CALEDONIA
NORDIC • SKI • CLUB

P.O. Box 1243,
Prince George BC, V2L 4V3
PHONE/FAX 250.564.3809

General Manager Report | 2025–26

John Bowes, General Manager

What a year at Caledonia Nordic. When I look back, the thing that stands out most is the incredible team of people behind everything we do. Our staff, coaches, program coordinators, grooming and snowmaking team, Board members and volunteers put a tremendous amount of time and energy into making this a great place for our members and visitors. The off season has also grown, with more programs and events bringing people to the club throughout the year.

It was not an easy winter. January brought rain, warm temperatures and changing trail conditions. Plans had to change, sometimes with very little notice. Our team kept working to provide the best skiing we could, keep programs going and prepare for events. A lot of that work happened early in the morning, late at night or behind the scenes, and I am incredibly grateful for it.

I also want to give a huge thank you to our members. We have an amazing community. People stop to visit on the trails, families spend time together, volunteers show up when we need help, and there always seems to be someone willing to lend a hand. Our members are a big part of what makes Caledonia Nordic such a fun place to be.

Building community through events and communication

One of the things I enjoyed most this year was seeing people spend more time at the club. B&E Eats helped make the lodge a busy place on winter weekends, where people could have lunch, warm up after a ski and visit with friends. It has become a great part of the Caledonia Nordic experience.

Youth Ski Free Day, Winterfest and our Family Day skis gave new visitors a chance to try the trails, meet people and get to know the Caledonia Nordic community. Our annual Brewski brought another group of skiers to the club for a fun day together. We work hard to offer events throughout the year that give everyone a reason to come out and take part. A big thank you to our events team and volunteers for making these days so memorable.

We also tried new ways to bring people together. Our outdoor music night turned the biathlon range into a venue for Rabbit Soup and Danny Bell & His Disappointments. Working with the Prince George Cycling Club, we hosted the first Caledonia Criterium on the paved trails. These events showed us more ways to bring people to Caledonia Nordic, and we look forward to growing them in the future.

With so much happening, communication remains important. We will continue to use our newsletters, website and social media to keep members informed about trails, programs, events and opportunities to get involved.

Growing year-round opportunities

The paved trail network has changed what we can offer through spring, summer and fall. It was busy with roller skiing, cycling, camps, training and community use. We celebrated its official opening in July and then hosted an IBU roller ski biathlon event. Seeing athletes race on trails that were an idea only a few years ago was pretty exciting.

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Our Land Based Learning program welcomed Kindergarten to Grade 7 classes in May and June. Developed with Lheidli T'enneh and the School District 57 Indigenous Education Department, it is an important part of our partnership with the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation community. It was wonderful to see students learning outside at Caledonia Nordic. The Programs Report shares more about their experiences.

Working with staff and volunteers

Peter Hoffman and our full grooming and snowmaking team will be returning this winter. I could not be happier to have them back. They worked through difficult conditions to give members and visitors the best skiing experience possible, and they will be ready to do it again.

Aaron O'Hearn continues to take on a larger role in the day-to-day operation of the club. He cares deeply about giving our members the best experience possible, and I appreciate the attention he brings to all the details that make a visit to Caledonia Nordic a good one. Carolyn Thorp is our School Ski Coordinator and quite possibly everyone's favourite person at the club. She and her amazing team of instructors make each school visit a positive experience for students and teachers.

Nicole Vaillancourt plans our events and organizes CANSI lessons with her teams of volunteers and instructors. Lisa Connor keeps our website and social media up to date, and she makes everything we share look great. Belinda Hanlon was our Skills Development Program Coordinator and, together with her coaches, did an amazing job adapting to the many weather challenges this winter. Judy Addie and her volunteers brought Explore More to life for our seniors. Gabby Hoehn led our spring and summer bike camps with a great group of young coaches, and also led Land Based Learning in the spring. Each of them brings so much care and energy to their work.

Ali Cadell and Tuppy Hoehn provide strong leadership for our athletes, and we are very happy to have Beth Hillhouse returning to support Track Attack with help from the National Winter Sport Development Association. Our instructors, seasonal staff and volunteer coaches put in a tremendous amount of work too. So much of it happens before anyone arrives for a lesson, camp or training session, and I really appreciate it.

Our volunteers deserve special recognition. From coaching and School Ski to race officiating, events, trails and Board work, they answer the call again and again. We simply could not operate Caledonia Nordic without them.

Competitions and club planning

We hosted the BC Teck Cup and the Western Canadian Biathlon Championships this past season. Events like these bring athletes, families and visitors to Prince George, but they also ask a great deal of our staff, officials, grooming and snowmaking team and volunteers. I am proud of the reputation this team has built for putting on great events.

We have also changed how we budget for major competitions so event budgets contribute to facility use, grooming and snowmaking. That better reflects the work and resources required to host them. We continue to pursue grants and plan for the equipment, facilities and accessibility improvements the club will need in the years ahead. The Facilities Report outlines the projects completed and those coming next.

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Looking ahead and giving thanks

This winter we look forward to the first season on the new dog trails, the return of the Two Rivers Loppet, more programs and time together in the lodge, and the Canadian Biathlon Championships in March 2027. There is a lot to prepare for, but we have a great team to do it.

I have been part of Caledonia Nordic for many years, and the staff team we have built means a great deal to me. This work can be challenging. I see the care, long hours and good humour everyone brings, especially when plans change. I truly appreciate the people I get to work alongside and all that we have built together. Thank you to our members, coaches, volunteers, Board members, sponsors and community partners for being part of it.