



TAWATINAW  
VALLEY

# Tawatinaw Valley Annual Report 2022-2023



# TAWATINAW VALLEY YEAR IN REVIEW (2022-2023)

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had a great 2022-2023 season, with many successes and highlights. Our opening day was December 17 and our last operating day was March 26. Mother Nature cooperated and we only missed 5 days all season due to the cold.

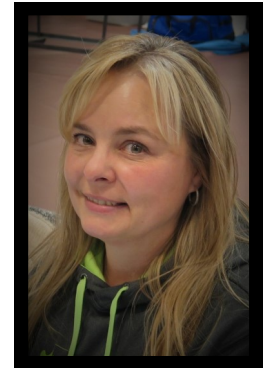
### Visits

The ski season started out well in January and we averaged 300-350 people per day, many from the south (Edmonton, Sturgeon and St. Albert). Although school bookings were paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, they strongly resumed and even in early November, we already had 9 schools booked for 14 days of field trips. At the end of the season, we had 19 schools and 2691 visits.

### Financial

We had a good start to the season and as of November 30 had \$12,548 in season pass sales, compared to \$650 by the same date of the previous year. By the end of the 22/23 season, we met our goal for season pass sales. Our other revenue from day passes, school visits, equipment rentals and food services helped us finish the year with a slight surplus, in spite of the impact of increasing fuel and utility costs, as well as other cost increases.

We were also helped by our ongoing maintenance program, which kept our repair costs lower than previous years. The Board continues to be strong stewards of this valuable asset and to invest significant time and resources to ensure the facility and equipment are kept in great condition.



**Wendy Batog,  
President  
Tawatinaw Valley Ski  
Club**

### Recognition by the Canadian Ski Hall of Fame and Museum

We were contacted in January by a representative of this museum who wished to develop an article about Tawatinaw as part of their series on community ski hills. We helped them tell the story of our ski area: its history, its characters, its current status and its prospects in the future. The article is scheduled to appear shortly.

### Partnerships

Tawatinaw continues to value strong partnerships, which have helped us to be successful. We recently signed a contract with the Millwright Apprentice Program with NAIT. This will be a win-win, allowing us to provide an opportunity for a community member to apprentice, while bringing their skills to support the ski area.

We continue to partner with, and to promote other recreation operations in the Tawatinaw Valley using our social media (e.g. Family Day with Pine Valley). We have met with local operators to talk about working together on packages and promotions.

We continue to build strong relationships with many Alberta ski areas. Some of our Board members toured Sunridge and Rabbit Hill to learn about their conveyor lifts. We also provided information and tours to other Alberta ski areas, especially those interested in our infrastructure and conveyor lift project. We also continue to maintain reciprocal agreements with other Alberta ski hills.

### Education

Board members and leadership continue to be active participants in Canada West Ski Area Association (CWSAA) education offerings. Board members and management are encouraged to access CWSAA on line resources and to review newsletters. Topics include skill hill operations, risk management, and health and safety. In-person events we attended include the CWSAA fall conference and the CWSAA Responsible Stewardship workshop series.

### Carpet-style Conveyor Lift

In August 2022 we received approval for a CFEP grant of \$125,000. This made it possible for us to move ahead with our purchase of a conveyor lift, a key capital priority. Work has continued on the lift throughout the year. Site preparation and engineering work is underway and it is expected to be operational for the 2023/2024 season. The creation of a sponsorship program has also supported the funding for the lift, with nearly \$20,000 raised in sponsorships. Also, the Fortis Community Investment Portfolio has provided a grant for underground power to the lift, an estimated donation value of \$26,000 dollars.

### Promotion

We continue to be active in promoting our facility. Board members and staff have attended Community Registration Nights and given interviews to Wild Alberta, as well as local media. We participated in a “take-over” of the Go Ski Alberta facebook page, providing a week of highlights about Tawatinaw. The Board made a number of presentations to Rotary Clubs and municipal councils in the surrounding areas.

### Volunteers

Volunteers continue to be an important part of our success. This year we held spring and fall work bees as we do every year. Activities included mowing, weed eating, cleaning the chalet, tree removal on cross country trails, maintenance yard clean up, kitchen and window cleaning. Volunteers also support us in other ways, for example the donation of a beautiful quilt that was created by Terry Brown and was raffled off at the Family Day event.

### Grants

As well as the CFEP grant for the conveyor lift, the Grants Committee has been very active in applying for a number of grants. The Board applied for and received a grant from the Tourism Relief Fund. The Tourist Relief Fund is a federal program administered by PrairiesCan in Edmonton. The funds will be applied to the rope for the green tow. We also received a grant from Servus Credit Union to support free tubing Sundays. This is a great opportunity for families to get out and enjoy some winter recreation together. We also submitted an application to the Westlock Community Foundation, Community Services Recovery Fund for the Innovative Social Media Branding and Communication Made Manageable grant. The funds will be used to hire a consultant to review and renew our communication strategies and implement changes with the required staff training.

