



Management Plan for **Wapiti Nordic Ski Club**

2023 to 2048



Introduction

Management plan development is an essential aspect of effectively protecting and enhancing habitat that has been identified as critically important to wildlife and fish or as having high recreational value to stakeholders. Management plans define the features, vision, and goals of the site and identify responsibilities of the project partners. This plan describes the history and physical characteristics for the WNSC lease and outlines the long-term management objectives and planned activities (see Section 2.0) to be conducted on the site over the next 10-25 years (change according to disposition type), in conjunction with the Alberta Environment and Parks (e.g. Fisheries, Wildlife, Habitat, Public Use) Management Objectives. This plan is to be a working document between AEP and WNSC and may require amendment in future.

Commented [MM1]: New ministry is "Alberta Forestry Parks and Tourism"

This management plan identifies the stakeholders of this project (Wapiti Nordic Ski Club, Alberta Environment and Parks, Boy Scouts of Canada, Church of Christ and the County of Grande Prairie No. 1).

This management plan will be reviewed at 10 year (or intervals, if a 25yr management plan – change verbiage as required) as part of a regular renewal schedule under AEP. The site can and will be inspected by AEP as part of a regular inspection program. Changes in management objectives and/or direction at WNSC will require amendments to this plan. The same will occur if there are new or changes to policy direction (AEP) or other necessary considerations. This will be a discussion between AEP and WNSC staff and/or management personnel as required.

Process for lease application and potential acquisition will follow rules and guidelines indicated by the Electronic Disposition Services, and other necessary information and direction provided by AEP. This includes public and Indigenous consultation direction.

Referrals and Inquiries

For all referrals and inquiries, regional Approvals and Resource Management staff and managers will jointly function as the land manager, with WNSC as the lease manager, as per objectives, timelines and overall direction and intent outlined in this management plan. Land Authority on all Crown lands will remain with the Crown. WNSC will perform management duties as per this management plan and is permitted to conduct maintenance and enhancement projects (e.g., fence construction, riparian and upland habitat enhancements, sign installation, etc.), as identified in this plan or in consultation with AEP. Any activities proposed to be undertaken on the land contrary to those identified in this management plan will require meeting and discussion with AEP and WNSC.

WNSC
Box 1176
780-539-9050
admin@wapitinordic.com



1.0 Site Description

1.1 Background

Originally founded in 1979, Wapiti Nordic Ski Club (WNSC) is a hidden gem in the Wapiti corridor region of Grande Prairie. Following the 1995 Canada Winter Games, the WNSC was left with a wonderful legacy facility - new lodge, parking lots, timing towers, stadiums, biathlon range and additional trail system. The venue continued to expand rapidly with the addition of a new maintenance building, trail lights and, Weyerhaeuser Forest Trails, and Multi-use trails. Today, the WNSC proudly averages over 700 members, a healthy stream of day pass visitors, a twelve-person volunteer Executive Committee, two employees and countless other volunteers who are the lifeblood of the Club.

Wapiti Nordic Ski Club is a volunteer-based organization operating a multi use facility, dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle through Nordic sports and other outdoor activities. We provide an environment for personal fulfillment through quality facilities, programs and activities for all ages and abilities. The Club is financially responsible and sustainable, offering affordability and good value. We are committed to fostering a sense of belonging through fun, fitness and friendship.

The total area of the recreational lease is 380 hectares. The lease area has several developed trail systems including: 35km of Nordic Ski trails including 4.5km of lit trail. 65km of Summer multi use trails. 25km of multi use winter trails.

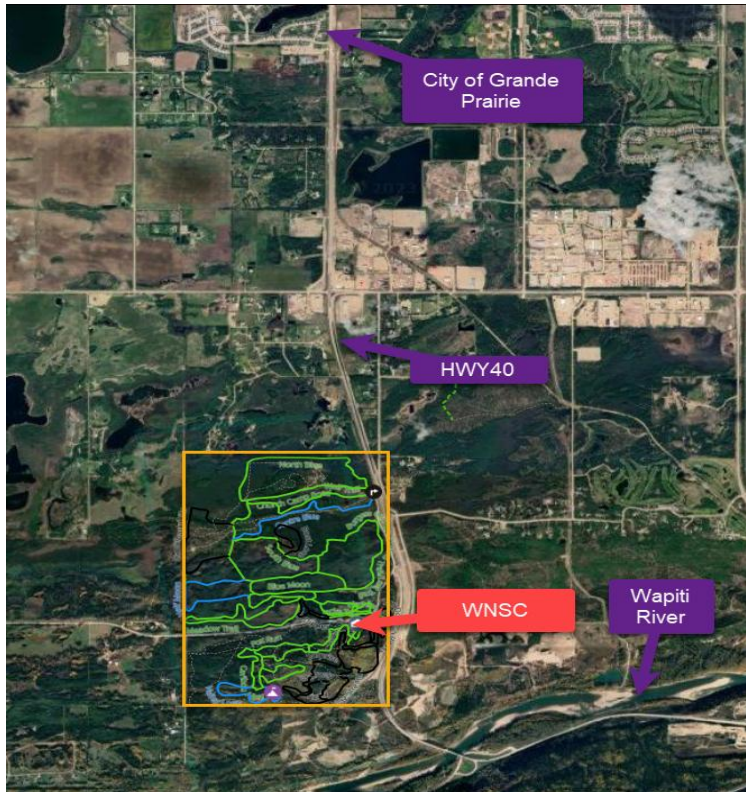
Commented [MM2]: Application plan says 359.99 ha

