



DURANGO NORDIC



Photo: Frank Mapel

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

WHO WE ARE

We are a community of outdoor enthusiasts. We are Nordic skiers and snowshoers. We celebrate the solitude and stark beauty of a winter's day and the joy of moving over snow through our own power. We are beginners, recreationalists, elite athletes, kids, team members, lifelong learners, coaches, instructors, and friends.

We are Durango Nordic.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's been over a year since I started in this new position with Durango Nordic, and I'm grateful to all of you for reconfirming my hunch that this community was going to be warm, welcoming, and passionate about winter and snow! It's been a pleasure to meet many of you at the Durango Nordic Center, including both long-time supporters and those of us new to the area. This past season was a busy and exciting learning time for me, as we saw a record number of season pass holders, a busy holiday week, and well-attended events throughout the season.



Highlights included the 4Corners Riversports Red Hot Relay at the end of January, where we raised over \$12,000 to support our team and youth programs, a partnership with San Juan Mountains Association to lead snowshoe hikes at our Full Moon Howlers, and the U-14 Festival in early March, which we co-hosted with Southwest Nordic in Los Alamos, NM. The team also traveled to Junior National Qualifying races all over Colorado with Head Coach Evan Elliot, where they enjoyed solid performances and fun with their teammates. School and senior groups from Durango also visited the Nordic Center throughout the season, and our Masters programs were more popular than ever, including a record number of folks signed up for beginner instruction.

As we plan for the 2022-2023 season, we are excited to share a number of improvements with you. With funding support from our community and the La Plata Electric Association Round Up grant program, and the initiative from Helen Low, Center Director, we were able to purchase a new UTV and associated grooming equipment to further improve our already-excellent grooming. Many Nordic areas are moving towards replacing snowmobiles with UTVs because of their versatility and ability to execute a high-quality groom, even when snow conditions are not ideal in the early and late seasons. We are also excited to launch our new e-commerce platform, co-designed with us by The Flybook in Bend, OR, and funded through the Community Foundation of Southwest Colorado's Community Emergency Relief Fund activated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are also in the midst of a strategic planning process, where we are re-working our mission, vision, and core values, envisioning the potential to evolve Durango Nordic into a year-round community asset, and ensuring that our current programs and facilities are welcoming, inclusive, and supportive to all members of our community. As always, we want to extend a hearty thanks to our generous sponsors, partners, donors, volunteers, and everyone in our community for your ongoing support of Durango Nordic!

See you on the trails!
Lydia

DNOSC UPDATES

NEW ONLINE E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

This year, we've updated our online e-commerce platform. We now are using The Flybook, a company based in Bend, OR, to improve user experience when purchasing passes and programs and/or booking rentals and lessons.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND BYLAWS UPDATES

Durango Nordic is in the midst of a five-year strategic planning process in the priority areas of operations & infrastructure, team & youth programs, activities & amenities, events, land stewardship, and organizational capacity. We anticipate completing our strategic plan process by the end of 2022.

CONTINUED TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Nordic Center Manager, Helen Low, continues to spearhead trail improvement projects with the generous support of AJ Construction. We also purchased a UTV and associated grooming equipment to support our ongoing commitment to excellent grooming!

ONGOING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We are grateful for the generosity, enthusiasm, and support we receive from our sponsors, donors, partners, volunteers, members, and trail users to make the Durango Nordic Center a community asset to be enjoyed for generations to come. We could not do this without you!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Holcomb, President
Terryll Peterson, Treasurer
Daniel Murray, Secretary
Jen Garvey
Benjamin Mitchell
Moira Montrose Compton

STAFF

Lydia Lawhon, Executive Director
Evan Elliott, Head Coach
Helen Low, Nordic Center Manager
Jesse Guglielmo, Lead Trail Groomer
Chip White, Trails & Maintenance

The Durango Nordic Ski Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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Photo by Frank Mapel