As you can see, our Board, management and volunteers continue to be very busy in ensuring a quality and safe experience for our customers, while being good financial stewards of this community gem. We look forward to a great season in 2023-2024, and to continuing to build on our success. We want to thank everyone for their support in making this possible!



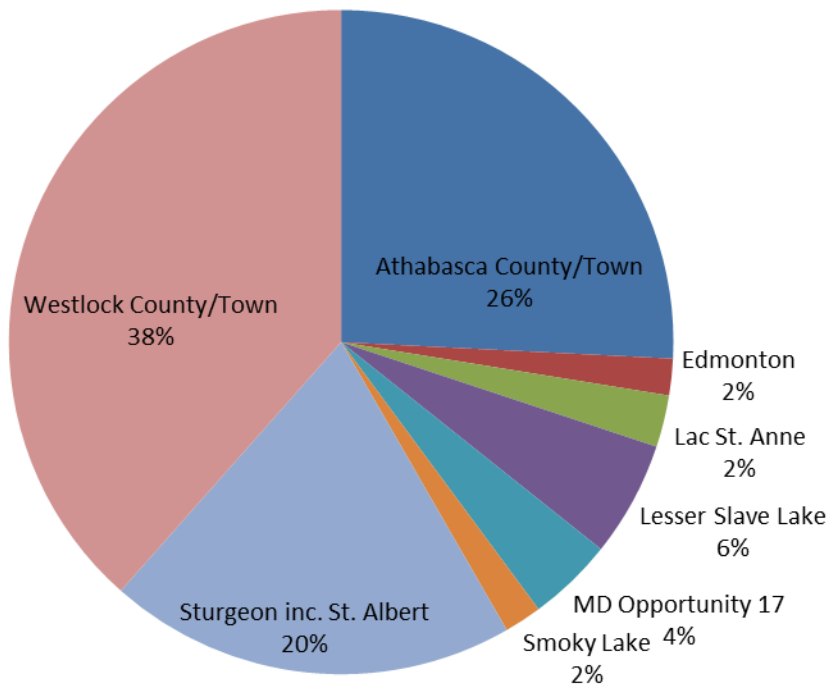
*Wendy Batog*

TVSC Board President

*“I’ve skied at big hills but I think this place is great.”*

## OUR VISITORS

Where do our visitors come from?



### Our top groups of visitors

1. Westlock County/Town
2. Athabasca County/Town
3. St. Albert/Sturgeon

These percentages are similar to last year. Our numbers from St. Albert and Sturgeon increased in 2020 and we are happy that the increase has been maintained.

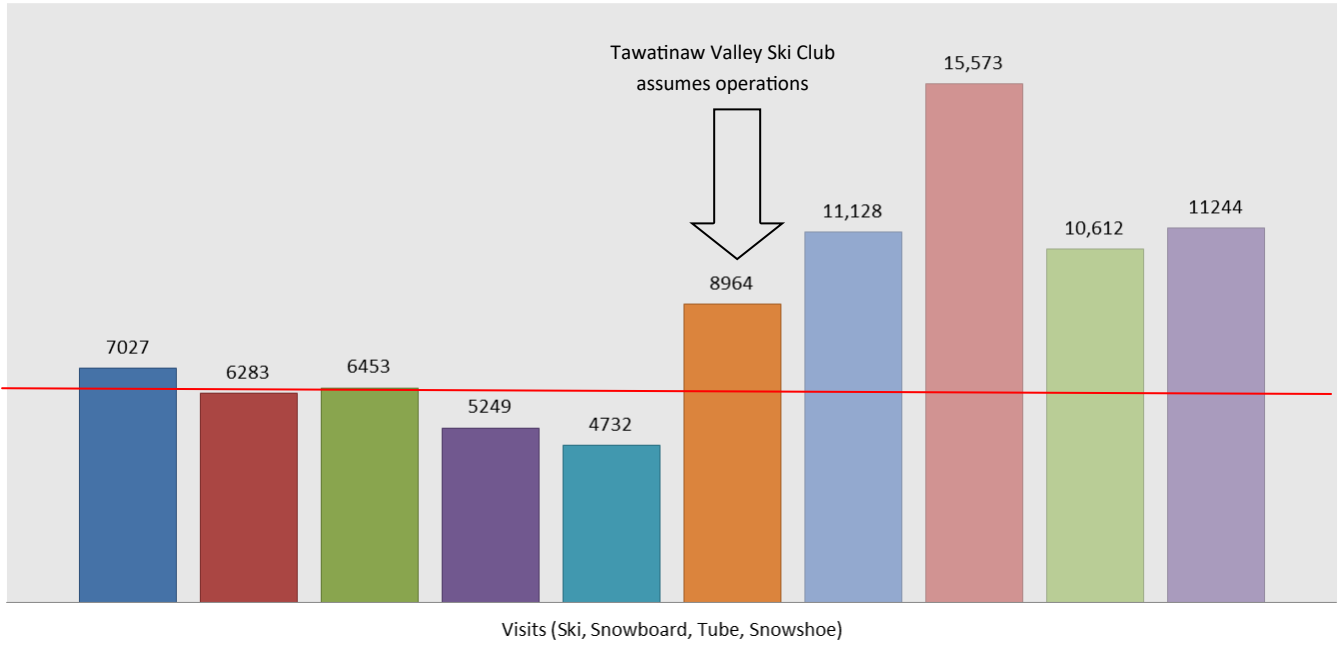
*“Great day at this ski hill, hour north of St. Albert. Has a snow tubing hill as well and cross country trails.”*

