

SOVEREIGN LAKE NORDIC CLUB LODGE RENEWAL PROJECT

Sovereign Lake Nordic Club (SLNC), founded in 1938, is a not-for-profit community organization based in Silver Star Provincial Park near Vernon, BC. SLNC is Canada's largest cross-country ski club and manages 52 km of groomed cross-country ski trails, 15 km of snowshoe trails and 12 km of backcountry trails. SLNC's trails connect to those at Silver Star Mountain Resort, for a combined 105 km of groomed trails. The club is run by a volunteer Board of Directors elected by members, and provides social and physical benefits to thousands of BC residents and visitors every year.

Our huge snow pack is an important part of the future value of Sovereign Lake at a time when climate change is negatively affecting winter outdoor recreation areas globally, However, the existing day lodge at Sovereign Lake, constructed in 1993, is badly in need of renewal to meet the needs of the growing cross-country and snowshoeing community. This document provides an overview to the context and vision for the Sovereign Lake Lodge Renewal project.



Growth at Sovereign Lake

SLNC membership has increased 2.5-fold in the past 10 years, to 3,000 members in 2021-22. The Club has seen similar growth in non-member visits, with more than total 40,000 visits annually.

Recreational programs, including children's programs, a low-cost program for local schools, biathlon, Masters and individual and group lessons have increased significantly in recent years, placing further demand on our lodge facilities. SLNC is pursuing opportunities to increase participation of children (via Kids Sport) and supporting indigenous participation in cross-country skiing through Spirit North.

The Club has hosted numerous events ranging from local loppets up to World Cup races, with the number of participants growing every year. SLNC has also served as a training centre for ski teams from around North America, including Canada's Nordic Ski Team prior to the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Sovereign Lake Lodge: the Need for Renewal

The current lodge was built in 1993, when Club membership was a fraction of what it is today. In addition to being too small, is in serious need of infrastructure improvements. Issues of concern include:

- *General crowding and insufficient space* for meeting up with families and friends and warming up;
- *Inadequate restroom and changing facilities;*
- *Minimal food service capabilities*, limiting healthy choices and added value for visitor experiences;
- *Limited space for staff, coaches, volunteers and admin / meeting spaces;*
- *Insufficient space to accommodate Nordic programs for children and youth* (we run one of the largest in Canada), including school programs during the week and club programs on weekends;

- *Compromised ability to support Nordic events and races* as a result of insufficient space and limited professional technical infrastructure, while demand increases from World and North American Cup races, Masters World Cup, regional and local races;
- *Poor to non-existent access for the mobility-impaired and other impairments.* The lodge renewal will be designed to accommodate all users, regardless of physical and intellectual capabilities;
- *Undersized and poorly located ski rental infrastructure,* limiting access for visitors and compromising visitor experiences.

These deficiencies limit SLNC’s ability to fully harness and promote skiing and snowshoeing as healthy outdoor activities, noting the significant benefits to personal and community health and resiliency through such activities. There is an urgent need to upgrade/replace the existing lodge to meet contemporary building standards including codes, energy and water use efficiency, FireSmart requirements, and long-term environmental sustainability.

What might a renewed Lodge provide?

While it is too early to predict size, location or attributes, one goal is clear, a renewed Lodge should be a contemporary, high functioning, sustainable asset that will serve the needs of visitors for decades to come. As part of the research and fact finding, SLNC is also exploring opportunities to advance year-round use of the lodge—maximizing the capital investment, and encouraging more visitors to engage in outdoor recreation in Silver Star Provincial Park. What we do know is that SLNC wants to ensure that any renewed lodge is truly needed; is designed for maximum efficiency, functionality, cost effectiveness and impact; can be funded in a realistic and timely manner, and operated over the long term in a realistic and affordable manner.

How will the Lodge Project be governed and funded?

The Board of Directors of the SLNC has established a Lodge Renewal Committee comprised of Board members and others with specific knowledge, skills and connections to benefit the project. The Board and the Lodge Committee are taking a long-term approach to developing the vision, building program, cost estimates and fundraising strategies to support this renewal. A community engagement process will ensure that the Lodge renewal truly meets the needs of members and visitors, and will provide timely information and opportunities for engagement through the multi-year process.

The fundraising strategy for lodge renewal builds on a diversity of revenue streams, including SLNC’s capital reserve, private philanthropy from members and friends of SLNC, contributions from local and senior levels of government, corporate sponsorships, as well as fundraising events. SLNC will partner with a charitable foundation to enable donors to receive a tax receipt for their contributions.

How can I learn more?

For additional information, please go to the Lodge Renewal page on the SLNC website <https://www.sovereignlake.com/lodge-renewal-project/> or contact us at lodge@sovereignlake.com.

SLNC acknowledges that we are situated on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Syilx and Sepwépmc Nations. We are grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate, play and work on these lands.