OUR IMPACT

SEASON PASSES SOLD

350

DAY PASSES SOLD

3,000

RACE ENTRIES

303

38

SNOWBURNERS

78

JUNIORS

46

MASTERS

SKATE CLINIC PARTICIPANTS

77

LESSONS TAUGHT

152+

SKI & SNOWSHOE RENTALS

~600

85

U14 FESTIVAL REGISTRANTS

64

BIGGEST COKE RACE YET REGISTRANTS

60

HOWLS AT THE FULL MOON

GROOMING HOURS

450

KILOMETERS GROOMED

2,000



FINANCIALS

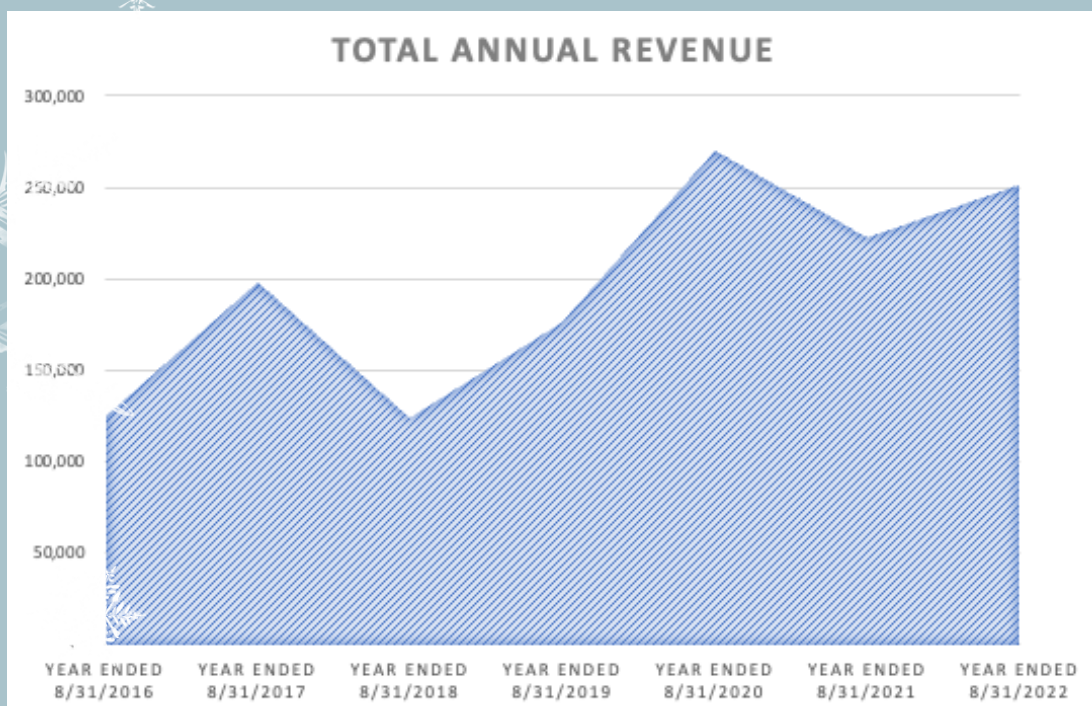


Our fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31. Our revenue has varied over the past several years. 2021-2022 was very strong for program revenue as well as revenue from Durango Nordic Center operations, including day and season passes, lessons, and rentals.

Durango Nordic plans for a balanced budget – being conservative with our expenses – and fundraising through grantwriting, donations, and sponsorships to meet our needs beyond basic operations. We build cash reserves for specific projects prior to initiating them to ensure the long-term financial health of the club. We also maintain a cash reserve for operating expenses should circumstances require it (e.g., a poor snow year.) We are proud to say that we are continuing to serve the Nordic community with a variety of events and programs and have a solid financial base from which we operate.



