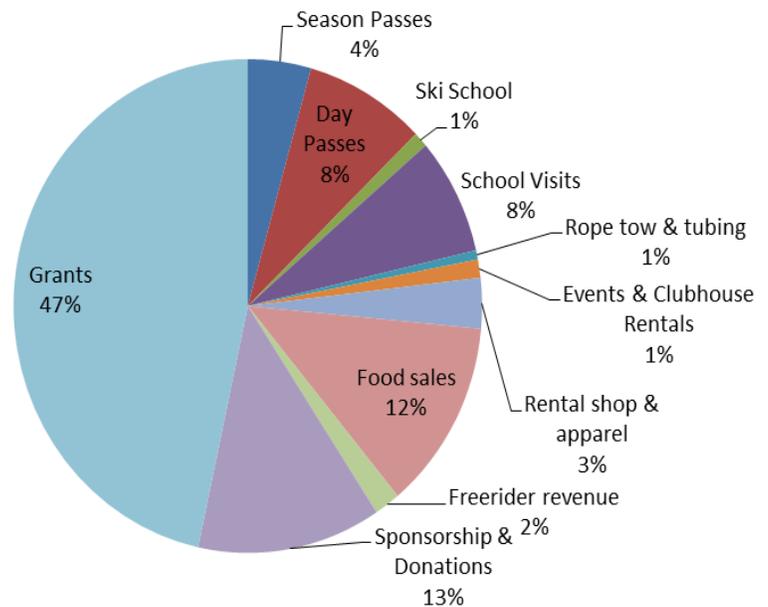
## Season-ending Results

With remaining payments due for key capital equipment such as snow guns, ski and snow board rental pool, as well as our fall maintenance and parking lot resurfacing, we are estimating a net surplus of:

**\$5824.00**

### Revenue Sources (for both Capital and Operations)-

Oct 1, 2018- July 31, 2019

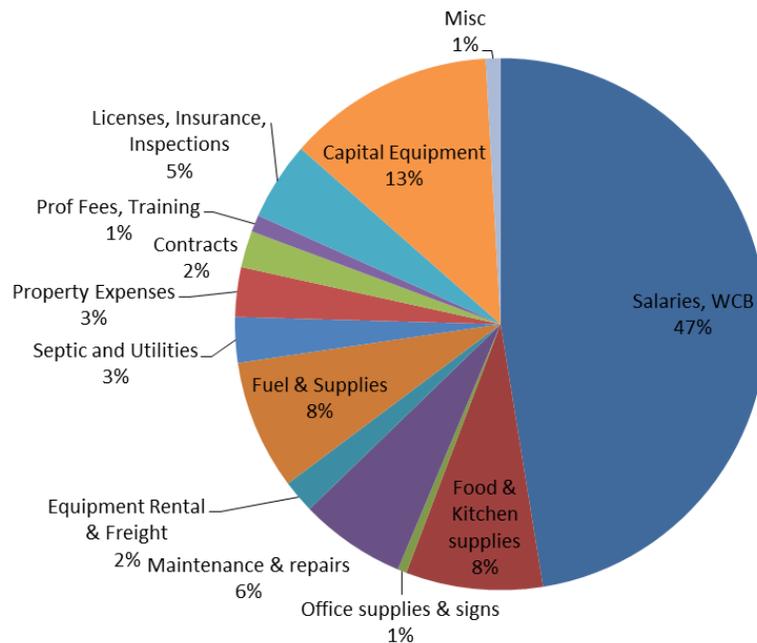


### Impact of volunteer hours:

**5,164 hours of time costed at minimum wage = \$77,460**

### Expenses (for both Capital and Operations)-

Oct 1, 2018- July 31, 2019



### Impact of donations, sponsorship and new donated equipment:

**\$121,399**

# Social media and promotions:

Use of social media also helped keep our advertising cost down and helped us attract more users. Our webpage, Facebook page and Instagram were developed and maintained by volunteers.

