

Nelson Nordic Ski Club Strategic Plan



September 2007

Prepared by the NNSC Executive

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Introduction:

This plan has been developed to provide direction for the future activities of the Nelson Nordic Ski Club (NNSC). The plan is strategic in nature and provides options for development of trails, facilities, programs, communication and other areas of the NNSC. The first section of the plan deals with the current status of the club, while the second section deals with options for future plans. The results of the 2007 membership survey were essential in the development of this plan.

Background

An improved trail system and facilities for the NNSC would be a boon to the area - not just to the increasing ranks of locals who enjoy the forest-based activities on their doorsteps, but with minimal marketing and promotion in the tourism area, substantial economic development could be generated for the entire region.

The population of Nelson and area is growing. Tourism visits to the area are increasing. The popularity of cross country skiing and other forest related outdoor recreational pursuits is on a dramatic upswing in B.C. and in the region. Regional facilities and trails are limited as are safe and moderate terrain close to Nelson. Cross country skiing is one of the fastest growing winter sports in North America. An estimated 5.5 million Canadians are cross country ski enthusiasts, skiing six or more times per winter. Between 1982 and 1988, the number of Canadians cross country skiing rose 57 per cent (*1993 Quesnel Report on Economic Opportunities for Cross Country Skiing*). With the population steadily aging, the future of cross country skiing - a true cradle to grave sport that is easy to master at any age - will dramatically grow. A Canadian Ski Council study revealed that sixty percent of skiers who skied more than 100 times per year were over the age of 45. The study also reported that thirty-seven per cent of cross country skiers were aged 35-44 while only 15% of the entire population was that age.

In 2005/2006 there were 50 registered Nordic ski clubs in British Columbia with a total of 13,054 members. The NNSC was the 5th largest in the province with 761 registered members, making it the largest ski club in the Kootenays.

Club History

The Nelson Nordic Ski Club has been active in the Nelson area since 1979, setting tracks on the Nelson golf course and later, in cooperation with the B.C. Forest Service, on the old Clearwater Road. On March 22, 1983 a non-profit society called the Kokanee Nordic Ski Society was established. Directors and officers were elected and club goals and directions were determined. There were about 50 members at that time.

The club's goal was to cooperate with all levels of government to develop Nordic skiing facilities and programs to serve residents and visitors of the Nelson area. The society's name was changed to the Nelson Nordic Ski Club in 1986. In 1987, the Western Canadian Masters' race was held on the Camp Busk trail and the BC Winter Games cross country skiing event was hosted here in 1989.

Trails were developed on Crown and private land taking advantage of provincial government grants and volunteer efforts. Tracks were set by the BC Forest Service initially and gradually the club took on the job using twin track snowmobiles. About 25 kilometers of tracks are regularly set for classic and skate skiing since purchasing a Pisten Bulley snow vehicle in late 1992. A 1.3 km lighted trail began operating January 1992 for night skiing and a warming hut was built at the Apex trailhead.

Membership has grown to the point where in 2005/2006 there were over 750 members, making it the fifth largest registered cross country ski club in British Columbia.

Current Situation

1. Site

The NNSC is located in the Salmo River Valley, about 11 km south of Nelson on both sides of Highway 6. The area receives heavy snowfall which normally allows for skiing from early December to mid April. There is a variety of terrain from flat trails designed for everyone to more challenging, steeper terrain. The ski area is separated by Highway 6 with the Apex areas on the west and Busk/Clearwater area on the east.

The Apex ski area is at the apex of the Salmo River Valley and the Cottonwood Creek. The terrain is nearly level, with extensive bog and marshlands forming the headwaters of the Salmo River on the south and Cottonwood Creek, which eventually runs through the city of Nelson, 11 km to the north. One of the longest established snow monitoring stations in BC is located in this area and documents the abundant snowfall received. Given the gentle terrain, this is an excellent area for learning to ski. The trails here are mainly on private land and have been operated since 1985 with the permission of several private landowners.

The Busk ski area is in the Clearwater Creek valley which is typical for this part of the Selkirk mountain range, with a V-shaped valley rising gently until it approaches its headwaters, where the terrain steepens. High grade cross country ski trail opportunities are generally confined to a narrow band in the valley bottom. Precipitation is heavy and quite reliable in this area however and does provide for a full four month ski season. The Busk/Euphrates and Clearwater trails begin at a parking area about 400 m from Highway 6 along the Clearwater FSR.

Elevation varies from 900m on the Euphrates trail to 1100m at the Clearwater warming shelter. The elevation of the Apex warming hut is 940m. A large wetland area covers much of the low lying area and the trails surround it.

The trails are on both private and Crown land. The NNSC has agreements in place with five different private landowners, four on the Apex side and one on the Busk side. The agreements with the private landowners are renewed annually. The NNSC has an agreement with Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts (MTSA) to use the trails on Crown land. The Crown land areas are specified as recreation use and are managed by the NNSC in conjunction with the MTSA.

2. Facilities

The facilities on site include: Apex warming shelter, garage, and two temporary machine shelters at Apex. There is also a warming shelter at the top of Clearwater trail. Ticket booths are located at both the Apex and Busk trailheads

The Apex trail head is the current centre for Club activities. The warming shelter, built in 1992, is 1200 ft² and has a wood stove. All races, CCBC ski league activities and any other Club events start here. The garage is the storage area for the PB 160 snow cat. All mechanical work on the PB160 and the PB 60 occurs here. The garage is 700 ft² and is heated by an oil furnace. A temporary wood structure was constructed in 2001 to house the PB 60. In 2006, a temporary canvas structure was erected to protect the snowmobile from the elements.

