



Background for CWSAA 50th Spring Conference Dates: April 24 – 26, 2018

Over the past year, CWSAA has refined its conference planning and scheduling process. It seeks to align its events to allow the maximum number of ski area and associate members participants. CWSAA is working closely with its peer Canadian and US industry organisations to complement dates and avoid overlap. This has been achieved with the most critical conferences as cited by CWSAA members, but regrettably does not eliminate all overlap, most notably with PNSAA for two out of the next three years. The following provides a snapshot of considerations reviewed by the Board and staff for future conference scheduling.

Strategy

As per member feedback, CWSAA members desired the spring conference to rotate locations every two years. CWSAA must also now sign contracts with host venues 24 months prior to arrival. This is required due to advance market demand for venues with suitable space for 500 delegates and trade show. CWSAA has currently received bids for 2019 & 2020, and is working on 2021 & 2022 options.

Considerations for venue and scheduling

- Venue requirements:
 - local mountain support
 - adequate space for trade show, meals, and break out events
 - favourable accommodation rates
 - reasonable food and beverage prices
 - air and highway access to a central location relative to entire membership
- CWSAA conference supports a combined Mountain Operations (lift, vehicle, operations) stream and a Resort Services (safety risk management, marketing, HR, etc) stream of content. This requires support from nearby ski areas to host hand-on workshops.
- CWSAA tries to accommodate an east / west balance for the health of the organisation and encourage attendance from all stakeholders
- CWSAA tries to schedule its conference after the end of most, but not all (eg: Louise, Sunshine, Whistler), ski area operations. It is best scheduled ahead of May 1st as some ski area members start engaging in other operations like farming and forestry (both common to smaller CWSAA ski areas personnel)
- Interlpin/Mtn Planet and NSAA have set dates to 2021. NSAA dates range widely and have included weekends to accommodate space and preferred rates for 800 delegates. Weekend dates are used by NSAA. When asked at 2017 CWSAA conference, associate members clearly did not like weekend dates. In addition, CWSAA delegates include management and staff. Feedback from ski areas suggest that most areas have just completed a winter of working weekends, and favoured shoulder season work commitments (eg: conference) to be placed mid-week.
- NSAA usually has technical committee meetings involving some CWSAA members one and two days in advance of the NSAA conference (ie: conflict with some CWSAA members)
- Easter is a factor. When it falls late in April compacts the time frames.
- ASSQ and OSRA moved their conference dates late in May to avoid conflicts...so if CWSAA moved to that period we could conflict with them.

Based on member feedback, CWSAA has identified a priority of alignment with other industry conferences. That is, members want to avoid overlap with the following events (listed by priority):

1. InterAlpin / Mountain Planet
2. NSAA
3. RMLA
4. PNSAA
5. Heli Cat Canada / Avalanche Canada
6. SAVMI
7. ASSQ / OSRA (end of May)

Future CWSAA Spring Conference Dates (Proposed)

- 2019 Wednesday April 24 – Friday April 26
- 2020 Monday April 27 – Wednesday April 29
- 2021 Monday April 26 - Wednesday April 28** (subject to InterAlpin)

Conclusion

CWSAA recognises the challenges imposed on some ski areas and associate members to attend spring conference due to location and schedule conflicts. It also believes its efforts have achieved accommodating the interests of the vast majority of members. The spring conference remains as one of the most important endeavours within the industry to share vital safety and risk management practises, network with peers, and advance the industry. As 2018 represents the 50th annual spring conference for the organisation, the Chateau Lake Louise promises to provide a remarkable venue for this celebration.

Thank you for your support.

Debbie Muirhead, Associate Director
CWSAA Board of Directors