

# Report on the Sovereign Lake Nordic Club's Lodge Renewal Project Engagement Sessions Held March 9, 10 and 11, 2023

## Introduction

The Lodge Committee of the Sovereign Lake Nordic Club (SLNC) hosted three engagement sessions to seek the views of Club members and visitors (i.e., the attendees) about the Lodge Renewal Project. This report provides the results of the engagement sessions.

The sessions were held in the Lodge on March 9, 10 and 11, 2023. Lodge Committee members and one Sovereign Lake Nordic Club Board member attended the sessions to guide the process and listen to attendees. Approximately 175 people attended one of the three sessions.

At each session, there were two display boards that presented information about the Lodge and two other boards with questions about (1) the priority of lodge renewal project, (2) what people like about the current Lodge, (3) what people would like to see included in a renovated, expanded or possibly new lodge, and (4) information about themselves as it relates to Nordic skiing and snowshoeing. The boards are shown in Appendix 1. The attendees used coloured dots to indicate their opinions and information about themselves. Attendees could also express their ideas and opinions on what they would like to see in a renovated, expanded, or new lodge by using post-it-notes. This generated 106 comments.

The results are presented in Appendices 2 and 3 and a summary and outline of the general themes that were heard are presented below. Appendix 4 is a summary of verbal comments that were heard by Committee members.

It should be noted that the research method does not provide any statistical reliability for the findings. The results only provide a snap shot of the views of people who attended the sessions and cannot be interpreted as the views of the entire membership or all visitors. The information needs to be used in this light.

## Summary of the Results

- Sixty-nine percent of attendees “Strongly” Agreed “the that Lodge Renewal Project is an important priority at this time”. An additional 23% “Agreed” (total 92% in agreement).
- No attendees Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with the statement “the Lodge Renewal Project is an important priority at this time”.
- In rank order, here is what attendees said they like about the current lodge.
  - Space to get ready (29%)
  - Space for socializing (22%)
  - Access/adjacency to parking (19%)
  - Light refreshments for sale (15%)
  - Rentals (10%)
  - Retail sales and services (5%)

- In rank order, here is what attendees said they would like to see included in a renovated, expanded or possibly new lodge.
  - Better space, washrooms (22%)
  - More social space (17%)
  - Café (17%)
  - Outdoor patio (14%)
  - Flex space for events (12%)
  - Improved disability access (9%)
  - Lockers (3%)
  - Better retail (3%)
  - Better rental (2)
  - Other (1%)
- 90 percent of attendees were season pass holders.
- Most attendees are avid Nordic skiers. Nearly 80 percent ski more than 20 times a year and 35 percent ski more than 50 times a year.
- 70 percent of attendees see themselves as recreational skiers.

## **Key Themes**

This section provides an interpretation of what the results from the March 9-11, 2023, engagement sessions are telling us in a general way.

- The lodge renewal project is very important and there is an expectation that action needs to be taken.
- The existing lodge needs to be renewed.
- Keep costs low.
- Keep it simple yet make it look nice.
- Limit the financial impact of the lodge renewal project on the cost of skiing for season pass holders and day users.
- The existing space is good for getting ready and socializing, however, there is a need to provide more and better space and facilities, especially space for socializing and washrooms.
- The existing lodge is in a good location. Although some people suggested building the lodge at the Viewpoint near the intersection of Wylie's Loop and Montezuma trails.
- The provision of food facilities and services seems to be important.
- On-going and regular communication with SLNC members should be a priority as the lodge project moves forward. Additional engagement sessions and newsletter updates will be welcome.

# Appendix 1: Display Boards

## LODGE RENEWAL

Sovereign Lake Nordic Club (SLNC)

**What is the Lodge Renewal Project?**  
Back in 1952, the SLNC Lodge in town (Sovereign Lake) was built as a simple wooden Club building. Over the years, the lodge has grown and changed. It is now a well-used building that is in need of renovation. The SLNC Board members are now in the process of renovating the lodge. This is a major project that will improve the lodge and make it a better place for everyone to enjoy.

**Why is Renewal Needed?**  
The lodge is in need of renewal because it is old and needs to be updated. The current lodge is a simple wooden building that is in need of renovation. The SLNC Board members are now in the process of renovating the lodge. This is a major project that will improve the lodge and make it a better place for everyone to enjoy.