The Clearwater warming shelter was constructed in 2000. It is a basic A-frame design with heavy plastic for the walls and roof. There is a wood stove and benches for several skiers

There are no indoor toilet facilities. Outhouses are located at the Apex and Busk trailheads as well as at the Clearwater warming shelter.

Parking lots are available at both the Apex and Busk trailheads. The Apex parking lot is small and is right on the side of Highway 6. It can get very crowded on weekends and is a safety concern for large events. A parking attendant is necessary when events are taking place. The Busk parking lot is away from the highway and can accommodate more cars.

The 2007 member survey indicated that the membership was mostly satisfied with the current facilities at the NNSC.

3. Trails

(All trails are shown in Appendix 1.)

Night Loop:

This 1.3 km loop starts at the Apex warming hut. It is on gentle terrain and offers excellent opportunities for new skiers. The majority of the trail is on flat terrain, but also has a gentle rise near the warming hut that can provide some uphill and downhill experience for new skiers. The trail is lit until approximately 10:00 each night during ski season. This trail is completely on private land.

Apex:

This 3km starts at the warming hut and encompasses part of the night loop. This trail is also on gentle terrain which is excellent for new skiers and children. The trail utilizes part of the old Nelson-Salmo highway. The trail is all on private land except for the 1 km on the old highway grade.

Cottonwood:

This trail, approximately 5 km, starts at the north end of Apex loop and is intermediate level. The trail starts and returns on the old Burlington Northern Railway bed, which is maintained as a park by the RDCK. There is a short loop into the field between the railway bed and the highway, as well as a loop in the forest which takes off to the south of the railway bed. The loop to the south is challenging with several hills and tight corners.

Beaumont:

Beaumont loop, an expert trail, is about 1.5 km long and starts from mid-way around the Apex loop. It is an out and back trail with steep pitches and several tight corners. The trail is entirely on private land.

Terrain Garden:

This is a small area, just below the Apex warming hut, also known as “the bumps and jumps”. It has been designed for kids to have some fast fun after skiing the trails.

Trail in the Woods:

This short trail, in the woods in the centre of the night loop, was designed for kids to have fun in. It is a short trail with automatic lights for night skiing, tight corners for kids to practice turning, and the feel that you are deep in the woods.

Busk:

The Busk trail starts from the parking lot at the Busk trailhead. This 3 km loop goes through old and young forest, across several creeks, through bogs and beside the Salmo River. It is rated intermediate level. A portion of the return trail is on the old BNR rail grade, which is the only Crown land portion of the trail.

Euphrates:

Euphrates is an extension of Busk, also intermediate, adding another 3 km. This trail parallels the Salmo River. The riverside setting for this trail is beautiful and makes it one of the most popular trails at the NNSC. The entire Euphrates loop is on Crown land.

Clearwater:

Clearwater Forest Service Road is used as a trail and is groomed to about 6.5 km. It is an intermediate trail and has traditionally only been groomed to 5km, where there is a loop that winds through old growth forest before returning to the road. There is a small warming shelter at the top of this loop. There are two other short loops on the road as well. The last 1.5 km on the road has been groomed the last few years. It is strictly an up and back trail, though there are opportunities for several loops in this area.

New Loop at bottom of Clearwater (needs a trail name):

This trail starts at approximately 200 m up the Clearwater trail. It was developed last season after a small block was harvested. Currently it is just an out and back trail, but there is the potential to create a connection to Busk. It is an intermediate level trail with several undulations.

The 2007 membership survey indicated that the membership enjoy all the trails at the NNSC and would support the creation of new ones as long as the additional trails would not impact the level of grooming and all trail development must be affordable.

4. Equipment

Piston Bulley 160 (PB160):

This 1994 machine was purchased in the late 1990s and is the main machine used for grooming the trails. The PB160 is in excellent condition and is well maintained. At the end of the 2007 season it registered 4100 engine hours. Depending on level of use it's expected life is 5 - 10 years before a replacement is needed. It typically logs about 800-1000 engine hours per year.

This machine is equipped with a 3.2m wide, 12 way multi-function blade, 3.2m wide Bachelor rear tiller and two tracksetters. Blade and tiller are also in excellent condition.

Piston Bulley 60 (PB 60):

This 1980 machine was purchased in 1992. It is currently mainly being used for storm grooming and as an emergency backup for the PB160. The PB60 is currently in reasonable mechanical condition, though additional maintenance is needed to get it to a more comfortable level of reliability. At the end of the 2007 season it registered 4400 engine hours. This machine had a major engine rebuild at approximately 3400 hours, so the current engine is relatively new. In 2007 it logged 40 hours; at this level of use it should easily last 5 - 10 years.

It is equipped with a 2.8m wide, 8 way multi-function blade. Operating the blade does take a reasonable level of skill as the operator ergonomics are poor. The PB60 has a rear hydraulic tiller and twin tracksetters, but these are not currently used due to reliability concerns. In 2007 it was fitted with a rear Compactor bar only, this is not considered acceptable for final grooming, but does a good job of storm grooming.

Renovator:

The renovator was purchased in 2005 and is used on the PB160. This piece of equipment is designed for breaking up the top surface in hard and icy conditions. The renovator can also be used in fresh snow and will help bond the new snow to the old surface layers, mixing and blending all the layers.

Snow machine and Ginzu tracksetter:

A new snowmachine was purchased in 2005 for the purpose of using it for grooming. The Ginzu grooming implement was purchased in 2005 along with the snowmachine. Grooming width is 2.1m and it can be used for both skate and classic grooming. It is less expensive to operate, requires a minimal amount of training and is much faster on the trails. It is expected that our grooming costs will decrease with increased use of this setup.

The acquisitions of the snowmachine/Ginzu and the renovator have added a new dimension to our grooming repertoire.

