

2016/17 Annual Report



CWSAA
Canada West Ski Areas Association

The Voice of the Ski Industry in Western Canada

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2016 CWSAA Board of Directors



Absent: Lawrence Blouin.

Subsequent to this photo, Debbie Muirhead replaced Brent Harley as Associate Member Director.

Board Chair

Steve Paccagnan
Panorama Mountain Resort

Associate Member Director

Debbie Muirhead
Inter-Mtn. Testing &
Inter-Mtn. Enterprises

Helicopter-Cat Skiing Division

Patric Maloney
Snowater Heli Skiing &
Valhalla Powdercats

Director at Large

Stewart Laver
Sunshine Village

ASM Division Chair

Andre Quenneville
Mt. Norquay

ASM Directors

Shawn Balog, Snow Valley
Jason Paterson, Marmot Basin
Lawrence Blouin, Table Mountain

BC-Yukon Division Chair

Andy Cohen
Fernie Alpine Resort / RCR

BC Directors

Thierry Keable, Whistler Blackcomb
Peter Nixon, Sun Peaks Resort
Eddie Wood, Mt. Seymour



Message from the Chair

Steve Paccagnan

The staff and directors of the Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA) keep the needs of our members and their guests top of mind at all times. After all, we exist to support our members by undertaking activities aimed at strengthening their operations and the industry as a whole. Doing that also means ensuring visitors to our members' areas and their staff have safe and positive experiences. To that end, safety and risk management remain top priorities. In the past year we continued to work closely with our members to develop and implement strategies and policies aimed at maximizing safety and managing risk. Ultimately, nothing is more important to our industry than achieving these goals.

CWSAA also plays an important external relations role, engaging with government and other external stakeholders to advocate for, and protect the interests of, our industry. You will see in the pages that follow that we have been active on this front in each region.

Of course, successful advocacy on behalf of ski areas in each of our regions requires CWSAA to work closely with you, our members, to identify challenges specific to your region and develop strategies to address them. This is something that new CWSAA president Christopher Nicolson took to heart when he joined us in May 2016. He hit the ground running and since then has managed to visit many of you. Engaging with all of our members in a meaningful way is high on our list of priorities whether this is achieved face-to-face or via other channels. We

value the feedback we get from our members in smaller community ski areas as much as we do from those in destination resorts. This feedback - from all areas - is what shapes our strategic direction.

The entire CWSAA team shares this commitment to engage with our stakeholders - from helping out in a member's rental shop during the busy Christmas period to facilitating the development of marketing plans.

Our members, and their guests, experienced a wide range of conditions this season. This is the nature of our industry. Whatever the conditions, CWSAA's staff and board members remain available to support our members and their guests' experience.

Finally, thank you for your ongoing support of OUR association. I hope you have an amazing conference and I, along with my fellow CWSAA Board members, look forward to spending some quality time with you in Lake Louise!

Sincerely,

Steve Paccagnan
Board Chair, Canada West Ski Areas Association
President & CEO, Panorama Mountain Resort



Message from the President Christopher Nicolson

Association leadership is about service. To be effective, it's vital that the organization's actions are aligned to advance the interests of its stakeholders. Thanks to the Board's vision and our dedicated office team, I was enabled to visit over 70 CWSAA ski areas this year. We also engaged directly with all ski areas and many associate members through calls, visits, meetings, and electronic communication. The most educative visits were those where we met management and staff in the maintenance shops, pump houses, rental shops, and other parts of the operation.

