



# DURANGO NORDIC



Red Hot Relay 2023. Photo: Frank Mapel

## ANNUAL REPORT

---

2022-2023

## 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

Wow, I'm still getting over what a great season it was for skiers here in Southwest Colorado. The Durango Nordic Center was open for more than 100 days given the abundant snowfall - from mid-December through the beginning of April. There was an epic snowslide (the playground kind) from the parking lot down to the bottom of the stairs for most of the winter. We had excellent conditions for our lineup of events and races, including two Coke races, the 4Corners Riversports Red Hot Relay (our annual youth programs fundraiser), two Alpine Bank Full Moon Howlers, and the Pine Needle Langlauf. We offered the option for a double-header at the last Coke race of the season, with 15 racers participating in both skate and classic races!



*Epic parking lot slide. Photo by Lydia Lawhon*

Our youth team traveled to Junior National Qualifying races in Colorado and Utah with Head Coach, Evan Elliot, where they enjoyed racing on different terrain and posted solid performances. School groups from Durango also visited the Nordic Center throughout the season, and we estimated that we had about 500 kids-on-skis days. Along with a record turnout for our Snowburners program, with around 55 participants, and consistent participation in our other youth programs, this season was tops for getting kids out on snow. The significant snowfall, as well as the extended season at Hillcrest, certainly helped too! **We are currently in the process of acquiring a 15-passenger van to provide transportation for our youth and families who cannot easily drive to the Nordic Center for practice or to races. If you are interested in supporting our fundraising efforts for the van, please contact me!**

This past season, we launched Miss Daisy into her career as a Nordic grooming machine. 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 purchased a new UTV and associated grooming equipment in the summer of 2022 to improve our ability to offer an excellent groom when we cannot use the snowcat due to snow quality or quantity, or maintenance issues. Read more about Miss Daisy's pilot year on p. 7.

On the administration side of things, we finalized our 5-year strategic plan in February, which we are excited to implement. This fall, we'll be reaching out to other Nordic clubs and centers around the country to learn more about their programs and operations in order to identify opportunities for us to grow as a community asset. We've also been working on the "back-end" of non-profit management to get our policies and procedures updated. And finally, we are grateful to Jen Garvey and Ben Mitchell for their time on the DNSC Board, and welcome Mitch Dion, Justin Jones, and Jeni Nicovich as Directors.

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

## STRATEGIC PLAN AND BYLAWS UPDATES

Durango Nordic completed a five-year strategic planning process in the priority areas of operations & infrastructure, team & youth programs, activities & amenities, events, land stewardship, and organizational capacity in early 2023. We also approved our updated bylaws.

## CONTINUED CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

Nordic Center Manager, Helen Low, continues to spearhead trail improvement projects with the generous support of AJ Construction. Last fall, with the help of several volunteers, we constructed a new 1 km trail off of the Forever Loop, named Rudolph's Run. There's also a new waxing bench available for public use at the Center building, thanks to the support of the Bank of Colorado. And finally, this past season was the first with our new fleet of classic skis!

## ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM

Our first season using our new online booking system, The Flybook, streamlined operations for staff on the backend and allowed us to upgrade our e-commerce sophistication. Look for continued improvements this season. Feedback is welcome!

## ONGOING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We are grateful for the generosity, enthusiasm, and support we receive from our sponsors, donors, partners, volunteers, passholders, 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  
Daniel Murray, Secretary  
Terryl Peterson, Treasurer  
Moira Montrose Compton  
Mitchell Dion  
Justin Jones  
Jeni Nicovich

## 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.

Mailing Address: 3302 E. Third Ave.  
Physical Address: 49786 US 550  
Durango, CO 81301  
970-385-2114 (winter only)  
[info@durangonordic.org](mailto:info@durangonordic.org)