5. Club Management:

The Nelson Nordic Ski Club is a registered society under the BC Society Act and is a not-for-profit organization. A new Constitution and Bylaws for the club was adopted at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April 2006. The AGM has been held in the spring the last several years, but at the 2006 AGM, it was decided to move the meeting back to the fall.

A volunteer board of directors is elected for a one year term at the NNSC's AGM each year. The board of directors consists of four (4) Executive positions and up to eight (8) Directors. The current Executive has eight (8) members for 2006/2007. The Directors meet on a regular basis throughout the year.

Current director positions and general areas of responsibility are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| President: | Treasurer: |
| Vice President: | Secretary: |
| Equipment: | Grooming/Trail Maintenance: |
| Fundraising: | Communications: |

There is a need to recruit more directors for the NNSC. This plan will outline several new ideas that will require additional directors.

6. Staff:

Operations Manager:

We currently have a full-time operations manager during the ski season who looks after the day to day activities of the Club. Responsibilities include: representative of the NNSC, day ticket sales, snow phone, snow plowing coordination, event organizer, membership sales, and membership database, among many other duties.

Day Ticket Staff:

Currently have two (2) staff members to assist with day ticket sales. They are on duty mostly during the week when volunteers are not available.

Grooming Staff:

We currently have a position for a head groomer and a part-time (on call) assistant. The Club is considering the hiring of another part time grooming assistant for the 2007/08 season. The head groomer is responsible for coordinating all grooming activities, including: determining grooming priorities,

determining best use of equipment based on snow conditions, cost effective scheduling of grooming staff and volunteers, reporting machine issues, and identifying improvements in the system.

The Club also has dedicated volunteer groomers who contribute significant amounts of time to the grooming program. There is one individual who, for the last two seasons, has committed two evenings a week driving the snowcats. This past season the Club has also benefited from the assistance of 3-4 volunteer snowmobile groomers. The Club, and the membership, greatly appreciate the efforts of these individuals.

Mechanic:

The Club has been fortunate to hire a contract mechanic in 2006. He has proved to be an excellent addition to our staff and has been able to keep our snowcats in excellent operating condition.

7. Membership - Volunteers

Cross Country BC had 50 registered Clubs and over 13,000 members in 2005/2006. The membership of the NNSC for the 2005/2006 ski season was 761 which makes it the largest registered Club in the Kootenays and the fifth largest in the province. The membership is almost exclusively from the Nelson area. Despite the large membership, the Club only seems busy on Sunday afternoons when the BC Ski League is on.

Some demographic information on the membership (2005/2006) is detailed below:

Group	Percentage
Under 19 years	18%
19 - 39 years	19%
40 – 49 years	30%
50 years and over	33%
Female	58%
Male	42%

The NNSC encourages volunteer participation. There is a volunteer voucher system in place which leads to a reduced membership fee depending on the amount of volunteer hours worked. Volunteer activities include, but are not limited to: day ticket sales, annual work bee, ski swap, membership sales, Kootenay Cup, Ski League coaching, grooming, trail brushing and fundraising.

Volunteer participation in 2005/2006:

- 90 different volunteers
- 1094 total hours
- 13 members with more than 40 hours

Usage:

It is difficult to get an accurate count of the number of trail visits. Trail attendants are not on duty at all times, and they do not record the numbers of members visiting. Members are required to sign in, which is sometimes forgotten. Trail attendants keep track of day ticket sales. When attendants are not on duty, day users are expected to use the honour system for payment.

An estimate of skier usage is approximately 8,000 – 10,000 skier visits for the membership and another 2,500 skier visits from day ticket use.

8. Grooming:

Grooming is the highest priority, and the biggest expense, at the NNSC. There are 25km of trail that are set for both classic and skate skiing. Some areas are set for double classic, but most of the trails have only one classic track. Grooming has improved significantly over the past five years. The popularity of skate skiing and the corresponding increase in skate skiers has brought added visibility to the grooming program. Skate skiing requires more investment in grooming than classic skiing.

The weather conditions in the area also contribute to the grooming issue. It is not uncommon for rain to follow a snow event, which makes for very difficult grooming decisions. The dispersed nature of the trail system causes inefficiencies and some safety concerns for grooming. The grooming machines are almost 8km from the machine shop when at the farthest reaches of Clearwater. If a serious breakdown happens at this area it can be very costly if not impossible to get the machine back.

The current machine setup requires that all trails have 2 passes with the PB 160 for a full groom. The setup is not wide enough to groom the full trail width in one pass. A full groom for all the trails with the PB 160 requires 12 -15 hours when the trails are in reasonable condition. A heavy snowfall typically doubles the amount of hours required for a full groom.

A grooming policy manual was developed in 2006 and is intended to give guidance to all grooming activities. Among other things, it sets out the goals of the grooming program, priority areas for grooming and some guidance on the selection of grooming equipment. The grooming policy manual will be reviewed periodically to see how effective it was and if any changes are necessary.

The 2007 membership survey indicated that 65% of the membership was satisfied with the grooming. However, many of these people also had comments that indicated that grooming could still be improved. The Executive considers these results to be significant and will strive for an improvement in the 2007/08 season.

9. Trail Maintenance:

The trail system is inspected annually by one or two of the Directors and/or members to determine trail maintenance priorities for the year.

All the trails require some off season maintenance to keep them in good condition. The largest portion of maintenance program is the brushing program which runs for 3-4 weeks each fall. All trails are brushed using gas powered brush saws. A significant amount of volunteer hours are required to have a successful brushing program.

There are eight (8) bridges on the trail system that need annual inspection, maintenance and replacement, if necessary. The NNSC has replaced several bridges during the past 4 years. The Club has been very successful in purchasing used flat decks for use as bridge decking.