This management plan will be used for the entire lease. In the past, WNSC had three different dispositions including the north ski trails, Canada Games additions, and the North Ski Lodge.

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1.3 Site Location and Surrounding Land Use



WNSC Recreation Area is located South of the City of Grande Prairie between Township Road 710 and the Wapiti River. Trail access is just off HWY 40 on Township RD 704 or 1.4km west on Township Road 704 at the main lodge.

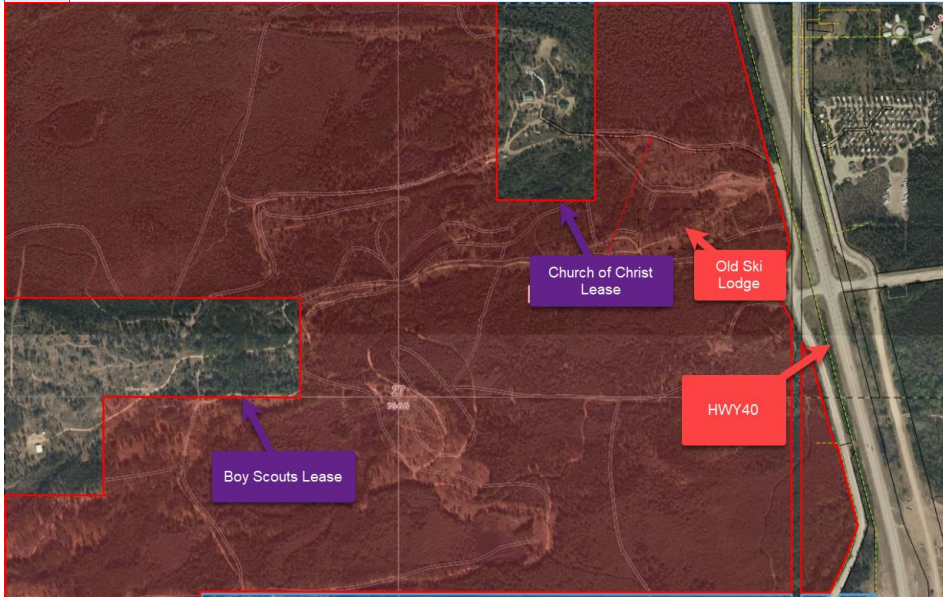
To the north east of the lease is the Wapiti-Dunes trail, that is managed under a disposition by the County of Grande Prairie. To the east of the disposition is the Dunes Golf Course and Country Club, and the Dunes residential subdivision. To the west of the disposition is Tamarack Estates residential subdivision. To the west of the disposition is Camp Tamarack Association and Camp Tamarack RV park. To the east of the disposition is Range Road 62 and highway 40.

To the north is River Road Estates and Sandy Lane Estates.



Within the boundary of the WNSC Lease. Boy Scouts and the Church of Christ have their leases.