Photo by Lydia Lawhon

# OUR IMPACT

SEASON PASSES SOLD

~390

DAY PASSES SOLD

2,000

TOTAL RACE ENTRIES

252

55

SNOWBURNERS

49

JUNIORS

46

MASTERS

SKATE CLINIC PARTICIPANTS

77

LESSONS TAUGHT

170

SKI & SNOWSHOE RENTALS

~600

15

COKE RACE #2 CLASSIC RACERS

80

HOWLS AT THE FULL MOON

~900

VOLUNTEER HOURS

GROOMING HOURS

~500

KILOMETERS GROOMED

~2,000

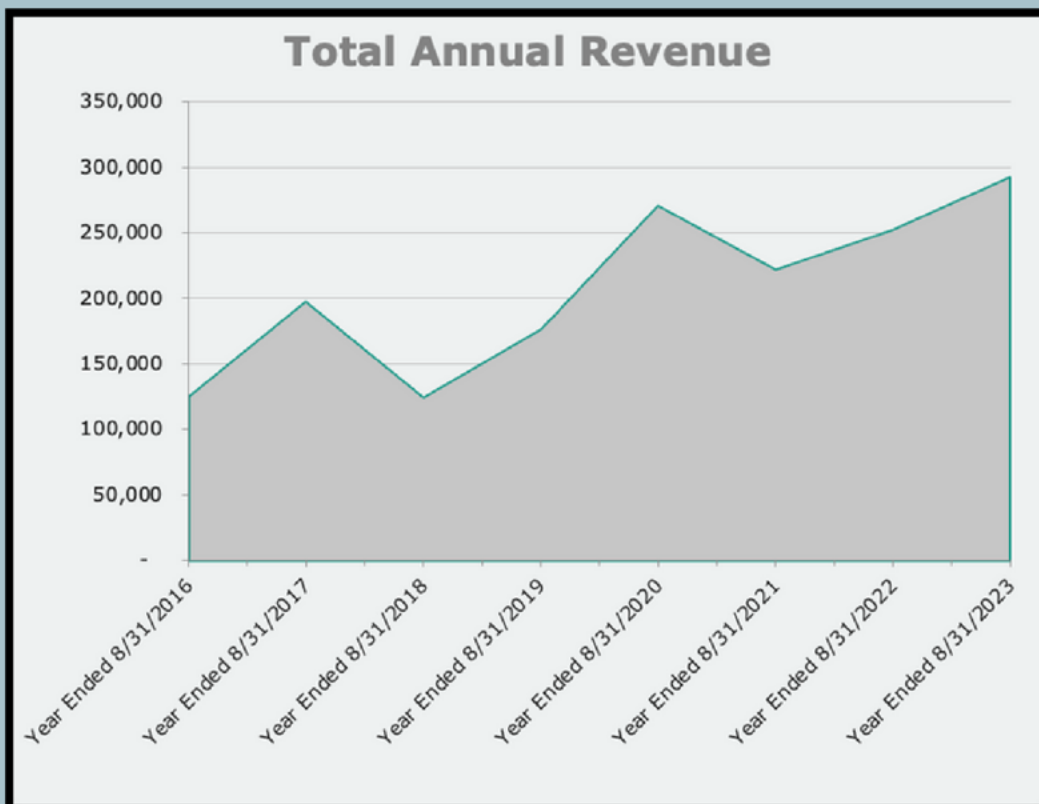
# FINANCIALS

Our fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31. 2023-2023 was an excellent year for revenue from Durango Nordic Center operations, including day and season passes, lessons, clinics, and rentals. We continue to see growth in lessons, rentals, and season passes, with this past season setting another record for season passholders. Our adult and youth program revenue holds steady, and we are investing in a part-time staff person to help us grow the team and youth program participants this upcoming season.