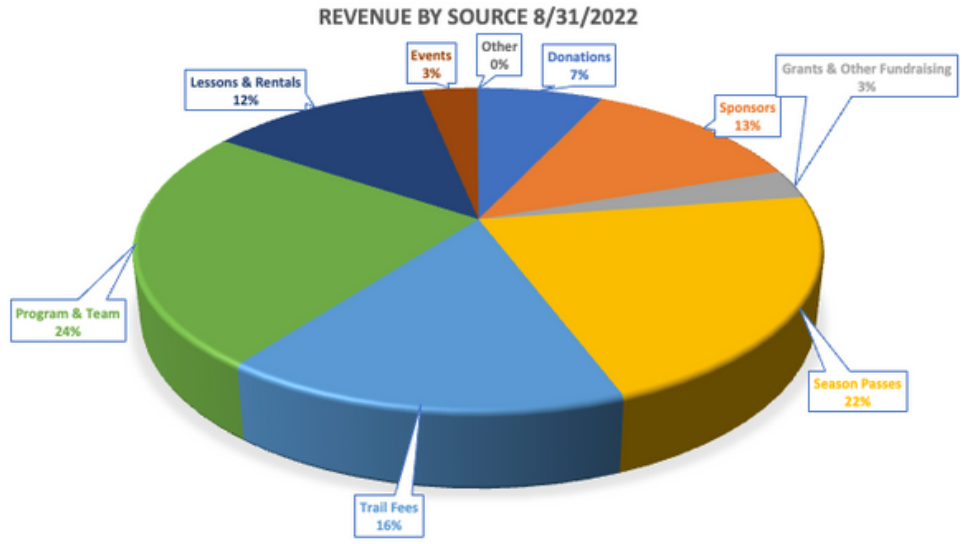
Photo by Lydia Lawhon



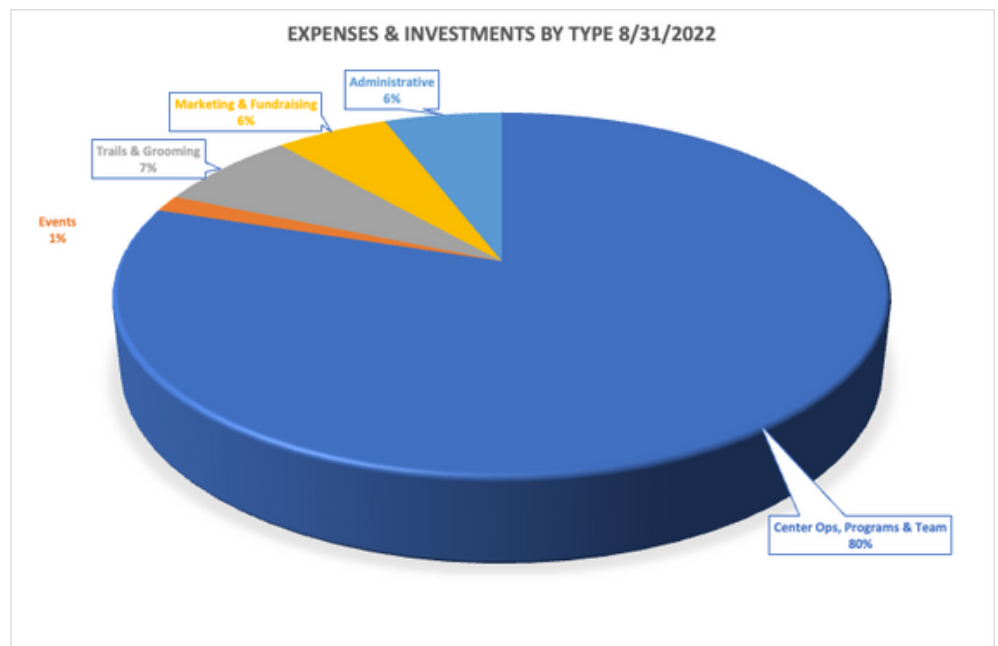


Photos by Lydia Lawhon

INCOME



EXPENSES & INVESTMENTS



TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

We have an exciting new update for this season for aficionados of the northern trails who like to ski forever! We are currently building a new trail adjacent to the North Pole, across the highway from Cascade Village. The new trail will be about one kilometer in length. Huge thanks to Chip White, Brent Brown, Helen Low, Jeanne Pastore, Tim Thomas, and Mitch Dion for their work clearing the trail this past September.