**How is the Renewal Project Being Done?**  
The SLNC Board members are now in the process of renovating the lodge. This is a major project that will improve the lodge and make it a better place for everyone to enjoy. The project will be done in several stages, starting with the exterior and then moving to the interior.

**What's the Timeline for Renewing the Lodge?**

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Exterior Renovation	Interior Renovation	Final Touches	Grand Opening	Completed

**HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**  
If you are interested in helping with the lodge renewal project, please contact the SLNC Board members. We would love to have you on board and help us make the lodge a better place for everyone to enjoy.

## SKIING IN THE NORTH OKANAGAN

Sovereign Lake Nordic Club (SLNC) History

**1930** - The SLNC was founded in 1930. The first lodge was built in 1932. The lodge was a simple wooden building that was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**1950** - The lodge was expanded in 1950. The new addition included a dining room and a bar. The lodge was now a more formal building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**1970** - The lodge was renovated in 1970. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**1980** - The lodge was renovated in 1980. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**1990** - The lodge was renovated in 1990. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**2000** - The lodge was renovated in 2000. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**2010** - The lodge was renovated in 2010. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**2020** - The lodge was renovated in 2020. The renovation included the addition of a new kitchen and a new bathroom. The lodge was now a more modern building and was used for social activities and as a meeting place for the club members.

**Major Events Hosted**

- 1930s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 1950s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 1970s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 1980s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 1990s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 2000s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 2010s: Social activities, meetings, and events.
- 2020s: Social activities, meetings, and events.

**SLNC Trail System**

The SLNC Trail System is a network of trails that are used for skiing and snowshoeing. The trails are located in the area around the lodge and are well-maintained. The SLNC Trail System is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and get some exercise.

**Did You Know?**

The SLNC has a long history of providing a great place for everyone to enjoy. The lodge has been a part of the community for over 90 years and has provided a great place for everyone to enjoy. The SLNC is proud to be a part of the community and to provide a great place for everyone to enjoy.

Would you agree that the Lodge Renewal Project is an important priority at this time?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10 dots	5 dots	0 dots	0 dots	0 dots

Are you a season pass holder at Sovereign Lake Nordic Club (SLNC)?

Yes	No
10 dots	0 dots

On average how many times do you ski/snowshoe at SLNC per year?

Less than 5 days a year	5 - 20 days per year	21 - 50 days per year	51 - 100 days per year	100+ days per year
0 dots	5 dots	10 dots	15 dots	20 dots

What style of skier or snowshoer would you describe yourself as?

Recreational Skier (S1 and under)	Recreational Skier (S2)	Performance Skier (S3 and under)	Performance Skier (S4)
0 dots	5 dots	0 dots	0 dots
Competitive Skier (S5 and under)	Competitive Skier (S6)	Expert Skier (S7 and under)	Expert Skier (S8)
0 dots	0 dots	0 dots	0 dots

SLNC acknowledges that we are situated on the unceded territories of the Squilax (Shuswap Nation) and Squamish (Shuswap Nation) Peoples.

What do you like about the current Lodge?

Space for socializing	Space to get ready before/after skiing, snowshoeing, rollers, etc.	Retail Sales & Service
10 dots	5 dots	0 dots
Light refreshments for sale	Accessibility to parking lots	Restrooms
10 dots	5 dots	0 dots

In a renovated, expanded or possibly a new lodge, what might you like to see included?