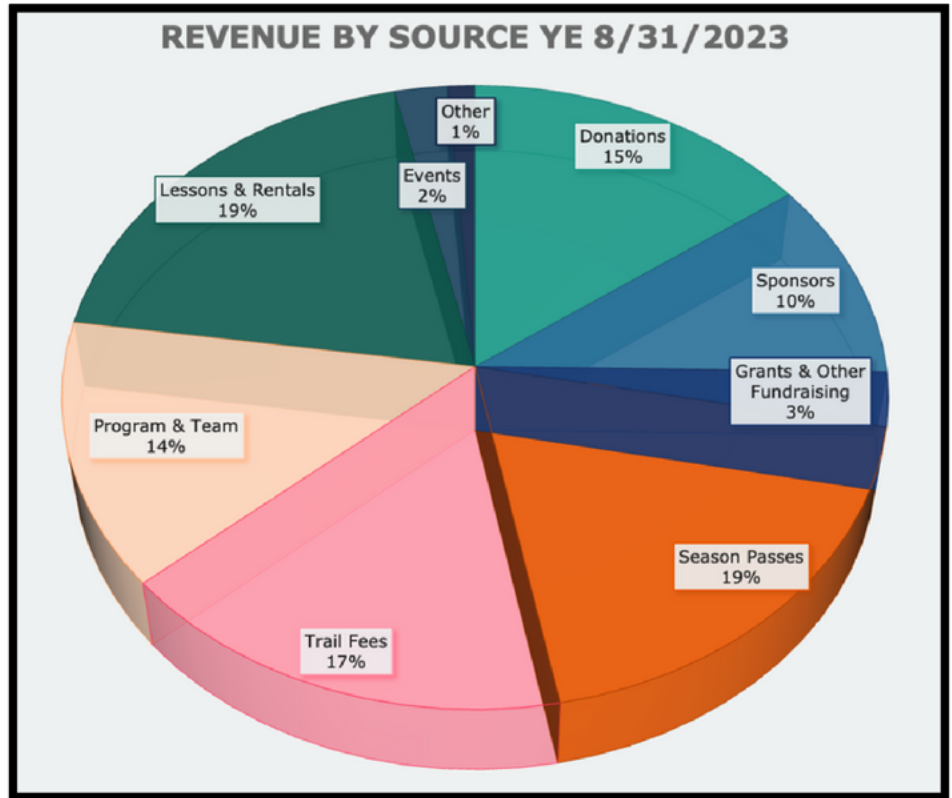
Durango Nordic plans for a balanced budget – being conservative with our expenses – and fundraising through grantwriting, donations, and sponsorships to meet our needs beyond basic operations. We build cash reserves for specific needs, such as equipment replacement, prior to initiating them to ensure the long-term financial health of the club. Finally, we maintain a cash reserve for six months of operating expenses should circumstances require it (e.g., a poor snow year).