AJ Construction is back for another year of importing dirt to level out our trails. They are currently working on the junction of the Fruit and North Loops, where they are bringing in crushed rocks to raise the level of the trail by around six feet in some places and create a smoother transition from the Fruit Loop, both for the climb to the north and for the climb towards Norton's Corner. The rocks will be topped with soil so we can replant grass to keep erosion at bay. If the weather is obliging, AJ Construction will continue their dirt work further south on the Fruit Loop to Triple Bypass Hill, where they will fill in the dip at the bottom of the hill and change the camber on the corners. If we are unable to get to that this fall it will happen next year.

MEET OUR NEW POLARIS RANGER

Many Nordic centers are transitioning to UTVs instead of snowmobiles for early and late season grooming. Because of the suspension on a snowmobile, when it is towing a Ginzu, which is a piece of equipment used to create tracks, it overcuts on rises and undercuts on dips. Our groomers have to constantly adjust the height of the cutting teeth. When using a UTV, this happens much less frequently. In spring conditions, the snowmobile leaves a deep rut from the two skis at the front, which means the groomers have to cut much deeper with the teeth than is optimal to ensure that ski ruts are not dangerous for skiers. Cutting deeper means the snow gets softer and melts quicker, which is not a good combination on warm days and when we have low snow cover! The UTV provides a far superior groom than a snowmobile. Finally, it is much easier to drive, more comfortable, and warmer than a snowmobile, which are all welcome bonuses on frigid mornings!



Thanks to the LPEA Round Up Foundation and our donors for supporting the acquisition of our new grooming equipment.

2021-2022 EVENT RECAP

We had a successful run of events this year, with several skate clinics, two Coke Races, three Alpine Bank Full Moon Howlers, the Pine Needle Langlauf, and the 4Corners Riversports Red Hot Relay, which is quickly evolving (after two years) into a fun Durango Nordic tradition and successful fundraiser for the team.

The Pine Needle Langlauf concludes the Rossignol Southwest Nordic Race Series, which also includes the Pagosa Nordic Season Opener, Chama Chili Classic, and Butch Cassidy Ski Chase in Telluride. Our Durango skiers rocked the series, with Brett Wilson and Missy Neagos earning the titles of King and Queen of the Southwest, respectively. Thanks to Rossignol, who provided the prizes for the Series, as well as all of our other event sponsors, including Coca Cola of Durango, McDonalds of Durango, 4Corners Riversports, Alpine Bank, Animas Orthopedic Associates, and Pine Needle Mountaineering. We also had a stellar show of support from local businesses for our events. All of our supporters can be found on our website at <https://www.durangonordic.org/sponsors>.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NORDIC MIKE ELLIOTT U14 FESTIVAL

On March 5-6, 2022, DNSC co-hosted the Rocky Mountain Nordic Mike Elliott U14 Festival with Southwest Nordic Ski Club (SWNSC). We were excited to have visitors from all over the region, including Winter Park, Summit County, Boulder, Aspen, Telluride, and Crested Butte! Athletes raced in the 3 km and 1.5 km distance Coke races on Saturday. Sunday was cold and stormy, which made the fun relay designed by Brent Brown even more challenging, with a slushy slalom course and final jump entertaining spectators as athletes raced down the home stretch.

Results can be found on our website (Blog > Coke Race #2 & U14 Festival). Thanks to all of the volunteers from Durango Nordic and SWNSC who helped to make this event a success!