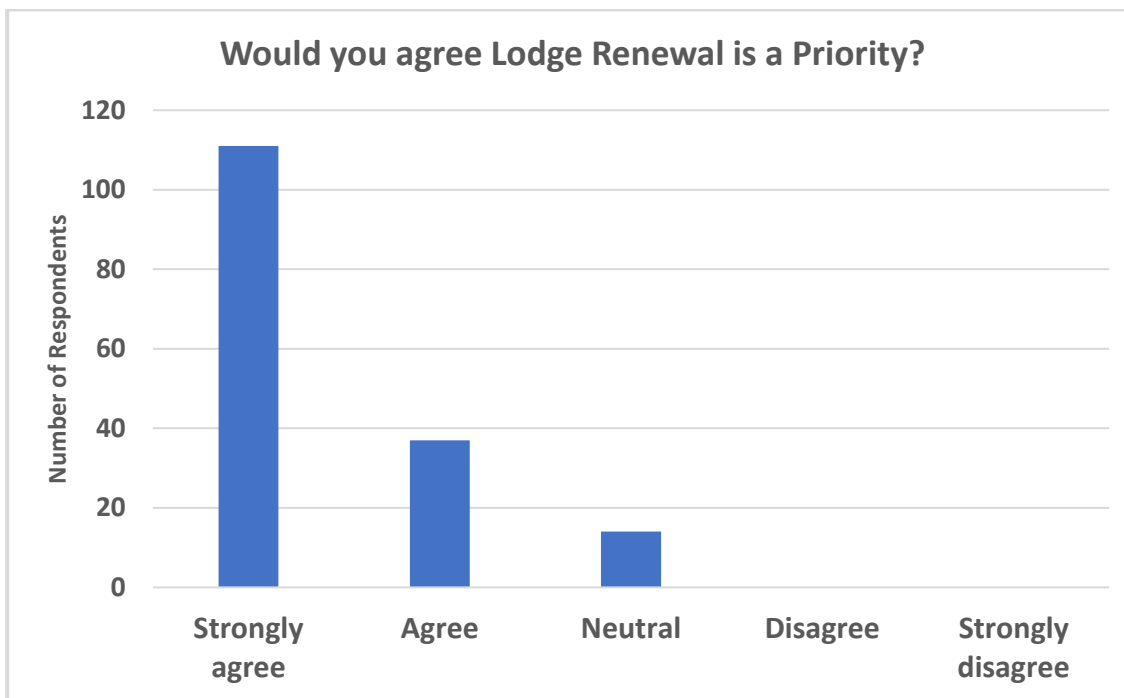
More space for socializing	More space for socializing, snowshoeing, rollers, etc.	Better retail sales and service area	Better retail sales and service area	Better retail sales and service area
10 dots	5 dots	0 dots	0 dots	0 dots
Outdoor parking area	Outdoor parking area	Play space for programs, events, etc.	Improved access to parking lots	Restrooms
10 dots	5 dots	0 dots	0 dots	0 dots

SLNC acknowledges that we are situated on the unceded territories of the Squilax (Shuswap Nation) and Squamish (Shuswap Nation) Peoples.

## Appendix 2: Results From Questions

*Would you agree that Lodge Renewal is a priority?*

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<b>Strongly agree</b>	56	26	29	111	69%
Agree	3	4	30	37	23%
Neutral	1	3	10	14	9%
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	60	33	69	162	100%



**What do you like about the current lodge?**

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
Space for Socializing	53	17	53	123	22%
Space to get ready	62	31	68	161	29%
Retail Sales and Services	9	6	11	26	5%
Light refreshments for sale	29	12	43	84	15%
Access/Adjacency to parking	34	27	48	109	19%
Rentals	15	15	29	59	10%

**What would you like to see in a new or renovated lodge?**

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
More social space	51	26	64	141	17%
Better space & washrooms	77	36	69	182	22%
Better retail	9	8	5	22	3%
Better rental	7	8	4	19	2%
Café	44	29	67	140	17%
Outdoor patio	49	22	48	119	14%
Lockers	9	1	14	24	3%
Flexible space for events	40	21	36	97	12%
Improved disability access	26	13	33	72	9%
Other (in comments section)	2	1	3	6	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>100%</b>