Current issues include: several low lying areas of the trail system that could benefit from added fill, several areas where snow interception from overhanging trees is a problem, and some bridges that could do with replacement.

10. Communications:

The Club puts out a newsletter 3-4 times a year. The newsletter is currently put together by one of our volunteers. The NNSC has a website where all pertinent Club information is posted. The website is now linked into a local weather station at Hall Creek which provides local temperatures for the area.

Most members are included in email mail outs of information and the newsletter. Approximately 60 members still get Club information through Canada Post.

The snow phone is active during the season and is updated daily with current weather and status of grooming.

11. Fundraising:

The Club has been successful over the past few years in getting several grants for Club activities. Most of the purchase price of the snowmobile and Ginzu was covered by grant money. The successful grant applications are due to the efforts of one of the Directors.

Some money is raised through the sale of advertising plaques at the Apex trailhead, but the Club does not have any large corporate sponsors who contribute to programs on a regular basis.

The annual ski swap is not a big fundraiser and is put on more as a service to our skiers rather than as a money maker. The junior racers have now taken over the organization of the ski swap and are the beneficiaries of any profit.

12. Programs/Events

The BC Ski League (JackRabbits) is a very successful program at the NNSC. There were more than 55 participants and 8 volunteer coaches in the program last year. The program runs for 1.5 hours on Sunday afternoons and is a great way for kids to improve ski skills. The success of the program is entirely dependent on the volunteer coaches who do a fantastic job at the NNSC.

The Kootenay Cup is a five race series held at Kimberley, Blackjack, Castlegar and Nelson ski clubs throughout the ski season. The last race is traditionally held at the NNSC each March and is where the coveted Kootenay Cup is awarded to the winner of the Series. The last several years there have been over 100 participants from ski clubs throughout the Kootenays.

The NNSC has celebrations for two of the most exciting times of the winter, aside from Christmas of course, and they are the Winter Solstice Potluck, and the Valentines Night Ski. 2007 was the 5th time for the Valentines Ski which keeps getting bigger and better every year. The Apex trail is lit with tiki torches, bonfire, music and best of all home made goodies. For the first time, admission in 2007 was a non-perishable food item to donate to the Nelson Food Cupboard. The ski night event is a great community event.

Several local schools use the trails for half price each year and ski technique and coaching clinics are also offered.

13. Nelson Nordic Junior Racers

The Nelson Nordic Junior Racers are a group of 15 to 20 kids ranging in age from 10 to 15 years. Five racers have been picked by our coaches for the Talent Squad, BC Development program. There is no full time coach for the team. There are four volunteer coaches who take turns coming out to coach when they can. At present none of the coaches are paid.

The team trains September through to April for a minimum of 6 hours per week. There are also weekend training camps in early fall and a snow camp in early winter. All the racers participate in the Kootenay Cup races held in Kimberley, Rossland and Nelson. Quite a few of the racers also participate in the BC Cup races that are held in different parts of BC, such as 100 Mile House, Prince George and Kelowna, and in a number of other races (e.g., Black Jack Loppet).

Many other clubs comment about the number of racers the NNSC has for such a small club and how successful our racers are. There is a need to keep this momentum and build on our team. Coaching is the biggest issue that needs to be addressed. There is not enough coaching at the present time and parents are usually taking a turn skiing with one of the groups on the team, so they are accompanied by an adult, while the coach is with the younger or older team members. Many times these parents can't even keep up to the older athletes and are not qualified to provide coaching advice.

Future Options

This portion of the document explores all the possible options for the Club. Detailed cost estimates, work plans and timelines for each of the possible options will be developed after the adoption of this plan.

1. Location:

Some concern has been expressed that the current location of the Club is not sustainable for the long term because of the amount of private land that is currently being used by the NNSC. The Club has five (5) different private land arrangements with the various landowners in the area. Only one of these has offered the Club the option of locking in for a twenty (20) year term. The rest of the leases are renewed on an annual basis.

The Executive have had several discussions concerning the purchase of some of the private property that the trails are on. The purchase of the property would secure long term stability for the Club. The 2007 member survey indicated that the members are not ready to consider the purchase of any private property. The Executive will continue to look for opportunities to purchase some of the private land, but no decision will be made without the consent of the membership.

The Executive will now seriously consider signing the 20 year lease for the property which covers the Apex shelter, the garage and the night loop. The current rate of the lease is reasonable and it will give the Club some stability and enable planning to occur for a new garage or improvements to the Apex shelter.

The Executive is also in the process of applying for tenure on the crown land that we ski on. This will provide the Club with security for the tenure on the Crown land and also make it easier to apply for new trail development. The proposed area is larger than the current area the Club skis on so as to accommodate future trail development.

2. Facilities:

Apex Shelter:

The current main shelter at the Apex trailhead was built in 1992. It has served its purpose very well over the years. The Executive was considering the construction of a new lodge to replace the existing Apex shelter. The 2007 member survey indicated that almost 92% of the membership is satisfied with the current Apex shelter and almost 70% do not wish to see construction of a replacement.

Considering the response from the members, the Executive will shelve further discussions on a new lodge for Apex. This decision should be reevaluated in five years to see if there is a desire/need for a new shelter at that time.

Clearwater Shelter:

The Clearwater warming shelter is at the top loop on Clearwater. This shelter, constructed in 2000, is a basic log A Frame covered by heavy plastic with a wood stove and a couple benches. The Executive was considering the construction of a new shelter to replace the current one. The 2007 member survey indicated that 92% of the membership is satisfied with the current shelter and 89% do not want construction of a new shelter.