Can you spot Mike Elliott? Photo provided by Clay Moseley



TEAM UPDATES

The theme this year for the youth and team programs is gratitude! We were fortunate to have a great snow season, which made for fun practices and stellar conditions for our events on our home trails, including the Coke races, Langlauf, and the Rocky Mountain Nordic Mike Elliott U14 Festival. The team also traveled to Junior National Qualifying (JNQ) races in Aspen, Winter Park, Frisco, and Minturn. Results from each JNQ are posted on our website (Our Club > Blog). Our goal is to grow the race team by prioritizing fun and goal-setting with athletes! DNSC coaching staff always show up with positive energy and a focus on ensuring training sessions are high quality.

As Head Coach, Evan Elliott, pointed out, "One of the most rewarding aspects of DNSC is that it feels like family and not just a program."



Vail JNQs, February 2022. Photo: Ben Mitchell

"Being at high elevation has helped my endurance, my running form has improved thanks to the gliding, my overall strength and confidence can be felt every time I go for a run. Durango Nordic set me up for a successful track season.

-Lacy Ruggiero, Cruisers

2021-2022 Coaches

Will Bodewes - Race Team
Mylie Lanier - Cruisers
Chad Mac Cluskey - Cruisers
Gunther Ott - Cruisers
Nick McKey - WACO

SUMMER PROGRAM RECAP

We had around 14 athletes participate in our summer training program this year. Evan Elliott, DNSC Head Coach, said, "It was really fun to see the excitement in the athletes. There are a number of Cruisers who are planning to move into the race team this upcoming winter. They also asked a ton of questions! The athletes really wanted to learn about everything around Nordic racing and during the training sessions, we dove deep into the inner workings of Nordic racing." The program was designed with maximum flexibility for kids and parents, where they could sign up for 2, 3, or 4 days of training each week, and commit to a minimum of two weeks and up to ten weeks over the course of the summer. Activities included running, hiking, mountain biking, and a hot afternoon favorite - stand up paddleboarding. As an added bonus, given the smaller group sizes each week, participation in the summer program supported the development of coach and athlete relationships.

SNOWBURNERS

Our littlest skiers arrived at the Nordic Center on Sunday mornings ready to play games, eat snowcones, look for magical beings in the woods, and learn some tips and tricks for Nordic skiing along the way. Our older 'burners now have the run of the trails, racing down hills and playing tag around Boyce Lake. The Snowburners program is so beloved by parents and kids that for the 2022-2023 season we are introducing "Afterburners" - a Snowburners group for kids in middle school who want to continue to ski with their friends on Sunday mornings!



2021-2022 Snowburners Coaches

Ken Armstrong
Katrina Blair
Kathleen Costello
Aiden Eisenhour
Buck Farley
Zoe Freeman
Hannah Garvey

Lorelei Hassel
Ava Hobby
Kim Hobby
Zach Ottman
Rob Trudeau
Brett Wilson

Photos: Ken Armstrong

MASTERS PROGRAMS



The Masters Programs continue to be a popular offering for adults looking to learn to ski or improve their skiing technique. This past year, we made a few changes to better meet participants' needs. First, we offered four-week beginner programs in January and February, which provided opportunities for new skiers to try out Nordic skiing without needing to commit to the entire winter. Then, given that a number of participants in the January beginner session were interested in continuing through the winter, we offered a new "advanced beginner" four-week program. This change resulted in about 15 new skiers at the end of the winter, which is twice as many as we've seen in the past. Several of our new skiers were racing or volunteering at races by the end of the winter!

Thanks to our dedicated Masters coaches: Jeanne Pastore (Beginner & Advanced Beginner), Hannah Mader (Enthusiast), Missy Neagos (Enthusiast) and Evan Elliott (Elite).



WE WANT TO EXTEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ANIMAS ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES FOR BEING THE PRESENTING SPONSOR OF OUR MASTERS PROGRAMS.

OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

In 2022, Durango Nordic embarked on a strategic planning process to update our mission, vision, and core values. We also identified the goals and objectives we want to prioritize in the next one-five years in the priority areas of youth & team programs, activities & amenities, operations & infrastructure, land stewardship, events, and organizational sustainability.