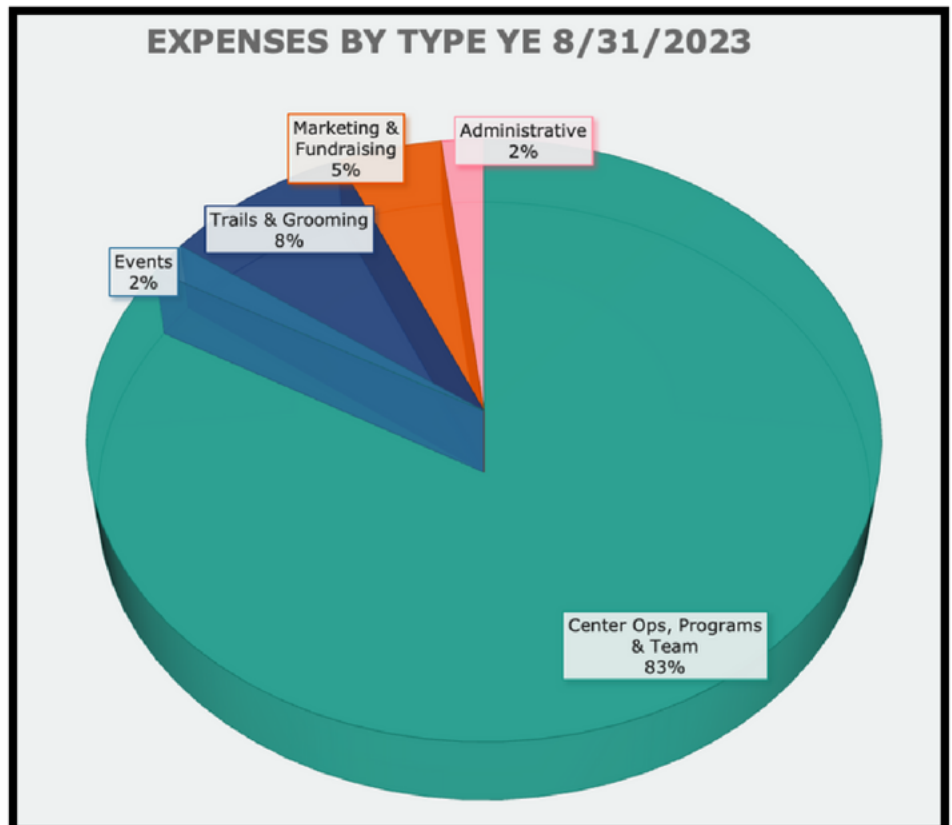
Photo by Lydia Lawhon



# INCOME



# EXPENSES



# TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

We are happy to report that we have received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to carry out maintenance on the trail into Boyce Lake, so our friends at AJ Construction returned to level the trail out and raise and realign the trail slightly at the low point before we climb into Boyce Lake. This will make it both much easier to groom and also much easier to ski as it will no longer be sloped to the side.

We are also building a new section of snowshoe trail, to make the trail more of a loop rather than an out and back. The new section of trail will be on the bench above the existing trail so will have fewer steep hills on it, and some superb views of the Twilights.

Last winter we were delighted with the work that AJ Construction completed last fall on the Fruit Loop. They bought in a significant amount of material to smooth out the junction between the Fruit and North Loops and ease the transition to Norton's Corner. And it skied really well! That was the final link which means we have now completed major trail work on all the trails on the top two levels closest to the highway, and that has really paid off for us in terms of extending our season. We were able to open our trails to the public last season with only about two feet of fallen snow which gave us a base of around 5 inches. Prior to doing any of the recent trailwork we needed about twice that amount of snow before we could groom the trails.


Our new Ranger UTV proved to be a useful tool to add to our toolbelt last winter. With a top speed of around 8mph, we affectionately named her Miss Daisy, as it was easy to drive around and wave at the same time! In the early season we used her to help pack the snow and create a base. During some of the bigger dumps of snow we really put her to the test and she proved more than capable of climbing the steepest hills we could find. With all the wonderful snow we had last winter we didn't need to use Miss Daisy to groom very often as we had enough coverage to run the snow cat, but during spring conditions we were pleased to find that the tracks stayed right on top of the snow without leaving a mark, so we needed to cut less with the teeth on the ginzu than with a snowmobile. The Ranger is also our new rescue machine. It is easier to drive than a snowmobile so our Nordic Center staff can use her to get to an injured skier on the trails.



*Left & bottom right: New trailwork on Boyce Lake climb; top right: Miss Daisy doing what she does best. Photos: Helen Low*

# LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# AJ Construction

INC.  
DURANGO, COLORADO

**Thanks to the LPEA Round Up Foundation & our donors for supporting the acquisition of our new grooming equipment and to AJ Construction for their ongoing support in improving our trails.**

# 2022-2023 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Our **Alpine Bank Full Moon Howlers** were exceptionally well-attended this year with community members and visitors alike! We are grateful to San Juan Mountains Association for their partnership in organizing this event, and their natural history expertise in guiding the ever-popular Full Moon Snowshoe Hike. We are excited to announce that Durango Nordic's Full Moon Howlers will be featured in Alpine Bank's 2024 Community Calendar! Look for us in January. The 2023-2024 Howler dates are:



- Tuesday, December 26, 2023
- Wednesday, January 24, 2024
- Saturday, February 24, 2024

We had two fun and competitive **Coke races** this past season, with a solid turnout for the adult and kids' distances. Our second Coke race of the season in March featured a "double-header" option, where skiers could participate in the skate race, change gear, and get out there again for a classic race! We plan to bring back a classic race option again this year for at least one race.

The **4Corners RiverSports Red Hot Relay** returned at the end of January to raise money for our youth team & youth programs. Course designer Brent Brown shook things up by sending racers CLOCKWISE on some of our favorite trails for the 3 km course. With about 15 teams competing, it was a strong group of amigos who took the lead, and in the end, the Trek Amigos triumphed over the Ski Amigos.