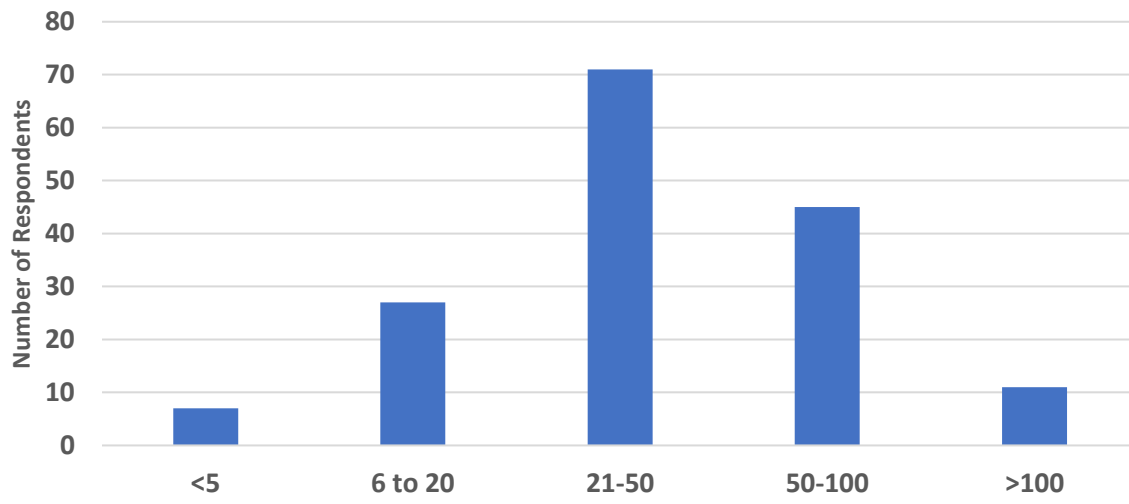
**Are you a Seasons Pass Holder?**

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
Yes	52	27	55	134	90%
No	1	1	13	15	10%

**How many times do you ski each year?**

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<5	0	1	6	7	4%
6 to 20	5	4	18	27	17%
21-50	33	14	24	71	44%
50-100	17	16	12	45	28%
>100	1	2	8	11	7%

### How Many Times do you Ski or Snowshoe each Year?



### What is your *Ski/Snowshoe Style*?

	09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	Total	%
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<b>Recreation &lt;=18</b>	0	0	9	9	5%
Recreation >18	45	18	44	107	65%
Performance <=18	0	1	1	2	1%
Performance >18	8	9	5	22	13%
Competitive <=18	0	1	10	11	7%
Competitive >18	0	2	1	3	2%
Snowshoe <=18	0	0	0	0	0%
Snowshoe >18	4	6	0	10	6%

### **Appendix 3: Results of Post-It-Note Comments**

Attendees were asked to respond to the statement “Like to See in Renovated, Expanded or New Lodge.” The verbatim responses are provided below for each day and are presented in no particular order. Each bullet represents an entire comment made by one person and these comments are organized around six topics; existing lodge/renewed lodge, design, location costs, food services and miscellaneous.

#### **Thursday March 9, 2023**

##### Existing Lodge – Renewed Lodge

- New lodge with bigger snack bar.
- Need a new lodge with more space and meeting rooms.
- New lodge. Too construction. Lots of tables and widows. Lunch. Woodstove. Wind, solar, electric. Scandinavian design. Low ceiling. Tables, cozy chairs, corners.
- New lodge by lookout at Montezuma.
- New lodge.
- New lodge should have some “class” to it. Not just a shelter shed. – with of stadium area – sunny place in winter – better choice of food – practical spaces for educational training and programs.
- Build a new lodge, but not in this hole. Build a beautiful lodge like Larch Hills over at the viewpoint by Montezuma.
- World class facilities such as better/newer washrooms, cafeteria, some lodging and retail.
- Replace lodge but not in this site, close to parking lot – build big for the future needs – commercial kitchen to serve lunch or snacks.
- New lodge please.

##### Design

- Better day use facilities – change room, café, storage.
- Really good access for handicap wheelchair folks.
- Avoid a flat roof if possible.
- Patio with view.
- Yes with engineered sound baffling.
- Better washrooms, change area – social area.
- Expanded facility needed – space for supply equipment, for handicapped, more food vending machines.
- Expanded more washrooms, larger socialization area.
- Have first aid station closer to where first aid and people come to.
- More wind sheltered lodge.
- Log lodge.
- Build to help noise reduction in social areas.
- More space for rental area.
- Fireplace with gathering space.
- Fireplace people can gather around – food – quieter –accommodation.

- Space divider, noise reduction panels.
- Add on to present lodge on north end.
- Flexibility in room configuration.
- Separate cash function from rental function.
- In an oval manner.
- More space to get changed.

#### Location

- Good view.
- Build over at viewpoint.
- Don't rebuild in this spot.
- Better view.
- I agree build where there is a nice view.
- Would like to it stay in this spot.

#### Costs

- Process – be realistic and skeptical re: cost to build – cost to operate.

#### Food Services

- Café with good coffee.
- Yes with café.
- Café (good coffee) snacks.
- Café.
- A food prep area important for events, races, and volunteers.

#### Miscellaneous

- Expand parking.
- Summer activity info gathering.
- Don't want to see another busy commercial Silver Star.
- Better quality rentals.
- Construct summer walking trails and have patio r and toilets available.

### **Friday March 10, 2023**

#### Existing Lodge/Renewed Lodge

- A bigger lodge is not needed.