The Executive will shelve plans for construction of a new Clearwater shelter. However, this decision should be reevaluated if the proposed new trails for upper Clearwater proceed. The new trails could encourage more use of Clearwater and increase the need for an improved shelter.

Busk Shelter:

The idea of a warming shelter in the Busk parking lot has been around for several years. It would not have to be a large shelter, but would provide skiers with a place to warm up and change gear. There is space available on Crown land and it may be possible to partner with government agencies and private partners for the construction. The 2007 member survey indicated that the membership is almost evenly split on this idea, with 50.6% voting in favour.

The Executive will investigate options for construction of a new shelter in the Busk parking lot. No construction will occur before the membership is fully briefed on all the options.

Euphrates Structure:

There has been discussion that a structure is needed at the far end of the Euphrates loop. This is a great location along the Salmo River at which to have a break. The structure could be a simple roofed structure over a picnic table along with a couple benches and an outhouse. This would be a perfect spot to stop for a snack with young children.

Machine Shop:

A new machine shop is needed for storage of the Piston Bulleys and the Snowmobile. The current workshop only has room for storage of one of the PBs. The new workshop would have the capacity to hold both the PBs and the snowmobile. The Executive is actively looking at options for the construction of a machine shop at Apex. The summer of 2008 would be the desired timeline for construction. Any proposed activity will be discussed with the membership.

Washroom Facilities:

The Club currently only has outhouses in three locations. The Executive was under the assumption that the facilities needed to be upgraded. The 2007 membership survey indicated that over 82% of the members were satisfied with the current facilities. The Executive will be taking no action with respect to the outhouses outside of normal annual maintenance.

The only possible addition would be to locate an outhouse at the far end of the Euphrates loop.

3. Equipment:

The NNSC is currently in a good position with respect to grooming equipment. It is not expected that we will need any new equipment in the short term. However, the Club **must** plan for the replacement of the PB160 within the next 5-10 years. A replacement snowcat will be in the neighbourhood of \$150,000 and the Club needs to start planning for this.

Machine size must be a consideration when purchasing a new grooming machine. A larger snowcat and grooming implement could give a full groom in only one pass. There could be issues with narrow trail width in some locations. Also, the out and back nature of some of the trails defeats the efficiency gained with only needing one pass.

A decision also has to be made with regard to the PB60. The machine is currently used for track packing only. If the Club decides to hire another part-time groomer the machine may be used more often.

4. Grooming:

Grooming is the highest priority activity done by the Club. Our members demand high quality trails groomed to meet their needs and the Club tries to meet this demand. It must also be understood that grooming is also the most expensive activity done by the Club. A balance has to be made between the trail conditions and the budget we have for grooming trails. The Club does not have a lot of volunteer groomers, so most of our grooming is done by paid staff or contractors.

The membership survey clearly indicated that there was general disapproval with the level of grooming in 2007. Much of this had to do with an unusually large amount of snowfall in the early season and the fact that the Club hired a relatively inexperienced head groomer in 2007. The decision to hire the head groomer has turned out to be an excellent choice and the Executive was very pleased with his progress last season. The Executive will commit to a plan to try to improve grooming conditions for the upcoming seasons.

5. Executive:

The Executive needs to expand and some of the current members would like to retire. Most of the current members have been on the Executive for several years now, some are even in their second go-around. It is time for some new members to step forward and assume some of the Club responsibilities. This is a great time to become involved with the NNSC. This long term plan is just the beginning of a transition and growth period for the Club.

Current membership on the Executive is eight and can be a maximum of twelve. Anyone wishing to join the Executive should contact a current member for more information.

Possible New Positions:

Program/Race/Social Activities Director:

Fundraising Director:

Trail Development Director:

Facilities Director:

Director at Large:

6. Programs/Races/Social Activities

There are many opportunities to increase the exposure of the NNSC through the development of programs for members, and races for skiers of all abilities. Scheduling of family oriented social events around skiing would also promote the Club in a positive manner. It would be ideal if the Club could sponsor some event every two- three weeks throughout the ski season. The Club then becomes a centre of activity for the community. People know that something is always going on.

Members Programs:

Masters Group
Waxing Clinics
Ski Improvement Clinics
Babysitting service on weekend mornings

Social Activities:

New Year's Eve Ski
NNSC Family Race Day: three legged ski; pulk race; family relay race; scavenger hunt

Races:

NNSC Loppet
Family Race Day
Kootenay Cup
Gerick's Race

7. Nelson Nordic Junior Racers

The junior racing program is a very successful portion of the Club, which is dependent on the dedication of the volunteer coaches as well as the support of parents. The Executive supports the continued development of the program. The most pressing needs are in the areas of coach recruitment and development and bringing more athletes into the program.

Coaches

- Our coaches would all like to get more certification, but this involves time away from home to attend courses as well as the cost to get certified.
- More than one coach is needed at the training sessions to cope with the varied levels of ability of 10 to 15 year old racers. It isn't possible to go on a run or ski without either sending the older kids ahead or leaving the younger ones behind. This format doesn't encourage good coaching.
- Due to coaches having young families, the team has gone to several races (including last two BC Championships) without a coach and have asked a coach from Kimberley or Rossland to help out. It is awkward asking other team coaches for waxing advice when they are the competition, but most have been very helpful.
- In the long term it would be ideal to have a paid head coach managing the overall program.

Athletes

- A broad range of skills and ages on the team requires that there be more than one coach at each session in order to give all athletes proper training and coaching.
- Expansion comes from the strong Jackrabbit program, which we believe is present.
- There is a need for a "bridging" program between rabbits and racers, especially for the mini midgets (10-11 year olds), who aren't always ready for the rigorous training that is involved with being on the team.