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1.4 Site Features

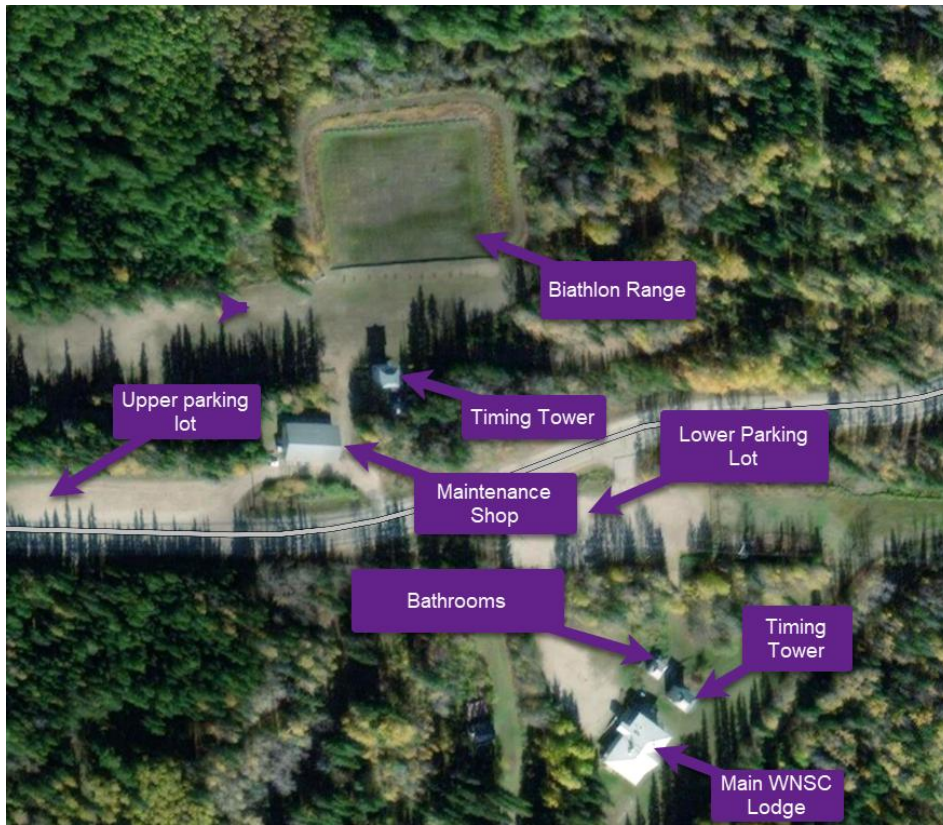
1.4.1 Infrastructure

Following the 1995 Canada Winter Games, the WNSC was left with a wonderful legacy facility - new lodge, parking lots, timing towers, stadiums, biathlon range and additional trail system. The venue continued to expand rapidly with the addition of a new maintenance building, trail lights and the Weyerhaeuser Forest Trails.

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Within the next three years, the WNSC plans to create a master plan for the ski trails, multi-use trails summer and multi-use trails winter. The project will include reclamation of old trails and building of some new trails. WNSC will use the AEP Trail development guidelines for Alberta's public lands for planning, classification, design, construction and management of trail experiences on the WNSC lease. Before any construction begins the plan will be reviewed with the local AEP Land Management Specialist.



1.4.2 Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Values

The north and south portions of the lease area consist of a mixture of gentle sandy dunes hosting a community of lodgepole pine with some white spruce and aspen poplar and shrubs such as bear berry, rose and bog cranberry and flora such as lily of the valley, wild vetch and bunchberry. It is through this habitat that there are existing signs of traditional access by foot and vehicular traffic. The center of the lease is dominated by dense black spruce with mossy ground cover over muskeg with intermittent open water. The central area is not inviting to foot or motorized traffic and shows little to no sign of disturbance.

2.0 Site Management

2.1 Purpose of the Management Plan



The proposed Management Plan for this area includes the following components:

1. To identify the lease area bordered by the WNSC, Boy Scouts, The Church of Christ, HWY 40, and The County of Grande Prairie.
2. To create a Recreation lease between Public Lands and WNSC for a 25-year term for the area proposed.
3. Identify and implement objectives related to the provision of enhanced low environment impact recreational services.
4. Provide a location to educate about wetlands and dunes conservation and leave no trace recreation.
5. Identify and implement objectives related to the conservation of terrestrial habitat and eco-systems.

2.2 Proposed Management Direction

2.2.1 Long Term Objectives

Long-Term Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Timelines
Habitat Enhancement and Maintenance	1. Manage vegetation.	1.1. Trail development will be done with minimal impact of trees.	2023-2048
		1.2. Continually identify and eliminate noxious weeds on site.	2023-2048
	2. Restoration of land with recreational and habitat improvements goals	2.1 Restoration of treed areas.	2023-2048
		2.2. Mulching and seedling planting as part of restoration plan.	2023-2048
	3. FireSmart Area	2.3 Clear down trees and use for firewood or gather in burn piles, working with other stakeholders when possible	2023-2048
Recreation Infrastructure	3. Trail building and development	3.1 Tree/brush clearing to prep sites. Every effort possible should be used to leave trees over 6" in diameter in place.	2023-2048
		3.2 Use existing materials and foreign material (Lumber &	



		Aggregate) for trail construction.	
	4. Trail Maintenance	4.1. Only remove vegetation that obstructs existing trails	
	5. Waste Management	5.1 Bear-proof garbage receptacles provided onsite.	
Protection of wildlife, fisheries and other biodiversity values	6. Manage recreational use to reduce wildlife disturbances.	6.1 Design site to ensure treed buffers.	2023-2048
		6.2 Use low impact methods of trail development and maintenance	2023-2048.
Public Education and Outreach	7. Utilize signage to educate public	7.1 Bear Smart signs on garbage management and staying safe in bear county.	2023-2048
	8. Utilize signage to educate public	8.1 Utilize trail markers and maps to help public navigate area.	2023-2048

2.2.2 Recreation, Conservation and Education

WNSC currently has no large development plans for the lease. The only proposed development will be the trails master plan. This master plan will be focused on using the trail infrastructure that is already in place. Some trails may need to be created. The goals of the master plan are to make a more enjoyable experience for users with similar or less impact to the land. This can be accomplished by reclaiming unsustainable trails and building sustainable trails. Additional structures may be needed in the future. For this we will follow the TFA approval process. Before any construction activity begins the plan will be reviewed with the local AEP Land Management Specialist.