*“This place is an absolute hidden gem there is so many hills there is options for people of all skill ranges and lessons are very cheap there! Very minimal wait time for the T bar, overall super impressed and we will be back.”*

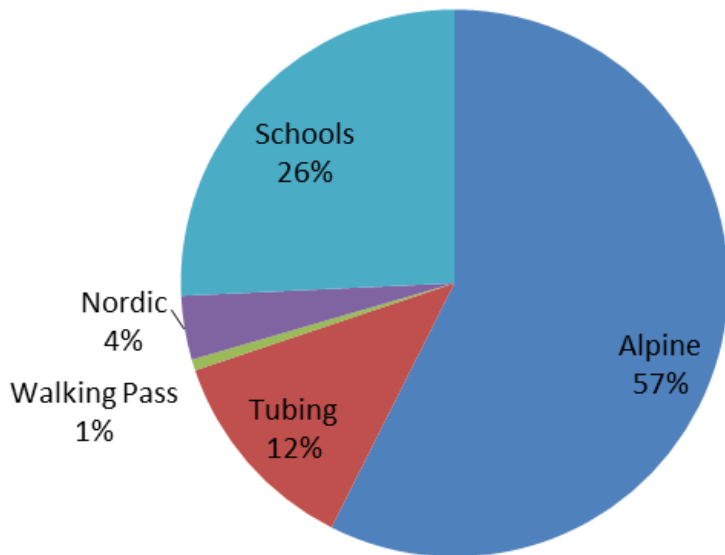


## Numbers of Visits

■ 2010-2011 ■ 2011-2012 ■ 2012-2013 ■ 2013-2014 ■ 2014-2015 ■ 2018-2019 ■ 2019-2020 ■ 2020-2021 ■ 2021-2022 ■ 2022-2023



## Types of Visits



*“Great spot for Snowboarding, Skiing, Tubing, & Snowshoe Hiking! Also school field trip friendly. Rentals available if you require. Check it out before winter passes you!”*



## VOLUNTEERS

The club is aided by a passionate and very active group of volunteers who support the ski hill with a wide variety of needed activities, including:

- ◆ Building and maintaining ski hill features (jumps, terrain park, etc.)
- ◆ Mowing and maintaining cross country trails
- ◆ Spring and Fall Work bees
- ◆ Equipment maintenance
- ◆ Grant-writing
- ◆ Greeting and directing visitors
- ◆ Serving on the Board of Directors
- ◆ Ski Patrol
- ◆ Special events

*We would like to thank our community supporters, Westlock County, our volunteers, staff and all of the people that come to enjoy our facility...without whom all of this it wouldn't be possible!*



### 2022-2023 Season

- ◆ **Total number of active volunteers: Over 50 active volunteers**
- ◆ **Total number of volunteer hours: Over 4460 hours (equating to 2.2 FTE staff)**
  - ◆ **Total Value of hours: Over \$66,900 (costed at \$15/hour)**

***“Wishing you the very best for the new ski season. Best group of volunteers in Alberta.”***



# Volunteer contributions to infrastructure maintenance

## SPRING/SUMMER

Maintenance of lifts

### Spring



## SUMMER/FALL

Mowing and grooming of trails and runs

### Summer



### Fall



### Winter



## FALL

Work Bee: indoor and outdoor cleaning and maintenance of chalet and grounds

## WINTER

Terrain Park set up  
Building & maintaining mogul run

## SPECIAL EVENTS: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

October

- Work Bee- Oct 15
- Wellness Retreat- Oct 29

November

- Snowmaking begins- Nov 5
- Annual General Meeting- Nov 9

December

- Nordic trail grooming- Dec 5
- Ski hill opens- Dec 17
- Nordiq Alberta on-snow camp

January

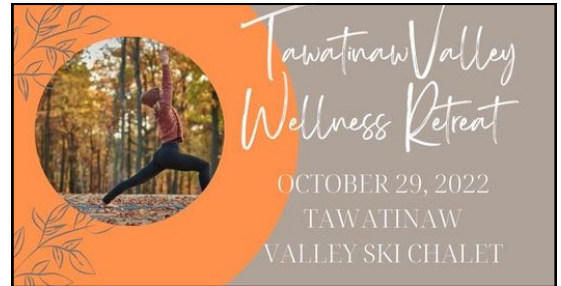
- Town of Legal youth ski & snowboard trip- Jan 5
- World Snow Day- Jan 15
- Wapiti Nordic and Ptarmigan Nordic Training- Arctic Winter Games- Jan 23
- Ski Patrol Training- Jan 25