We are excited to share our mission, vision, and core values, which we feel reflect the organization's growth and potential, while remaining rooted in our history.

Mission

The Durango Nordic Ski Club provides opportunities for Nordic skiing and other human-powered outdoor recreation to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in Southwest Colorado while serving as a steward of our home in the heart of the San Juan Mountains.

Vision

We inspire enthusiasm and passion for Nordic skiing and snowshoeing in our community and with visitors to the region. We aspire to support athletes of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to strive towards their goals. We envision this unique destination in Southwest Colorado as a year-round recreational hub for trails, outdoor programs, and natural beauty.

Core Values

Expanding Community: We endeavor to be welcoming, inclusive, and supportive to all as our community grows, to honor our deeply-rooted history in sharing the joy of Nordic skiing and snowshoeing, and to foster lifelong friendships among outdoor enthusiasts.

Empowering Athleticism and Character Development: We celebrate the achievements of our young athletes on the Nordic team and our community members. We encourage kindness and good sportsmanship in all of our athletes.

Connecting to Nature: We offer a respite in our growing region to deepen a connection to the outdoors in the presence of the beautiful Twilight Peaks.

Stewarding our Resources: We commit to being environmental stewards as our passion for the outdoors relies on healthy and functioning ecosystems.

Promoting Health and Wellness: We provide the foundation for youth, individuals, and families to develop lifelong habits to support health and wellness through outdoor recreation.



Photo: Ken Armstrong

THANK YOU!

2020-2021 SUSTAINING SPONSORS



2020-2021 DONORS & PARTNERS

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Juanita Farrell
William Furbush
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*Partners**
AJ Construction
Ballantine Family Fund
Durango Mountain Masters Association
Durango Mountain Realty
Durango Trails
Fort Lewis College
Homewood Suites
Purgatory Metro District
Purgatory Ski Resort
San Juan National Forest

**Partners provide financial and/or in-kind support for capital investments, operations, and programs.*

IN MEMORIAM

It has been a tough year for the Durango Nordic community with the loss of several dedicated Nordic supporters and enthusiasts.

John Ott, our incredible Nordic community member, left us too soon on March 6, 2022. He will be lovingly remembered as a steadfast leader and board member for the Durango Nordic Ski Club for many years. John was a gregarious volunteer who always brought the largest chainsaw and the biggest bear hugs to every fall volunteer day, and engaged with every age participant with the same big smile and hellllllloooooo! John and Julie's three sons, Gunther, Abe & Stanton, participated in Nordic programs for many years. John wholeheartedly supported his sons' love of Nordic skiing, racing and coaching. John and the Ott family have had an incredible influence on DNSC, from selfless volunteering to organizing regular August team pond parties, and, snow permitting, grooming trails in the James Ranch pastures with hot cocoa served afterwards in the hunting tent. DNSC is forever grateful for the dedication that John Ott shared with all of us and we all miss his enthusiastic bear hugs!!!



Scott Gallagher had great enthusiasm for being outdoors with his wife and daughter. Scott's daughter, Gwen, became fond of Nordic skiing a few years ago and Scott followed suit. During Gwen's practices, you could often find Scott on the trail skiing, and like most of us, trying to understand how our children make it look so easy. Because of his love of the outdoors and his dedication to his families interests, many of us at DSNC were fortunate to enjoy Scott's optimistic attitude, wit, and contagious smile.

Jan Collins, who volunteered at the Nordic Center for many years, passed away this spring after a battle with cancer. She was an enthusiastic outdoorswoman and Nordic skier who was active with Seniors Outdoors. We also lost **Michael Hughes**, who joined us last winter as a volunteer at the Nordic Center. Michael welcomed visitors with his cowboy hat and big smile. We are grateful for their dedication and energy to Durango Nordic, and send our condolences to their friends and family.



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