#### Design

- Outdoor patio: As much as people like the idea, the current outdoor space is rarely used and only on warm spring days. Wasted area of covered and if uncovered, waste of staff time clearing snow off.



- Agree (with above comment). Plus it's windy and cold up her! Silverstar's are rarely used in winter.
- Please make rental area flow-through.
- Rental area should be separate from social/change area. Better flow-through for sure.
- More space!
- More women's toilets!
- Improved wax facility.
- Related to the lodge is parking. More would be great or how about a walkable path from overflow lot to our two main parking lots. People can't park and walk at this point without going on the main road.
- Outdoor patio not necessary. Lockers are not needed.
- Saunas. Utilize facility year-round.
- No showers or sauna.
- Lockers are unnecessary.
- Maybe an international style hostel should be discussed.

#### Miscellaneous

- Accessible bathrooms from exterior for winter and summer; porta-potties, but cost of rental would be prohibitive; better to have permanent outside washrooms.

### **Saturday March 11, 2023**

#### Existing Lodge/Renewed Lodge

- Love to see a new lodge ... go take a look at Larch Hills Nordic Centre. Lovely log lodge.

#### Design

- Flexible spaces for multiple uses including outdoor patios.
- Keep the wood stove.
- Keep the fireplaces.
- Space for music, events, restaurant, etc.
- Gender neutral language and space.
- More space. Free candies and drinks for kids with pass. Restaurant and indoor swimming pool.
- A kids play place, etc.
- Clear some trees at the viewpoints.
- Spaces club can use to generate revenues for programs.
- Keep the fireplaces.
- Keep the funky.
- Keep it quaint and low key.
- Designated warm up and cool down stretching space.
- Cozy, welcoming place to warm up and have a snack or lunch would be nice.
- Kids ski play area outdoors for play and skill development.

- Keep the character (incl. wood fireplace, wooden benches, simple, lots of light).
- Keep the rustic character and fireplaces. More space as it can get crowded. Play space for the kids.
- Keep the low-key charm. Keep fireplaces. Keep it affordable for families. Keep it cabin like.
- Keep the rustic character. Keep the fireplaces. More space. EV charger. Phone charger station.
- Keep it basic. Keep the character.
- Keep some of the old lodge character.
- Keep it simple, suitable to the environment, costs down.
- Any renovations should be geared toward the overall community not the racing and elite athletes.
- Space for performance clubs/flex space for things like: team meetings, video reviewing, Nordic treadmill for HP groups/gym for program groups. Showers in change room.
- More updated design and bright colours.
- The bigger we get the less accessible it may become for families – only Big Races and too many people – keep the charm.
- Place to watch on a laptop (my laptop) with WIFI.
- We skied at Kimberly Nordic Centre and loved the light picnic tables and snow shovels they had hanging on several view areas for skiers to enjoy.

#### Costs

- Keep fees low
- Keep fees low – keep it basic it's all we need.
- Grants and donations matching costs should set the timeline – asking too much of volunteers.
- Stay within the budget and not incur debt.
- Keep costs down – many people can't afford it here already.

#### Food Services

- Get the Bugaboo Café to open a branch coffee and pastry kiosk into the new lodge.
- Fresh meals in café.
- Yea candies and drink it's a good idea.
- Expanded food service means more garbage.

#### Miscellaneous

- EV charger (not free).
- Restaurant, café, music.
- Not bad well kids would be happy. Candy drinks TRUE!
- More and organized parking.
- Candies for kids I agree with the one above mine.

## Appendix 4: Verbal Feedback and Committee Member Observations

### Verbal Feedback

Verbal feedback are points made by attendees that came up in conversation with Lodge Committee members at the sessions and are organized around five topics; existing lodge/renewed lodge, design, engagement, costs and miscellaneous.

#### Existing Lodge/Renewed Lodge

- A few people commented they didn't feel a bigger lodge was needed.
- A conversation about replacing the lodge has been going on for 10 years. It is time to take some action and replace the lodge. Keep it simple and functional.
- Not in favour of a new Lodge. Recommends a significant renovation and expansion of the existing Lodge. Advises that we first get an authoritative assessment of the structural integrity of the building.
- Recommend a new Lodge vs renovating the existing Lodge. The new Lodge should have a decent cafeteria. This would be a major step us for Sovereign Lake. There is too much economic leakage to SilverStar.
- Give serious thought to the new and expanded revenue impacts of a new Lodge.
- Renovating the existing Lodge would be a huge mistake.
- The Lodge is too small.
- Many people commented on the need to do something with the Lodge because it is too small and doesn't suit the club's size as it used to.