February

- Easy Ride Day- Feb 12
- Family Day- Feb 20
- Servus Free Tubing- Feb 26

March

- Pub Night- Mar 11
- CADS- March 12
- Servus Free Tubing- Mar 12
- Concussion Awareness Event- Savage family- Mar 19
- Hill closes- Mar 26



**FAMILY DAY 2023**

**CARDBOARD RACE**

- \$20 per team entrance fee
- 4 people per team
- Max of 12 teams
- MUST register in advance - online or at guest services
- MUST build your sled at home using only cardboard and duct tape
- 11:30 sled inspection
- 2:00 start
- Double elimination format (guaranteed min. 2 races per team)
- Participants MUST complete a waiver - signed by parent/guardian

**MONDAY FEB 20TH**

**SKI PATROL BBQ**

- Cash Only!
- Hamburgers & Pop
- Support Our Ski Patrol!

**TAWATINAW VALLEY**

**PUB NIGHT!!!**  
**SATURDAY**  
**MARCH 11, 2023**  
**5 - 10 pm**



# Special Events



*"An Alberta gem, fabulous skiing, crazy alpine jumpers, amazing cross country, good quality rentals, nice chalet, good food, close to Edmonton."*



*"This hill is a hidden gem, love this small town hill!!"*





**RETRO DAY**  
Saturday March 25

Time to bring out the neon, one piece suits & 210's!!!

Lots of fun & prizes!

tawatinawvalley.ca



*"Amazing place to ski snowboard or tube. It's never overcrowded and it got me used to the T-bar haha. The prices for food in the chalet are reasonable and the staff are friendly and helpful."*



## PROGRAMS & CLUBS: CADS Ride & Slide

A committed group of volunteers, including four trained instructors, continues the work to develop a Tawatinau Valley CADS program. These volunteers, supported by provincial CADS, put on a Ride and Slide demo event in March. Although the demo day had to be rescheduled due to cold temperatures, a great group of individuals came out on March 12 to experience the fun of sit-skiing and skiing.



The purpose of CADS (Canadian Adaptive Snowsports) is to give people living with disabilities the opportunity to eliminate barriers that have prevented them in experiencing the joy and freedom of Snowsports. Not only in a fun and inclusive environment that embraces diversity but in an accessible community that treats each individual with respect.



## PROGRAMS & CLUBS: Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders

Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders is a non-profit club with the vision of promoting lifelong family sport through freestyle skiing. The club provides coaching which allows children to further develop their skiing skills while introducing them to the sport. They are registered with the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association and the Alberta Freestyle Skiing Association.

The Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders have produced some great athletes who have won many competitions, and the 2022-2023 season is no exception.

February— Provincial competition at Win-sport’s Canada Olympic Park competing in halfpipe and slopestyle a number of medals were won.

February- Edmonton Freestyle Ski Club competition at Sunridge. TVFR athletes competed in moguls and slopestyle, earning 14 medals in total.

February— 2023 Canada Winter Games in PEI. Three of the athletes competing for team Alberta in freestyle skiing got their start at Tawatinaw.

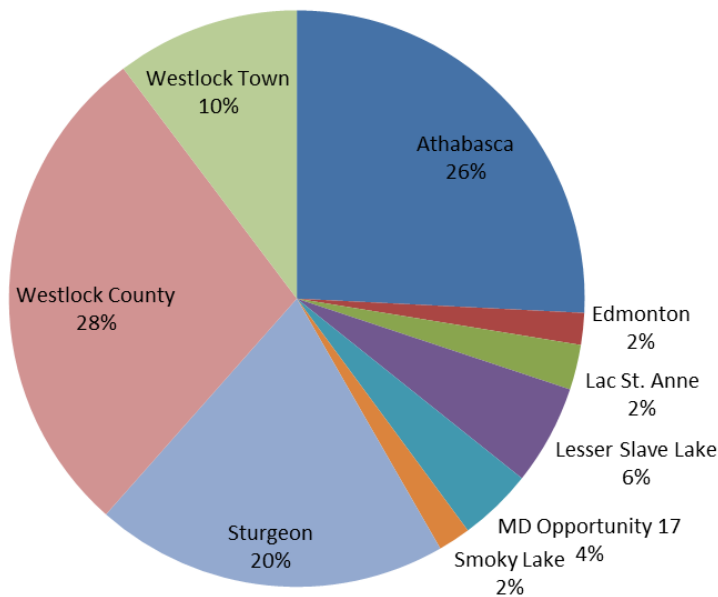
April- Ski Halfpipe Canada Cup event at COP in Calgary. One of the TVFR placed third overall at Junior Nationals in the half-pipe final.

April— Marmot Basin competition. TVFR athletes took home a number of medals in the slope event.