- We also need a way to integrate older skiers with less experience into the program until they can keep up with the other racers on snow. They may have the endurance but not the technique and thus require a coach to assist them more with technique. There have been several of these athletes in the last couple of years.

Races

- Lobby the CCBC to include the Kootenay Cup races in the BC Cup series. This could decrease the amount of travel for our racers and encourage participation in the Kootenay Cup from other ski clubs outside the Kootenays.

8. Trail Maintenance

There are many places where the Club could improve trail conditions. All these activities require is volunteer time and/or money to get them done.

General Trail Maintenance:

- A regular trail maintenance program needs to be developed where the trails would be walked in the spring and fall to identify hazards and items to be removed from the trails. Large rocks, rotting bridge decks, low areas on the trail, and issues arising from beaver dams are examples of items that should be identified and dealt with on a regular basis.

Machine Work:

- Several places on Busk/Euphrates, Apex and Back end of Cottonwood are low lying and could use fill to improve the trails. The fill would raise the level of the trail and would make the trails useable at an earlier time. A day with a backhoe could do a lot to improve these areas.
- There are several stumps on Cottonwood that could also be removed to widen the trail. It is very tight to maneuver the PB through these areas and the stumps can cause damage to the tiller.
- Several areas where a backhoe could widen the trail to make it easier to ski and groom.

Branch Removal:

- Overhanging branches on Apex, Busk, Euphrates and Loop 3 on Clearwater can be a problem. They intercept snow and drop considerable amounts of debris onto the trail. Pruning back some of the lower branches, and removal of some trees if necessary, would definitely improve the trail conditions. This project would require permission from landowners and significant volunteer time or money for a contractor.

Bridges:

- Our bridges are currently in very good condition. The bridges must be inspected on a regular basis to ensure they are still safe. It may require the hiring of a contractor to inspect our bridge system and make recommendations for improvements.

9. Communication

Newsletter

Currently the newsletter is not put out on a regular schedule. It may be appropriate to set up a definite schedule for the release of a newsletter 3-4 times per year.

Web Site

The website needs to be updated and retooled. The goal of the website re-design is that it will be the place where members can go to get all the information they need about the Club. Improvements could include: web cam, daily conditions report, planned grooming schedule, upcoming events section, counter to track web site visits, ability to pay for membership online, ability for members to send in comments, and an interactive map.

Email:

Email is currently used for distributing the newsletter and for letting members know about upcoming events. The Club does not want to expand the use of email as people generally get too much email on a regular basis.

New Brochure

A new trail map brochure is in the process of being developed and should be ready for the 2007/2008 season.

Trail Signage

Current trail signage is limited to signs showing names of trails and some directional signs. The Club will embark on a program to improve signage on the trails. Information on signs will include maps, "You Are Here" markers and distances. It is the intent that all trail intersections will have signage.

10. Fundraising

The NNSC has not been as successful as it should be in the area of fundraising. The Club needs a person solely devoted to the task of fundraising and corporate sponsorship. This person would be responsible for searching out grant opportunities and ensuring the submitted proposal meets the needs. There also needs to be a concerted effort to invite local businesses to partner with the Club on future plans. Fundraising will be crucial to the delivery of the options presented in this plan.

Searching out grant opportunities and writing proposals requires a significant amount of time. The Club may explore the opportunity to get professional help in this area. This can be in the form of getting a proposal template developed for the Club to use, or of hiring a contractor to search out grant opportunities and submit proposals on behalf of the Club.

11. Staff

Current staffing levels seem to be adequate for a Club of our size. The one potential area for increased staffing is for grooming. The Club will look at recruiting new members to the grooming team for the 2007/2008 ski season.

12. Membership/Volunteers

Membership

The membership seems to have stabilized around the 700 range. The Executive would always like to see more members however, it also has to be taken into consideration that an expanded membership puts a stress on the facilities. The Club seems to be able to adequately provide for the current membership level. A consistent membership in the 900-1000 range would put stress on the parking and other facilities.

Volunteers

The success of the Club depends heavily on volunteer support. Without volunteer support the Club would not be able to exist. In 2005/2006 the Club had 90 members volunteer for a total of 1094 hours. This equates to only 11% of the membership that volunteer time. This is a good response and is greatly appreciated, however, the Club needs more support from volunteers if we are going to be successful in implementing the options outlined in this plan.

Options that should be considered to recruit more volunteers:

- Large projects may attract more volunteers as members will know exactly what they are volunteering for
- Revise the volunteer voucher system

13. Revenue:

The Club needs to increase revenue to continue to maintain current levels of service and to plan for expanded service in the future. Sources of revenue include:

Membership Fees

Membership fees are the biggest source of revenue for the Club. They account for approximately 80% of the income per year. The membership fees were raised for the 2006/2007 season. The current fees are comparable to those charged by other Nordic centres with facilities similar to the NNSC. Depending on the options chosen from this plan, it may be necessary to raise fees to finance the proposed changes.

Day Use Fees:

Day use fees currently account for approximately 15% of the income. Fees were raised for the 2006/2007 season in conjunction with the raise in membership fees. Fee increases are possible in any season, but the Club should be careful to keep day use fees at a level comparable to other Nordic centres in the area.

Sponsorship:

Money received from sponsors currently accounts for about 5% of the revenue. This is one area where the Club could significantly increase the amount of revenue. A concerted effort must be made to approach local businesses to partner with the NNSC on a long term basis.

Grants:

This is another area where there is great potential to increase revenue to the Club. An endorsed long term plan and a dedicated effort could lead to a significant increase in the amount of money received from grant giving organizations.