The questions asked during these visits probed the challenges of our industry, and helped us define how CWSAA best serves our membership. The answers revealed five strategic priorities, which were presented and approved by the CWSAA Board of Directors in July 2016. They include:

1. Safety and Risk Management
2. Government Advocacy
3. Industry Development
4. New Skier and Rider Development
5. Culture & Communication

As Steve mentioned in his message, safety and risk management is the key focus for CWSAA and its members. Active government advocacy is essential to ensuring we have a favourable operating environment from a policy and regulatory perspective. The goal of our industry development activity is to ensure all members have the

opportunity to engage in best practices. New skier and rider development requires that we begin to see ourselves as an important piece of Canada's national social fabric, and in turn, redefine how guests and potential guests view skiing and snowboarding so that we can attract the next generation of skiers and riders. And, finally, our organizational culture is shaped by the interaction with our members and stakeholders. It celebrates the interdependence of all areas large and small. And it is judged by not only what we say and do, but by how we do it.

CWSAA is united by a common spirit of gliding down mountains and river valleys. As an industry we are fortunate to be surrounded by great leaders. We are indebted to many that serve our industry, from the volunteer board of directors to the many committee members and champions both quiet and vocal that comprise our industry...thank you for your service. It is under one unified banner that we will successfully propel our industry into the decades ahead.

Cheers,

Christopher



Christopher Nicolson
President and CEO
Canada West Ski Areas Association

Advocacy

CWSAA undertakes advocacy activities aimed at maintaining and establishing a favourable policy and regulatory environment for its members and the industry as a whole. CWSAA works with individual members and the regions to identify existing challenges and potential threats related to policy and regulation. Advocacy is directed at various levels of government and other external stakeholders whose activities do or might have an impact on Western Canadian ski business.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Family Day - While there have been calls to align BC's Family Day with those of other provinces by moving it from the second to the third week of February, CWSAA is advocating to keep BC's Family Day in the second week. CWSAA continues to articulate to the provincial government the incremental value of spreading the visitor load, which is already heavy during the third week of February due to the US Presidents' Day and the other provincial holidays.

Lift Safety - CWSAA and ski areas are committed to staff and guest safety. All believe lift safety requirements must be effective and implementable. CWSAA has been working hard with BC Safety Authority on best practices and education to achieve these goals

WorkSafeBC - CWSAA continues to work closely with WorkSafeBC to increase performance, share best practices, and control premiums. To the industry's credit, the investment of time and senior management focus on new initiatives over the last couple of years is paying dividends. The Certificate of Recognition program is now an active component of many ski area management plans and CWSAA is monitoring its evolution.

Adventure Tourism Strategy - CWSAA and HeliCat Canada worked closely over the past year as part of a 18-sector Adventure Tourism coalition, and developed an Adventure Tourism Strategy to share with the provincial government. Co-chaired by Dave Butler and Brad Harrison, the coordinated effort resulted in praise from government ministers, and government commitment of a senior official to work with industry to advance issues relating to topics such as land tenure, government process, and user group alignment.

Accommodation Tax - CWSAA worked with the BC Hotel Association and others to advocate for equitable taxation between large and small accommodators. The request would remove a tax exemption for properties of less than four rooms. The incremental funds would be directed to destination marketing efforts. It is also anticipated that some private nightly rental units would return to long-term rental and help alleviate staff accommodation shortages.

BC Parks Fees - Ski areas within BC Parks have nearly concluded a process that aligns crown fees with all other areas in the province. CWSAA has been advocating for a favourable start date of these new terms.



Andy Cohen

BC-Yukon Division Chair
General Manager
Fernie Alpine Resort / RCR

Advocacy

ALBERTA ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Energy Costs - CWSAA members feel unfairly burdened by annual energy rates being based on a brief seasonal period of maximum load and consumption during snowmaking season. CWSAA is actively building upon its successful Fortis model to find a similar relief through other carriers and the Alberta Utilities Commission.

Carbon Tax Incentives - CWSAA is advocating for carbon tax incentives, similar to those afforded the agricultural industry. The ski industry will present a case for incentives given its role of providing outdoor physical activity and health benefit to Alberta communities.

Alberta Tourism Funding - CWSAA has aligned itself with like-minded partners supporting continued and increased Travel Alberta funding. Funding for the ski sector helps Alberta balance its seasonal tourism revenues, diversifies the overall economy, and benefits communities throughout the province.