## Programs & Clubs: “LEARN TO SKI” School Program

*Where do our students come from?*



*“I just wanted to say thank you once again for the most amazing day! Our group of little are so sweet but we often do not get to do field trips like that! You made their year! Every class had so much! It was so awesome that we as teachers, and our volunteers, could also participate and have fun with our kids! We are so grateful to have spent the day on your hill. When we got back to school, we told everyone about it! I just wanted you to know that we will be back every year with our littles. Thank you for becoming our new favourite field trip spot!”*

Morinville Public School

19 schools attended on a total of 23 days, with 2691 student visits.

*“Our Gr 4-9 kids had an awesome day at Tawatinaw Valley Ski Hill on Friday! Thanks so much to all the super helpful staff at the hill, to all our fantastic parent volunteers, to our awesome bus drivers and to our great school staff for spending the day with our students so they could all have an amazing day at the ski hill!”*

Pembina North School



**We are proud participants in the Grade 4 & 5 Snow Pass program.**



# PROGRAMS & CLUBS: Pembina Ski Patrol

The ski patrol has a total of 20 active members.

Through the season at Tawatinaw, these members volunteered a combined 630 hours!

The Pembina Ski Patrol has provided over 50 years of service to the Tawatinaw Ski area.

Their training is regulated by the Canadian Ski Patrol, which is a national organization of more than 4,000 highly trained volunteers. It is accredited by the Canadian government, and is certified by the Alberta government. The CSP patrols at over 200 resorts across Canada, promoting safety and injury prevention.



On January 25, we had the honor of hosting Dr. Lance Barclay from Castle Mountain, Mountain Division On-Snow Coordinator to help improve our skiing and toboggan handling.



We are very proud of Lori Latreille and the National Award of Appreciation she received yesterday at the Mountain Division fall meeting!! This award is given for contribution to the organization in a manner beyond that normally expected and for which efforts the Canadian Ski Patrol expresses its sincere and grateful appreciation. Lori is the Patrol Leader Co-coordinator for Mountain Division, Patrol Leader for Tawatinaw Valley Ski Hill, she is one of the Pembina Zone instructors, and she is the outgoing Pembina Zone Treasurer! Congratulations Lori! Thank you for all you do and all you have done!

We work closely with the Tawatinaw Valley Freeriders and their President is one of our active patrollers. We provide First Aid services at EVO through the summer.

We had a few members participate in the CADS training and participate in the Ride and Slide demo day.

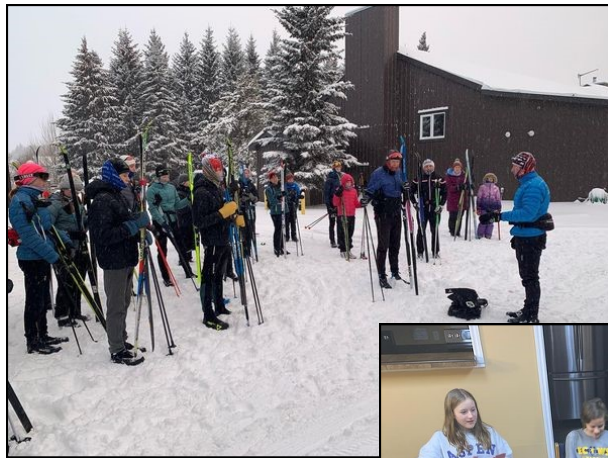
We had a very successful Family Day last year with a great BBQ and events through the day including our always popular cardboard sled race.



## PROGRAMS & CLUBS: Westlock Nordic

Westlock Nordic is a club affiliated with Nordiq Alberta, a provincial non-profit that strives represent all nordic skiers—from newcomers trying it for the first time, to experienced athletes representing us internationally. Nordiq Alberta’s mission is to help develop and enhance our sport in the province of Alberta.

Westlock Nordic is composed of active volunteers who support trail maintenance and trail grooming at Tawatinaw Valley, as well as a smaller system at the Westlock Golf Course. They promote Nordic skiing to young people in particular with a fun youth program and activities.



Our ski area and the Westlock Nordic Club hosted the Tawatinaw On-Snow Open Camp in mid-December with training and fun activities for participants.



“Watched some Cross Country skiers and looked like fun!”  
“Excellent grooming some of the best, I’ve skied on this winter and I ski a lot.”

Wapiti Nordic and Ptarmigan Nordic (Grande Prairie & Ft. Mac) Cross Country coaches and athletes, stayed in the valley 3 days to **train for the Arctic Winter Games** in late January. It was exciting to see them ski on our trails!



## THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING EMPLOYEEE TEAM!



*"Everyone was very friendly, clear directions! We took some lessons on Snowboarding and the staff (Jamie and Mason) were very helpful and informative! 10/10 would recommend this Ski Hill to anyone and will be going back again soon!!"*

*"Friendly staff and so much fun!"*

*"Love the place and the staff is ALWAYS welcoming!"*

*"The people, staff are amazing. Shout out to all your frontline staff!"*

*"This place is amazing. The staff are all wonderful and go out of their way to make everyone feel welcome and never hesitated to help my family out with our first snowboarding adventure."*



## FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE



### SOME OF OUR CURRENT FOUR SEASON AMENITIES

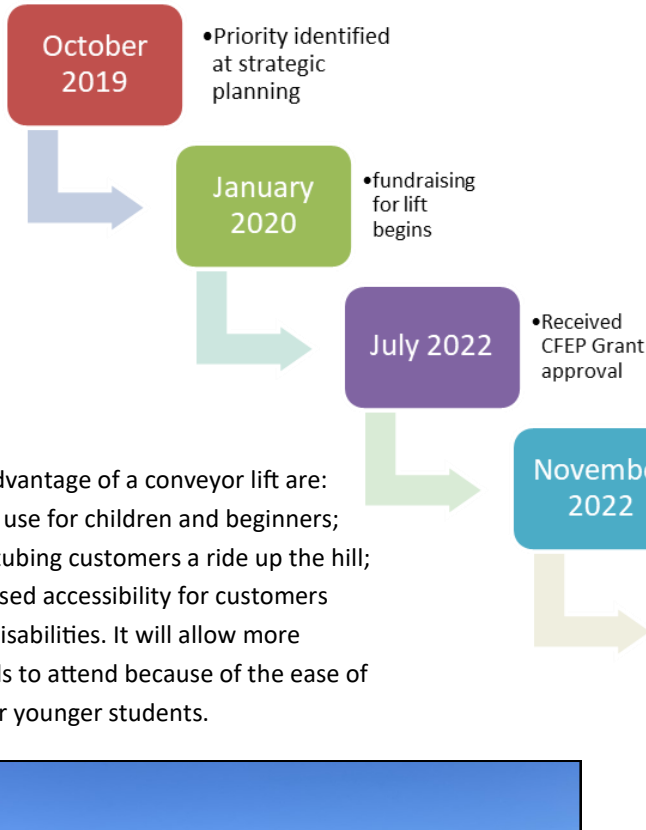
- ◆ snowshoe trail system and snowshoe rentals (sponsored by Pembina Pipelines)
- ◆ free tubing Sundays (sponsored by Servus Credit Union)
- ◆ wildlife interpretive signage on our nature trails (trails mowed by volunteers to encourage hiking and mountain biking)





## CONVEYOR LIFT: OUR FIVE YEAR GOAL NEARLY ACCOMPLISHED!

We are excited to say that we received approval for CFEP grant in July 2022 for a multi year project to install a conveyor lift to replace the rope tow. This was first identified as a key priority during our community engagement and strategic planning four years ago, and appears every year as feedback on our customer satisfaction survey. We are proud that we are now delivering on this strategic priority!



The advantage of a conveyor lift are: easier use for children and beginners; gives tubing customers a ride up the hill; increased accessibility for customers with disabilities. It will allow more schools to attend because of the ease of use for younger students.

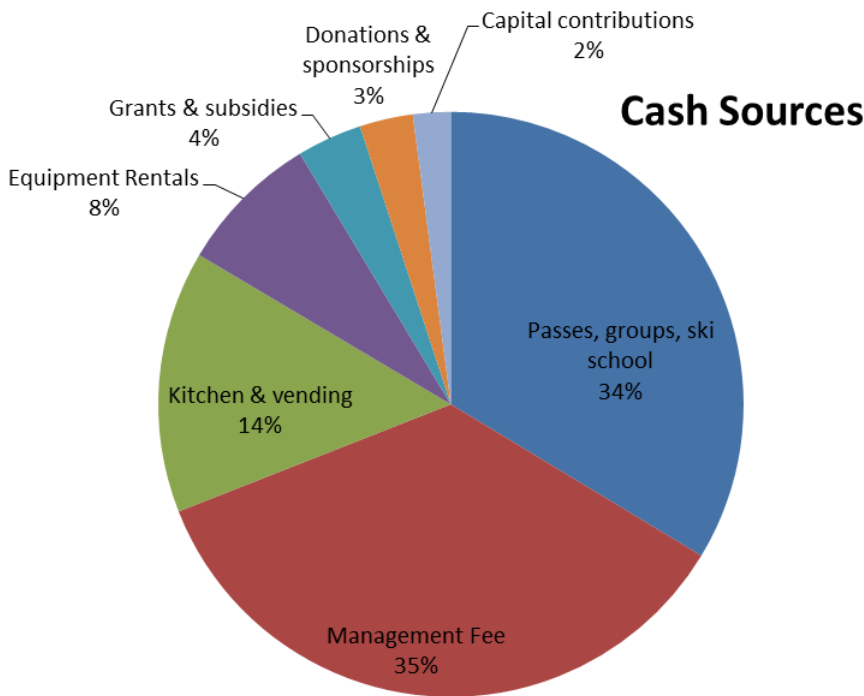
*"Your team has/is already doing so much, thank you! The magic carpet will be amazing for the little skiers."*