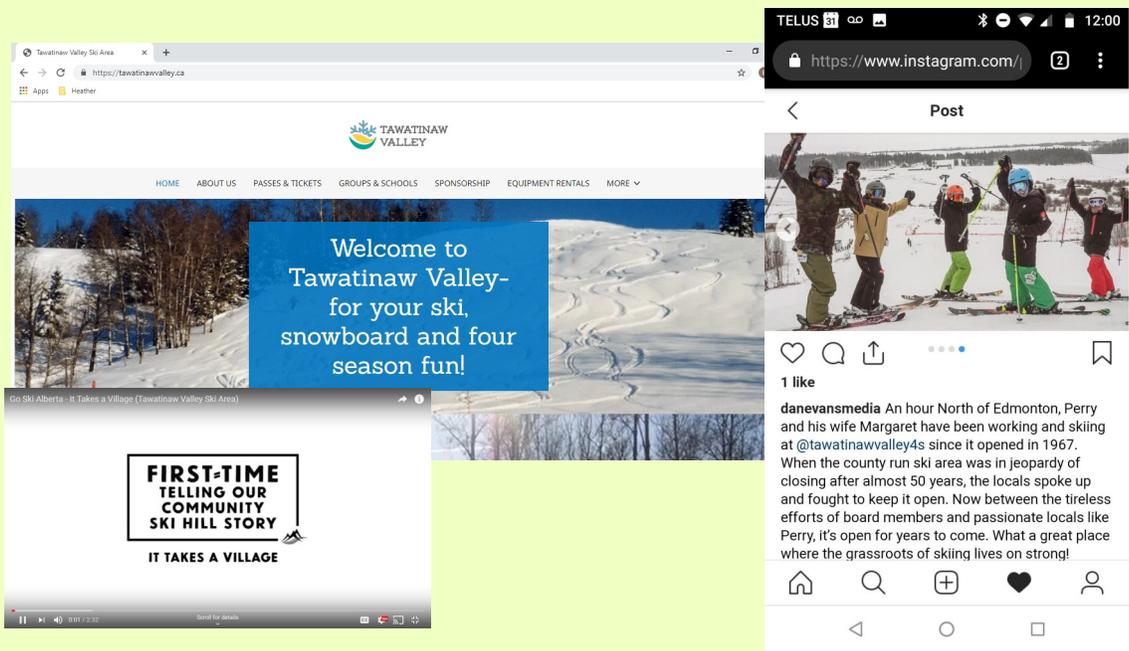
**Our Facebook page has 1152 followers and 1119 “likes”**. Some of our posts reached as many as 3,300 viewers. Over 28,000 people had information about our events reach their screen. Our followers are 76% women and the biggest age group is 35-44 years old, followed by 25-34 years old. Top 3 groups of followers are from: Edmonton, Westlock, Athabasca.

**Our website got up to 200 views per day** on some days during the ski season.

**Our Instagram has grown to 139 followers** in spite of a later start in the season and we want to grow this area.

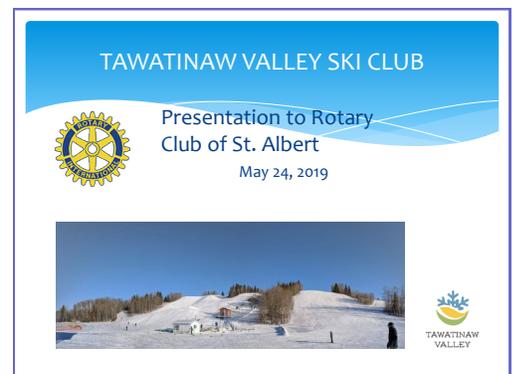
In the last quarter, **our Google business site had 4,480 views** and the most common actions they took was visiting our website or checking directions. Photos on the site were viewed 6,380 times.

We were very pleased to be featured in a video developed by *Go Ski Alberta* and the *Canada West Ski Areas Association*, called **“It Takes a Village”**, and in the *National Post*, as well as an article for *Ski Area Management* magazine. We were also very thankful for great coverage provided by our local media.



## Presentations:

In order to let our communities know about the facility and our plans, we provided presentations to a number of County and Town Councils, including: **Athabasca, Westlock and Sturgeon**. As well, we presented to the **Westlock Rotary Club, Athabasca Rotary Club** and **St. Albert Rotary Club**. We attended the **St. Albert Chamber of Commerce** and provided **local MLAs** with regular updates. We have many more groups we plan to visit in the future.



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR TAWATINAW VALLEY

## Some of the things we want to do:

- Continue to add more winter programs– we are adding snowshoe rentals and trails in the 2019/20 season
- Increase access to other groups and users, especially youth groups
- Explore and add more summer programs, for example nature trails
- Offer event and meeting space (e.g. weddings, Christmas parties, business meetings and retreats)
- Host more special events such as dinners, competitions and fun events
- Pilot and evaluate field trips with schools in the area

We would like to let our communities know what we have to offer by attending open houses, light-ups, registration evenings and other community events.

*“Keep the current direction going. Engaging the public both users and non-users is critical to future success. Continue working on regional partnerships.”*



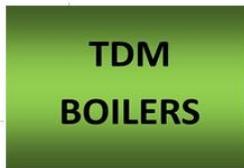
In order to meet the needs of our residents and communities, we want to continue to engage with and consult with a variety of organizations including:

- ◇ Municipal governments
- ◇ Service clubs
- ◇ Social support organizations
- ◇ Schools
- ◇ Youth groups
- ◇ Organizations representing Indigenous people and youth

We are currently working with **Alberta Community Development** to carry out a strategic planning and visioning workshop, which will involve key community groups and organizations in helping us shape our future.



# Thank you to our sponsors and supporters:



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS



**Westlock Rotary Club, Westlock Elks and Westlock 100 Women Who Care** donations for the purchase of our rental fleet of skis, snowboards, bindings, poles and helmets.

Westlock Servus Credit Union sponsored our "Servus Sundays" Free Family tubing, with tubes donated by:

- ◆ Westlock Ford
- ◆ Westlock Motors
- ◆ Brown's Chrysler



Under the direction of Daniel Beaudoin of **Innovative Difference Interior Woodwork and Design Ltd**, 11 volunteers donated 139 hours to construct and assemble customized shelving for our rental shop.