The **McDonald's Twilight Night race** returned at the end of January. It was a cold and clear evening for a snowshoe, skate, and fat bike race at the base of Purgatory. The fat bikers were out in force, and a few competitors tackled the Triathlon. Purgatory's stayed open for the afterparty. Thanks to Purgatory Ski Area, Durango Running Company, and Pedal the Peaks Durango for collaborating on this event!

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. Brett Wilson of Durango and Laura Spector of Los Alamos earned the titles of King and Queen of the Southwest, respectively. Thanks to Rossignol, who provided the prizes for the Series! We want to thank our sustaining sponsors for this event: Pine Needle Mountaineering and Brian Butzen/Animas Orthopedic Associates. 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>.



**Big thanks to all of our event volunteers who help us with course marshalling, timing, registration, start/finish line support, course setting, race announcing, and more! If you'd like to volunteer for DNSC this season, email [info@durangonordic.org](mailto:info@durangonordic.org).**

**We can't do it without you!**



# TEAM & YOUTH PROGRAMS UPDATES

Our youth programs encompass several different options for kids depending on their goals. We try to find an option for everyone, and we are always willing to mix and match depending on family preferences! With a renewed partnership with the Durango Winter Sports Foundation this season, we are also planning joint fundraising activities to fundraise for scholarships. Please inquire with us about scholarship opportunities!

Regarding the team, Head Coach Evan Elliott remarked, "It's exciting to see a small group of athletes and families embracing the racing side of Nordic. They are researching and learning this area of the sport without guidance. These families come to training season with an excitement and wanting to learn. It's fun for the club to regrow the race side of the program."

With such an amazing snow year for Durango, the team and other youth programs were able to take advantage of all the great opportunities to ski in the Four Corners area, but in particular, close to home at Hillcrest Golf Course. Hillcrest did an amazing job this season to have great grooming for the community and team to use. We are ever grateful for this resource to save time for Nordic skiers in our community. It opens up the opportunity to ski easier after school or on a lunch break from work.

Elliott concludes that, "Overall it was an amazing year for the program and center. The team had lots of success over the season and really grow a love of the sport for the athletes, leading into the 23/24 year with lots of promise and excitement."



*"The first time I went Nordic skiing I loved it. I really like being out in the snow. I really like working on my technique. It's such a cool sport."*

**Archer Nicovich,  
Youth Team**



Soldier Hollow JNQs, January 2023. Photo: Jeni Nicovich

## OVERVIEW OF DNSC YOUTH PROGRAMS

**Snowburners (Ages 5-14):** For kids to learn cross country skiing through fun and games in a non-competitive environment.

**Cruisers (Ages 8-14):** For elementary & middle school athletes who wish to have fun, be outside with friends, and develop their skills in a less competitive environment. This is the next step up for Snowburners who want to continue skiing but do not want to race.

**Nordies (Ages 7-18):** For the youngster who wants to get off the beaten path and use skiing as a way to venture out into the wilderness in a fun and safe environment on scaled touring or classic skis.

**W.A.C.O. (Ages 14-19):** For high-school athletes who wish to maintain fitness during the winter. This program is ideal for the competitive mountain biker, cross-country runner, or summer sports athlete who wants to remain fit during the snowy winter months.

**Race Program (Ages 8-19):** For competition-minded skiers who wish to reach their full potential. Athletes compete in Rocky Mountain Nordic (RMN) Junior National Qualifier (JNQ) races in Colorado and Utah.

### 2022-2023 Coaches

Evan Elliott - Head Coach

Abe Ott - Race Team

Mylie Lanier - Cruisers

Chad Mac Cluskey - Cruisers

Gunther Ott - Cruisers

Nick McKey - WACO

# SNOWBURNERS

Snowburners is our weekend program aimed at kids ages 5-13. This year we had a record number of kids skiing with us on Sundays, with nearly 60 across three different levels. Our littlest skiers arrived at the Nordic Center on Sunday mornings ready to look for magical beings in the woods, eat sno-cones, and conquer the hill back down to the Center. Our older 'burners raced down hills and played tag around Boyce Lake, working on their skills and having fun with friends.

The Snowburners program is so beloved by parents and kids that for the 2022-2023 season we introduced "Afterburners" - a Snowburners group for kids in middle school who want to continue to ski with their friends on Sunday mornings!