*"We had a great time tubing. We took 2 sessions so we could take time to rest between the "climbings" of the hill. But overall it was great and we had a lot of fun!"*



# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



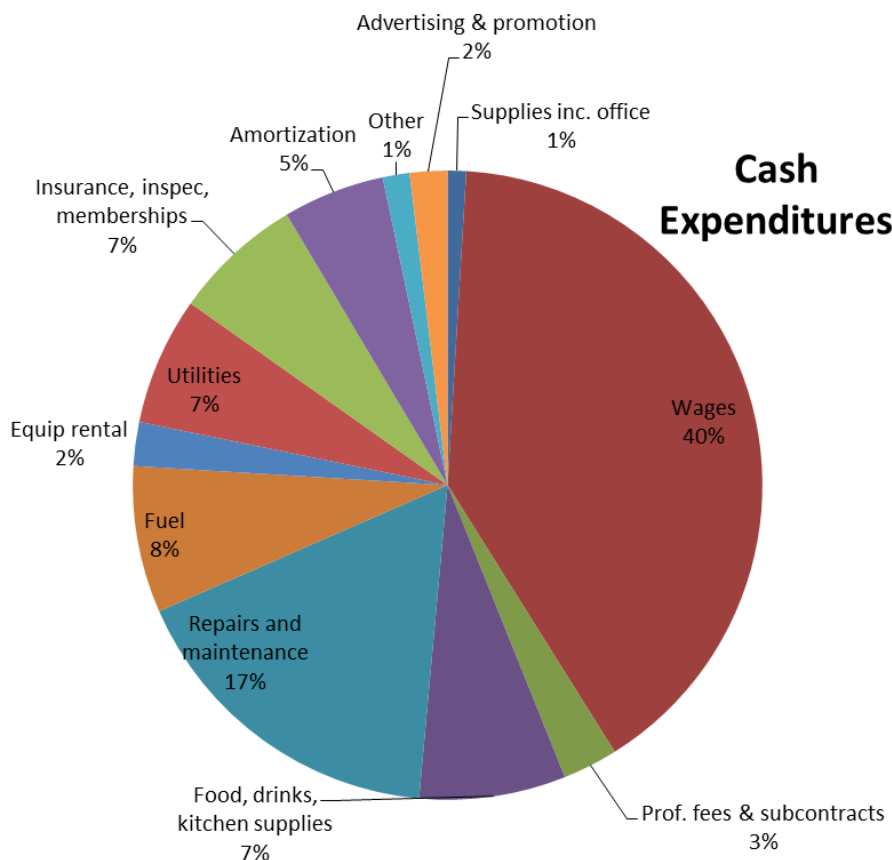
The Board continued to provide strong financial stewardship of the club and the operations, finishing the year with a break-even budget.

Ski passes, ski school and food services combined continued to be our top source of income, consistent with previous years.

Food services and special events income increased from the previous year by 45%.

In the 2022-2023 season, both fuel and utilities expenditures increased. Fuel and oil increased by 17%. Utilities increased by 33%

However our preventive maintenance program and proactive capital plan resulted in a decrease in repair costs of 21% and decrease in equipment rentals of 46%



*“Small hill but AWESOME little terrain park area. Great place to learn new skills and brush up on the old ones. Incredibly friendly staff and laid back atmosphere. I’ll be buying a season pass next year.”*

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025: WE CONTINUE TO MOVE AHEAD!



The Board developed their Strategic Plan beginning in late 2019, with input from community stakeholders at an engagement session led by Alberta Community Development.

The plan was approved in early 2020 and the Board uses it to guide their work on key priorities.

The Board will conduct a full review and refresh of the Strategic plan in 2024, once a number of our key initiatives are completed.

*“Worth the short drive. Needs a 10 star review. I would like to add a shout out to the staff at the bunny Hill this morning a million thanks for all the help we couldn't of enjoyed the day without you 2...”*





## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

**89.5% very likely or likely to recommend Tawatinaw Valley to a friend or family member**

*"Fabulous cross country skiing. Trails were well groomed."*

*"What a beautiful hidden gem for XC Skiing. The snow conditions were excellent and tracks set. Very scenic trails. Highly recommended."*

*"Great snow conditions. Always friendly staff and service. I have been going to Tawatinaw nordic trails for years and always an enjoyable road trip for a XC ski."*



- 83% Very satisfied or satisfied with their downhill skiing experience**
- 88% Very satisfied or satisfied with their tubing experience**
- 75% Very satisfied or satisfied with their Nordic skiing experience**
- 71% Very satisfied or satisfied with their snowshoe experience**
- 70.6% Very satisfied or satisfied with their meal or snack**
- 71% Very satisfied or satisfied with their competition experience**
- 75% Very satisfied or satisfied with their pub night experience**

### THINGS PEOPLE LIKED MOST ABOUT THEIR VISIT

1. **Friendly, helpful staff**
2. **Excellent snow conditions and grooming**
3. **Great food and great service**
4. **Not crowded**
5. **Family atmosphere**
6. **Terrain park, jumps and runs**
7. **Fun tubing**
8. **Great cross country trails**