Employment Standards & Labour

Code Review - Collectively with other Alberta tourism and business associations, CWSAA is relaying its concerns to government regarding the anticipated cost and impact of the proposed changes. During a down economy, new carbon tax, increasing wages, and intense global competition, government is being asked to consider

the sudden impact of these combined changes to the province's economy.

Room and Board Costs - CWSAA is continuing work with stakeholders in other industries to encourage the provincial government to permit an increase in employee lodging rates province-wide. Our members remain committed to balancing their need to operate viable employee accommodation programs with the employee experience.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

Workforce - Attracting and maintaining employees is the single largest challenge shared by our members from Manitoba to British Columbia. In partnership with go2HR, BC Chamber, TIABC, and various hotel associations, CWSAA submitted a report to the federal government with recommendations related to programs that affect our ability to attract seasonal workers.

Avalanche Explosives Storage -

Natural Resources Canada's National Explosives Regulatory Division imposed new storage regulations that did not take into account the unique situation of the ski industry. CWSAA worked with others, including the Canadian Avalanche Association, to have these regulations suspended. The coalition continues to work on a permanent remedy.



Andre Quenneville
Alberta Manitoba
Saskatchewan Division Chair
General Manager
Mt. Norquay



Safety & Risk

Safety and Risk Management are fundamental priorities for CWSAA members and the industry as a whole. In addition to an ongoing emphasis on safety and risk management, such as helmet safety and mountain signage, CWSAA members have identified emerging safety and risk management issues that require a thoughtful approach.

Concussion Safety - CWSAA has developed a position statement that acknowledges concussion as a reality within our industry. CWSAA has encouraged members to employ concussion protocols, and train all employees in concussion awareness.

Fentanyl - In light of the recent surge in opioid overdoses in Canada, CWSAA took a proactive approach to educating the industry about the dangers of fentanyl. Resources were actively presented and shared with members to arm staff and guests with knowledge of the epidemic.

Mountain Bike Responsibility Code - CWSAA is working with stakeholders in Canada and the US to align messages and share wording on a common code.

School Liability - The engagement of children in skiing and snowboarding is important to the sustainability of this industry. The current legal climate has turned school officials in many jurisdictions against activity with any level of risk. Under Robert Kennedy's leadership, CWSAA, with partner ski areas and insurers, have embarked on a pilot project in BC to develop industry best practices that address school authority concerns. These practices incorporate topics such as indemnity for school authorities and duty of care.



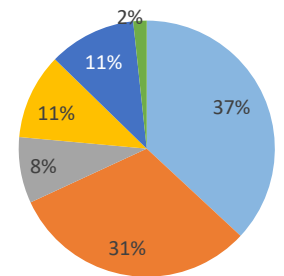
Ryan Stimming
Safety & Risk Management Chair

Financial Overview

For detailed Financial Statements please see the CWSAA Members Only website or contact our office.

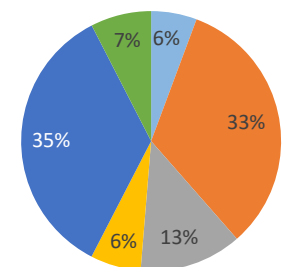
CWSAA is in a strong cash position. There was a nominal deficit of approximately \$6,000 for the 2016/17 operating year. This shift was due to an increase in expenses as a result of a variety of member engagement and advocacy initiatives.

Revenues



- Competitor Pass Program
- Conference & Div Meetings
- Grade 4/5 Snowpass
- Regular Membership Dues
- Associate Membership Dues
- Misc revenues

Expenses



- Competitor Pass Program
- Conference & Div Meetings
- Office, Financial & Admin
- Programs & Advocacy
- Salaries and Benefits
- Travel & Directors' Expenses



New Skier & Rider Development

Learn to Ski & Ride Initiatives - CWSAA is proactively working with members and stakeholders across the country to facilitate strategies aimed at increasing participation in skiing and snowboarding and cement its place in the national mosaic. Key strategies include championing the Grade 4/5 Snowpass and Never Ever Days programs, which are led by the Canadian Ski Council.