14. Purchase Property

There could be opportunities for the NNSC to purchase some of the private property that we currently ski on or is adjacent to areas we ski on. These areas are the Busk campground and the area between the highway and the Busk parking lot. The property on which the Apex shelter and the night loop sits is not for sale at this time.

The survey results indicate that the membership is not fully supportive of purchasing any property at this time. However, the membership must understand that without the assurance of having facilities on NNSC property there is always the risk the Club may lose the right to use the properties.

The Executive will still investigate potential opportunities to purchase property. It would not be doing it's job if it did not look for such opportunities. No decisions on purchasing property will be made without consulting the membership.

15. Trail Development:

Due to private land concerns, there is little to no opportunity to develop trails on the Apex side. With the exception of the expansion to the terrain garden, all trail development options discussed here will be limited to Crown land on the Busk/Clearwater area. The two main areas for potential development are Lower Clearwater and Upper Clearwater. Appendix 2 shows the potential new trails.

Terrain Garden:

There is considerable interest in enlarging the current terrain garden/playground area near the Apex shelter. This is an excellent area for kids to play on and develop skills and is a favourite instruction area for the Rabbit program. There is a small group looking at possible ideas for expansion to this area.

Lower Clearwater:

1. The plan is to join the existing new trail at the bottom of Clearwater Road to Busk. This will require approximately 100 meters of trail construction through existing forest. The total length of the addition will be close to 600 metres. This is one of the higher priorities for trail construction and should be complete by fall 2008, if not sooner.
2. The plan is to reestablish the old trail that runs from back of the Busk parking lot up to the top of the first hill on Clearwater. This will provide an easier way around the first hill climb on Clearwater. It could entice more people to use Clearwater if they know they can avoid the first big hill. There is a tight corner that needs work and a large bridge must be put in place over Apex Creek. This is another high priority trail which could be completed for the 2008 season.

Upper Clearwater

The new Atco road on the south side of Clearwater Creek provides a lot of opportunity to create some new loops at the top of Clearwater. The attached map shows three potential areas where logical bridge crossings can occur. They are in areas where there are old trails, so it is hoped these roads will be used as much as possible. Trail options 5 and 6 are not feasible with the current grooming equipment. A larger machine with the capability to groom the trail in one pass is needed.

3. New trail would start at the top of Clearwater where you turn right to continue down towards the existing warming shelter. It connects to the main road approximately 200-400m after the bridge. This was a ski trail at one time and has since been abandoned. It would require a bridge across Qua Creek, brushing and some machine work to rehabilitate the existing trail bed. This is a high priority trail which could be complete for the 2007 season.
4. New bridge location would be right at the current Clearwater warming shelter. The trail would start at the main road and follow an old trail down to the bridge crossing. This is a long term project if it is even possible to build trail here. The terrain is very steep and wet with several large creeks.
5. New bridge location would be in the vicinity of Loop 2. The trail would connect the main road on the far side of the creek with Loop 2. At one time there was a bridge crossing here and there are existing old roads in the area that would be used as much as possible. It would require a bridge across the creek and significant brushing. There may also be some machine work involved in rehabilitating the trail bed.
6. The trail would follow the length of the Atco logging road and cross the Salmo River near the end of Euphrates. This trail would make Clearwater into a true loop. The trail would drop down to the river along an existing old road. It would require a large bridge across the Salmo River and significant brushing and machine work.

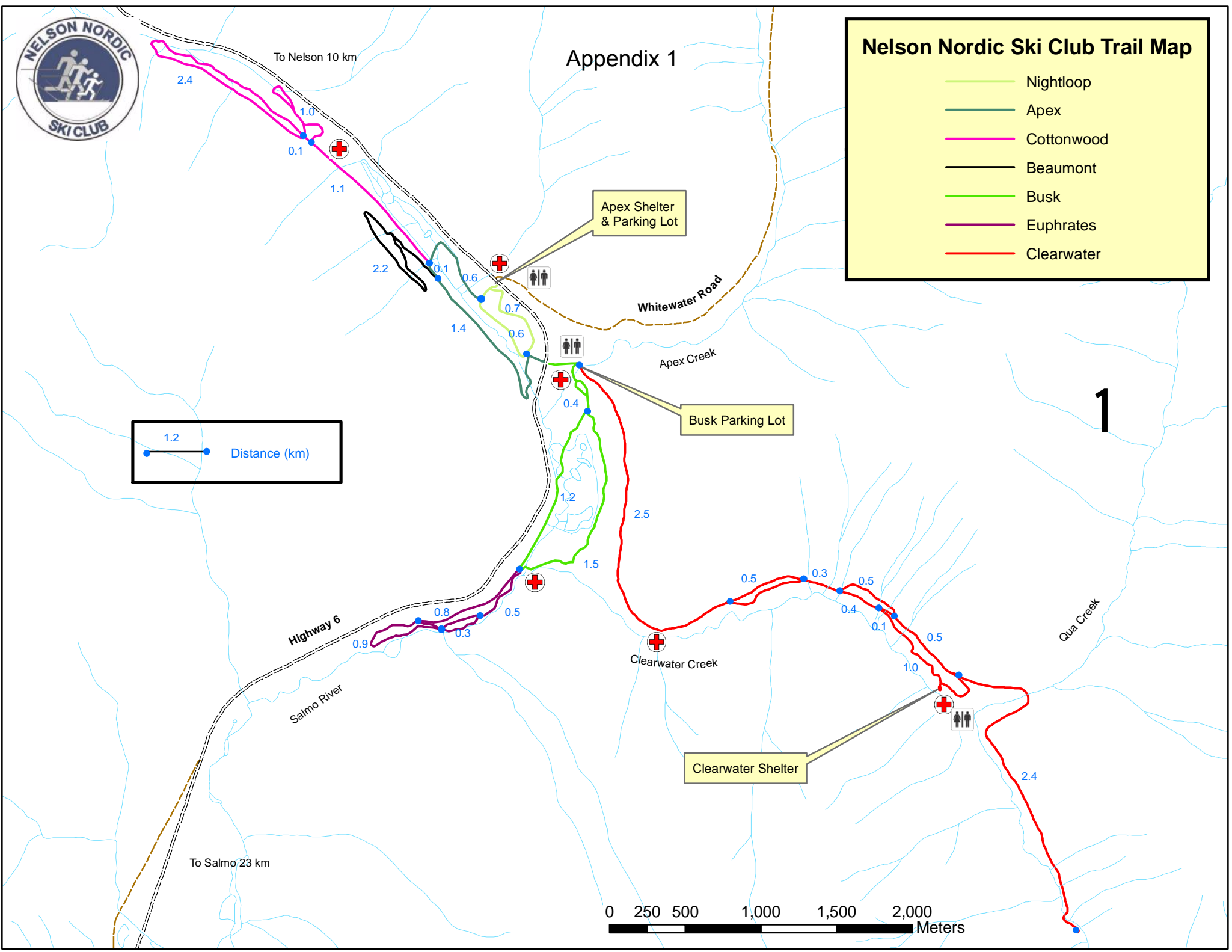
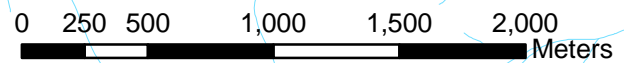