The management direction will be to create an area where users are welcomed to engage in an urban wildland experience that stresses No Trace principles outside of the established trails.

To support the education component of the plan, at the main trail entrances signs will be erected which highlight the fragile ecosystem and the need for conservation.

2.2.3 Compliance and Enforcement

As a not-for-profit volunteer run organization, Wapiti Nordic has limited resources to monitor users or enforce club rules and guidelines on a large land mass that is accessible to the public twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The club relies heavily on posted signage and an honor system that places responsibility on those accessing the property to follow behavioral



signage. Complaints and concerns from the public are handled by operations staff or the Board as needed.

The WNSC lease sits within the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie which endorses No Trace principles in its greenspaces, parklands and recreation areas. No Trace has seven guiding principles that are explained on the County website, and in literature distributed in County campgrounds. To support these basic principles of mutual respect and consideration between visitor, the County and the environment, County Bylaws are applied and enforced when required. Informational and Behavioral signage plays a significant role in ensuring that users of the facility behave in a safe and responsible fashion. The following County of Grande Prairie Bylaws are in effect and enforced by Regional Enforcement Services as they tour the facility or as needed based on reports from WNSC or the public:

- Bylaw No. 3002 – County Parkland Conservation – this bylaw establishes rules and regulations in order to protect and preserve natural ecosystems while promoting safe and responsible recreation activities in County Campgrounds and Parkland.
- Bylaw No. 3023 – Off-Highway Vehicles – by bylaw the County allows Off-Highway vehicles on highways and other places under its direction, control and management.
- Bylaw No. 2630 – Discharge of Weapons – by bylaw the County prohibits the discharge of weapons in specified areas in the County of Grande Prairie. Disposition I and II are encompassed in an area where discharge is prohibited.
- Bylaw No. 3024 – General Traffic – Council may provide for the control, regulation and penalties for the traffic and pedestrians moving on County highways, roadways and streets and for the parking of vehicles thereon.
- Bylaw No. 3032 – Animal Control Bylaw – by bylaw the County retains the right to license and control dogs.
- Bylaw No. 3098 – Community Standards Bylaw – by bylaw the County retains the right to enforce upon behavior that is inconsiderate and a nuisance to other visitors in Campgrounds, Parks and Day Use areas.

2.2.4 Alberta Trails Act

- Establish a system for sustainable trail management on public land
- Allow for the designation of trails for specific uses, such as hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, running, walking, and cycling.
- Improve trail planning to consider other land uses and values
- Understand enforcement tools to prevent environmental damage and promote stewardship of the land
- Be a partner in trail maintenance
- Strengthen trail protections so all Albertans can enjoy them for years to come

3.0 Responsibilities

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The following assignment of responsibilities is an important aspect in the continued success and viability of WNSC Recreation Area.

- The WNSC will be the Recreation leaseholder, and will abide by all direction provided by Public Lands to ensure the protection and best use of the leased lands.
- WNSC will act in good faith as a neighbor to the Boy Scouts of Canada and Church of Christ as fellow stakeholders within this disposition
- The County of Grande Prairie will provide enforcement services on the land and will collaborate with Alberta Environment and Parks where it is in the best interests of users and the land.
- Alberta Environment and Parks will keep the WNSC apprised of any legislative changes that may impact the operation of the area.

4.0 References

<http://www.wapitinordic.com/>

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/b1cae0e7-4b70-4c7b-8575-f89ada15342d/resource/9cc04dc8-ffe5-4c04-aed4-ff43cee2cb56/download/aep-trail-development-guidelines-2019.pdf>

<https://www.trailforks.com/region/wapiti-nordic-centre/>

Alberta Weed Control Act, 2008. Alberta Queen's Printer

Leavenotrace.ca

Alberta Trails Act

Alberta Lands Act



4.0 Agreement Term and Management Partners

The WNSC and AEP agree to review and update the management plan as required, as per application amendment procedures. Upon renewal of the [relevant disposition described in this management plan] we will review the plan to ensure the vision, objectives and specific activities stated within are being met.

[Organisation Name]

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Representative: _____



Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) – Operations, Resource Management

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Representative: _____



Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) – Operations, Approvals

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Representative: _____



Appendices

Sketch Plan.

Legal Survey [required under Surveys Act].

Others as necessary.