Schools Strategy - CWSAA is working to support and maintain the longstanding tradition of school group excursions to Canadian ski areas. In addition to the pilot project of best practices, CWSAA and its national colleagues have developed a narrative that articulates the physiological and social reasons why it is important for children to engage in skiing and snowboarding. This introduces the inherent benefits of skiing and riding to parents, schools, and education authorities.



Robert Kennedy (Farris, Vaughan, Wills & Murphy LLP) & Eddie Wood (Mount Seymour Resorts) preparing an industry strategy to increase school visits.

New Canadians - CWSAA is keen to facilitate the development of strategies aimed at attracting new Canadians to the sport. Incorporating images of participant diversity has commenced. However an orchestrated effort will take shape in 2017/18.

Marketing Programs

CWSAA supports its members ski areas marketing initiatives by coordinating programs that enable ski areas access to provincial cooperative tourism funding.

Go Ski Alberta aims to grow the participation in snow sports in Alberta. All ski areas in Alberta have the opportunity to participate in this digital marketing program, which is cost-shared by Travel Alberta. This year the marketing efforts embraced the new Never Ever Days program.

BC Destination Co-op Marketing Programs include Alpine, Nordic and Heli/Cat sector initiatives. This year nearly \$1.2 million was invested by ski areas and Destination BC in these campaigns. For the first time Helicopter and Cat skiing operators also had the opportunity to participate.





Industry Development

The objective of industry development activities is to advance the best practices of our industry at all member's ski areas and to provide solutions to industry challenges. This is undertaken through training, working sessions and informal networking. Industry best practices are also presented in manuals. Formal opportunities for members to engage in industry development activities occur at the annual CWSAA spring conference and fall division meetings. The agendas are developed based on the requests and recommendations of members and working committees. These sessions provide valuable opportunities to challenge the status quo and encourage innovation.



Christopher Nicolson (CWSAA), Paul Pinchbeck (CSC), Yves Juneau (ASSQ)
CWSAA has fostered close cooperation with industry peers.

Culture & Communication

CWSAA strives to maintain an organizational culture that encourages member engagement. Every point of contact helps build that culture. Emphasis has been placed on visits to members. Also, significant changes have been made to CWSAA communication channels needed to facilitate member engagement. These include a new newsletter and website. The website offers an increased

opportunity for Associate Member exposure and immediate analytics. Active social media channels, The Canada West Way industry blog, and direct email notifications provide additional engagement opportunities.

CWSAA actively engaged with other industry stakeholders by attending and presenting at meetings and conferences, including the Canadian Ski Council, peer ski area associations (NSAA, OSRA, ASSQ), HeliCat Canada, Canadian Ski Patrol, CSIA, and the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing. Each represents a valued partner in our diverse industry. CWSAA has also attended conferences and meetings for stakeholders aligned with our industry, including tourism and hospitality associations.

Integrating with other stakeholders serves the purpose of aligning our industry, and building strong partnerships and a common voice for advocacy.



CWSAA Team:

Christopher Nicolson, Cynthia Thomas, Dawn Sleiman, Bruno Graziotto

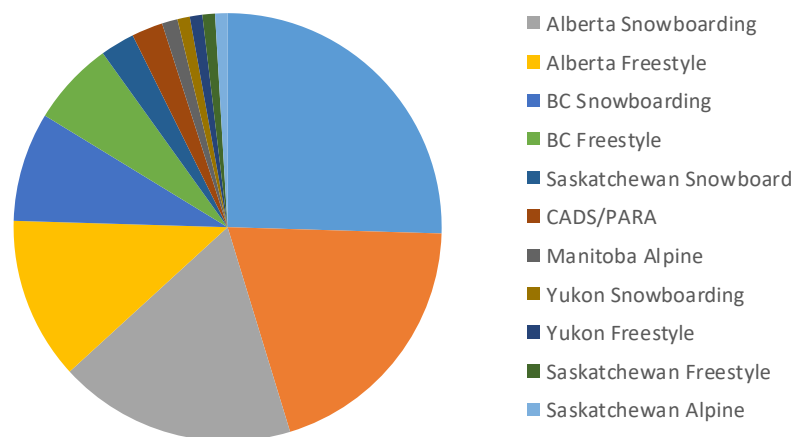
Competitor Pass

Young ski and snowboard athletes competing with the vision to one day represent Canada in Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Championships or World Cups, have the opportunity to apply for the CWSAA All Areas Competitor Pass. The pass enables eligible athletes and coaches access to Western Canada's ski and snowboard resorts for the purpose of training and competition.

In 2016/17, 424 athletes and coaches participated in the program.

*Special thanks to **Stewart Laver** of Sunshine Village for coordinating this program.*

2016/17 DISTRIBUTION OF PASSES

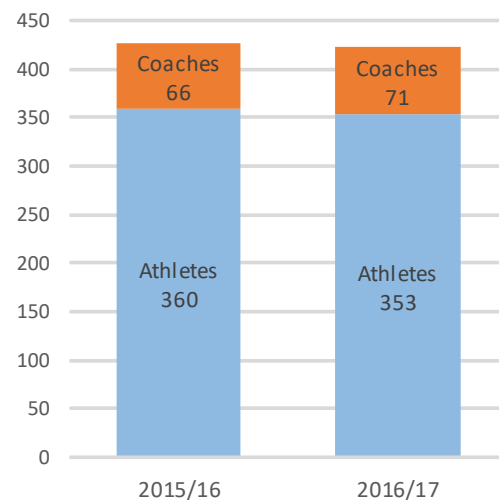


SROAM



This spring, CWSAA welcomes to our industry 20 new graduates from the **Selkirk College** Ski Resort Operations and Management program.

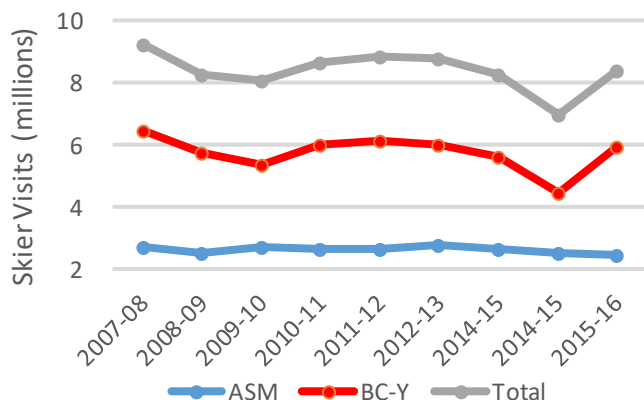
COMPARISON OF PASSES SOLD TO LAST YEAR



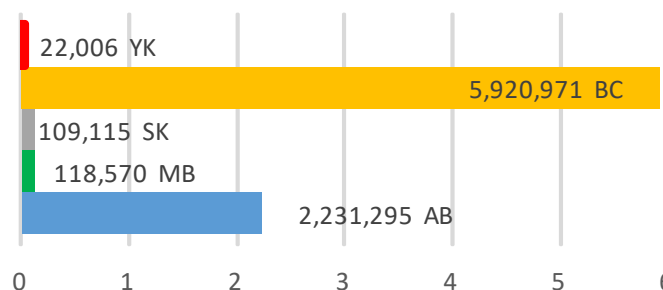
Industry Performance

2016/17 ski area visits are not available at the time of printing. Projected results will be presented at the CWSAA Spring Conference. The graphs below illustrate past visits by province and as a combined total.

HISTORICAL ALPINE SKIER VISITS



2015/16 SKIER VISITS BY PROVINCE (in millions)



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