Appendix 1

Nelson Nordic Ski Club Trail Map

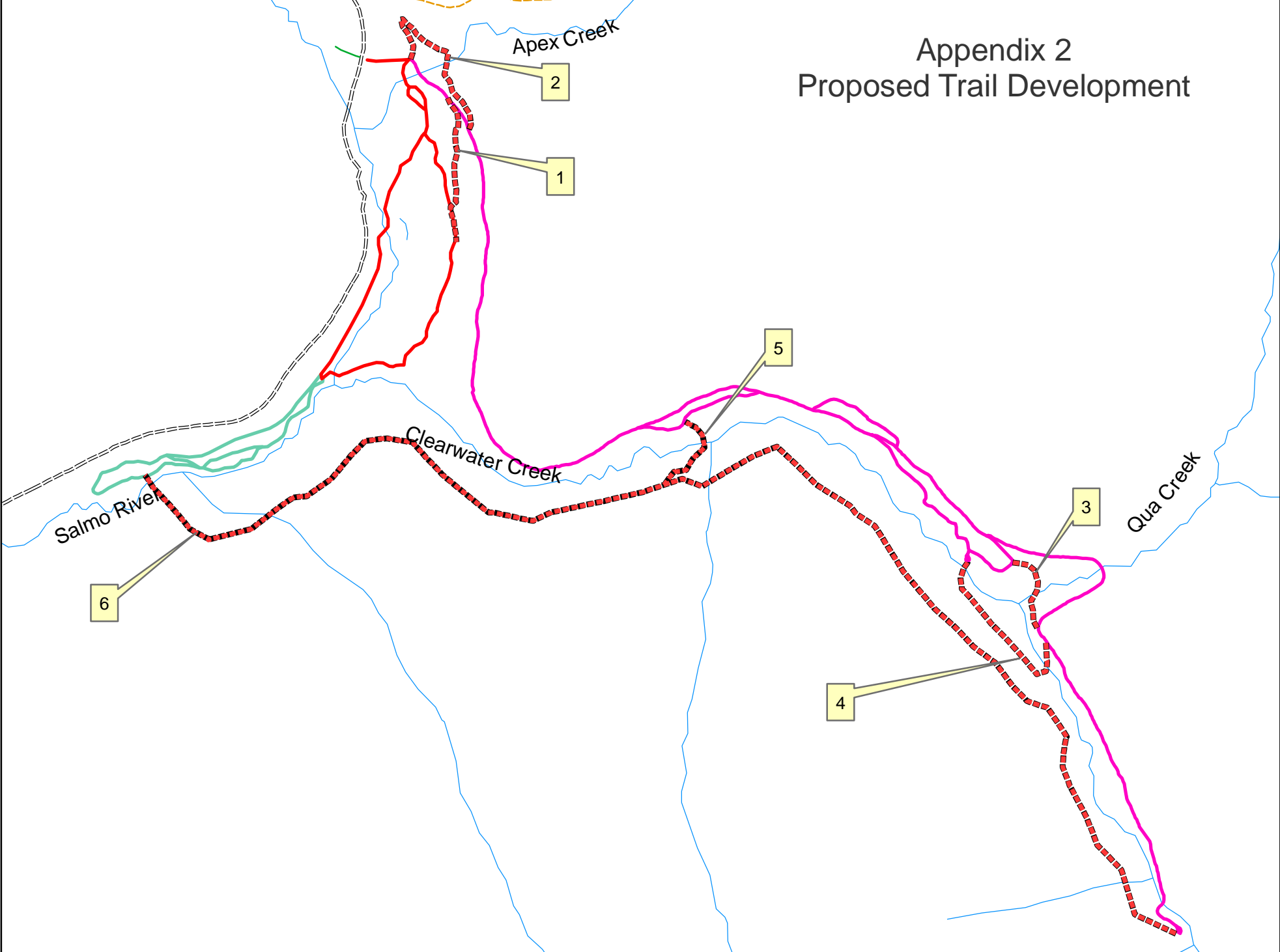
- Nightloop
- Apex
- Cottonwood
- Beaumont
- Busk
- Euphrates
- Clearwater

1.2 Distance (km)



1

Appendix 2 Proposed Trail Development



Appendix 3