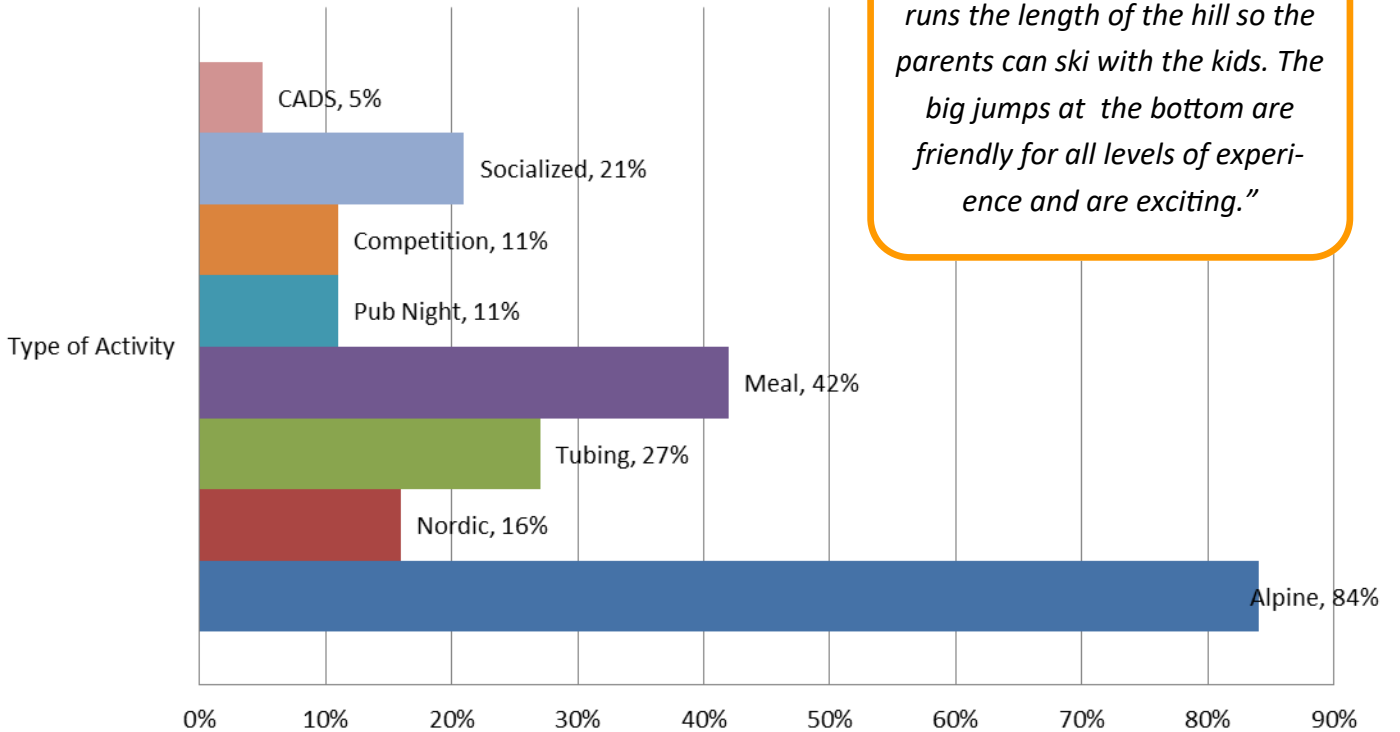
Some of the main feedback themes we received for how we can improve included recommendations for communication of lift opening and closure, as well as specific ideas about alpine grooming. As in other years, we received feedback about walking up the tubing hill and recommendations for a conveyor lift. The Board considers all feedback and uses it to build its' yearly plans. Much of this feedback has already been addressed.

*"The hill has excellent snow every time - very good grooming. The attitude of the employees is friendly. A topnotch experience all day long."*

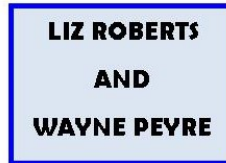


### What did you do at the ski hill?

*"We love how the terrain park runs the length of the hill so the parents can ski with the kids. The big jumps at the bottom are friendly for all levels of experience and are exciting."*



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



## Vision

- We strengthen community connections and have a positive impact on life-long physical, emotional and social well-being. We are everyone's happy place!

## Mission

- We work with community partners to provide affordable and quality four season recreation for all, with a ski hill at the heart.

## Values

- We value and respect volunteers and staff
- We are family oriented, with a small town feel
- We respect diversity and support inclusion
- We support multi-use, multi-seasonal opportunities
- We promote healthy, outdoor living
- The safety of our patrons and staff is of utmost importance
- We provide regional opportunities
- We believe in financial sustainability
- We believe in growth through learning
- We believe in being good land stewards
- We value building strong relationships, partnerships, and communication
- We value customer service
- We believe in accountability and measuring performance
- We believe in innovation, adaptability, and being progressive
- We care

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