#### Design

- Provide accessible bathrooms from exterior for winter and summer; Commented on porta-potties, but cost of rental would be prohibitive; better to have permanent outside washrooms.
- Look into the idea of developing a hostel, similar to what was done at Lake Louise. The idea was presented as a means of augmenting year-round income as well as filling a void for low use time cost travelers
- People were aware of past efforts to scope out a cost-effective design. Basically single floor on a concrete slab, open ceiling with fans, etc.
- Add lockers.
- Reconfigure the Lodge sales desk and rental areas so there is not so much congestion.
- Lodge expansion could be in the direction of the deck.
- There is a need to increase bathroom capacity.
- Several people asked to see a sketch or drawing of what was planned.
- Have an area with rentals in which people can store their skis. This is not lockers, but racks within a secure area. People would be prepared to pay for combination of storage and waxing services. We could charge an annual fee for this.
- Consider building a sauna into the new Lodge. The sauna experience is a good fit with Nordic.

#### Engagement

- Member saying how pleased she was with our approach and with the effort in communication.

- Several people indicated that they appreciate our process. Some felt that past lodge discussions didn't include members.

#### Costs

- General concern that the cost of a lodge will be passed on to members/users. These folks want XC skiing to remain affordable.
- One couple said that they couldn't comment without some idea of the costs of a renewed lodge.
- Keep the character of the current Lodge (informal, unpretentious).
- Place an emphasis on the recreational user.
- Keep Sovereign Lake affordable.
- Some people were concerned about the club living within its means – they wanted to know how much it would cost.
- It will be more expensive to properly renovate the existing lodge versus building a new one.
- The City of Vernon should contribute financially to a new Lodge. This is because Sovereign Lake, as a destination, is an economic driver for the region.

#### Miscellaneous

- Parking is a chronic issue. A partial solution is to schedule Programs and Events such that traffic volumes are better distributed over the course of a day.
- Sovereign Lake is the nicest Nordic ski centre in north America.
- The duo-pass arrangement between Sovereign Lake and Silver Star is too complicated from a user standpoint. A simpler duo-mountain pass is needed.
- Consider innovative partnerships, such as duo-memberships between Predator Ridge and Sovereign ... "Golf & Ski" packages.
- Charge more for our Day Tickets and Season Passes.

#### **Observations of the Sessions by Committee Members**

- Recommend 10am – 1pm in future for Saturday sessions – it was very busy!! Great mix and diversity of lodge users, members and non, very diverse ages and depth of skiing (i.e., from infrequent to very high use). Three volunteers were ideal. Would be hard with only two. Prizes were perfect - helped to motivate and gave us another data point for Verva.
- Overarching themes: need to balance the character of the current lodge with a bigger modern more functional renewal and likewise, balance costs, keeping fees in particular accessible/affordable and continuing or even increasing access to low barrier programs/fees for vulnerable populations, families. We also heard, do not get grand in either infrastructure nor programming. Capital and operational sustainability a strong theme with concern about over-leveraging the club financially; and finally, emphasis on working with partners as much as possible.
- Very busy after Masters on Thursday. Great interest in the process and future of the lodge.
- People liked the process and opportunity to provide their views and ideas.

- People were very interested in the display boards, the information, and many thanked me (us) for conducting the session – they clearly like to know what’s going on.
- Some people were concerned about the club living within its means – they wanted to know how much it would cost. When explained we weren’t there yet and the process we are going through, they said – good! A part of that discussion was that people wanted to know how it was going to be paid for, they were satisfied with the process answer, but several said they didn’t want the dues going up much (one person said “at all”).
- Several people who said they would help in some way when it comes time that they can. One attendee volunteered to join the Lodge Committee or otherwise help out.
- Saw mostly members on Thursday – given that it was a Masters day. We did have some “out of towners”, and they love the area. One noted, however and specifically, that the Lodge was too small.

**END**

Report reviewed by Lodge Committee April 4, 2023

### **Lodge Committee**

Malcolm Devine, Chair

Hugh Seaton

Hugh Hamilton

Rob Oxenham

John Nightingale

Jacqueline Gijssen

Jeff Ward

Troy Hudson