## 2022-2023 Snowburners Coaches

Ken Armstrong  
Katrina Blair  
Nola Burnite  
Kathleen Costello  
Jenny Dear  
Aiden Eisenhour  
Buck Farley  
Zoe Freeman  
Lilly Goltz

Miki Harder  
Lorelei Hassel  
Cathy Hearn  
Chad MacCluskey  
Zach Ottman  
Heinz Roethenmund  
Marina Roethenmund  
Donna Thormalen  
Brett Wilson



# 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 season, we continued to offer four-week beginner and advanced beginner programs in January and February, which provided opportunities for new skiers to try out Nordic skiing without having to commit to the entire winter. We anticipate changing up our Enthusiast group for 2023-2024 to the same format to give skiers the flexibility to commit to a shorter class, or sign up for all eight weeks. The Elite program will also see some modifications intended to prepare skiers for the Langlauf or another long-distance race.

Thanks to our dedicated Masters coaches: Jeanne Pastore (Beginner & Advanced Beginner), Emily McGrath (Enthusiast), Gunner Conrad (Enthusiast) and Evan Elliott (Elite).



THANKS TO MOREHART-MURPHY AUTO CENTER AS THE SPONSOR OF OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS AND ANIMAS ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES FOR SPONSORING 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!

## 2022-2023 SUSTAINING SPONSORS



## 2022-2023 DONORS & PARTNERS

Anonymous  
Abadie | Schill  
Nancy & Craig Agro  
Burl Applegate  
ASAP Accounting & Payroll  
Matthew Bernard  
Carl Bickford  
Brent, Cully, Lynn & Rogan Brown  
Helen & Greg Bruckbauer  
Catacombs Fitness Collective  
Tom Cohn  
Colorado Gives 365 - Community  
First Foundation  
Kathleen Costello  
Bryan & Jacquelyn Dear  
Mitch & Sydney Dion  
Wylee Jean & Gunnar Drew  
Durango Mountain Realty  
Buck & Chelsea Farley  
William Furbush  
Rene Garcia Reyes  
Jennifer Garvey  
Jana Goldstein  
Lyle Hancock  
Heather Hansman  
Rebecca Hanson  
Holly Hatch, *in loving memory of*  
*Brian Hannemann*  
Dianne Heleno  
Mitch, Kim, Ava, & Erik Hobby  
Jeff Kane

Sarah, Craig, & Cusson Konz  
Anastasia Jespersen  
Stasia & Jim Lanier  
Lydia, Jason, & Iris Lawhon  
Colby McKee  
Martha Minot  
Ben & Jessica Mitchell  
Kirk Morrison  
The Morrison Family  
Jeni & Keith Nicovich  
Tom, Sue & Sonja Norton  
Katie & John Ogier  
Chad Perkins  
Terry Peterson  
Pediatric Partners of the Southwest  
Don Ratcliff  
Kathy & Mike Rose,  
*in memory of Edward Aschliman*  
Alan P. Small & Margaret Poer  
Tiffany Purcell  
Tailwind Nutrition  
Andrew Schill  
Sarah Slaughter  
Bobby Spearman  
Ryan & Jonah Unterreiner  
Joni & Pete Vanderbilt  
David Warlop  
Todd Wells  
Anne Zalbowitz  
Roxanne Zoss

*Partners\**  
AJ Construction  
Animas Chocolate Company  
Ballantine Family Fund  
Bank of Colorado  
Bread  
Carver Brewing Company  
Durango Mountain Masters  
Association  
Durango Outdoor Exchange  
Durango Running Company  
Durango Trails  
Hillcrest Golf Club  
Homewood Suites  
La Plata Electric Association  
Round Up Fund  
Pedal the Peaks Durango  
Purgatory Metro District  
Purgatory Ski Resort  
San Juan Mountains Association  
San Juan National Forest  
Six Dollar String Band  
Ska Brewing Company  
Star Liquors

*\*Partners provide financial and/or in-kind support for club operations, programs, & events.*

www.durangonordic.org  
(970) 385-2114  
info@durangonordic.org