

**Saskatchewan Trails Association
Annual General Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 7 at 7 p.m. via ZOOM**

Welcome from the STA

David welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Introductions

David Powell is the President of the Saskatchewan Trails Association and a retired landscape architect. His career has involved designing and developing trail systems the ground up. He has long been involved with trail groups and is an active trail user.

Chris Exner works for the Town of Lumsden, where he helps manage approximately 15 kilometres of trail from Lumsden to Deer Valley, as well as 22 kilometres of blueway along the river system. He is an avid trail user who enjoys hiking and paddling and looks forward to spending more time on trails in retirement.

Andrew Exelby serves on the board in a non-voting capacity representing the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association. He works closely with trail groups and communities across the province, providing support and advice on trail development. He is also a member of the Trans Canada Trail Provincial Committee and has been involved with the STA for more than 14 years.

John Meed represents the Saskatchewan ATV Association, a provincial organization focused on ATV trail use and development. His work includes supporting managed trail systems as well as advocating for the responsible use of the informal ATV trail networks in northern Saskatchewan.

Pat Rediger is the Administrator for the Saskatchewan Trails Association through Benchmark Public Relations. He has been involved with the organization since 2007 and has supported its growth and development over the years.

Leslie Beck is co-chair of the Wâhkôhtowin Trails, a trail initiative connecting Flin Flon and Creighton. She is also a board member with both Manitoba Trails and the STA and is actively involved in trail development and maintenance. Her group is currently working to develop approximately 50 kilometres of trail in the region.

Saul Lipton has been involved with the STA since its early days and was engaged in trail development efforts even prior to its formation. With a background in mountain biking, he continues to advocate for trail development, particularly in the Regina to Lumsden area.

Logan Pletz is originally from Lumsden and was one of the first members of the Qu'Appelle Valley Nordic (QVN) Ski Club. A competitive cross-country skier and biathlete, he has trained and competed in locations including Whistler and Canmore, as well as internationally. He is an avid trail user with experience across a wide range of trail systems.

Brett Park is a board member of the QVN and an active trail user who enjoys hiking, walking, and cross-country skiing. He is a strong advocate for accessible, publicly available trail systems.

Joe Milligan is a Trails Specialist with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, where he supports trail development within Saskatchewan's provincial parks. He has longstanding experience working with trail organizations, including involvement with the Trans Canada Trail since the late 1990s.

Guest Presenter: Logan Pletz

Logan Pletz, a Canadian World Cup biathlete and 2026 Olympian, shared reflections on his athletic career and the important role Saskatchewan's trail systems played in his development.

He described his early involvement with the Qu'Appelle Valley Nordic Ski Club in Lumsden, which was established through the efforts of local volunteers and families. What began as a community-driven initiative with basic trail infrastructure has since evolved into a more comprehensive facility, including snowmaking capabilities. Logan emphasized that these local trails were foundational to his progression in the sport.

Drawing on his experiences training and competing in locations such as Whistler, Canmore, and across Europe, Logan highlighted the differences between Saskatchewan trails and world-class facilities. He noted that international venues often feature highly specialized, well-maintained trail systems designed specifically for cross-country skiing, while Saskatchewan trails are typically multi-use and developed with fewer resources.

He also spoke about the importance of trail quality and safety for athlete development, identifying key factors such as even terrain, proper grading, and minimizing hazards like uneven ground. Despite these challenges, Logan emphasized that Saskatchewan trails can still provide strong training opportunities, noting that certain local terrain and conditions helped build his endurance and technical skills.

Logan reflected on the broader impact of trail development, particularly the pride and recognition that facilities like the Qu'Appelle Valley Nordic Centre have brought to their communities. He also shared insights into his technical interests within the sport, including his work designing and customizing biathlon rifle equipment using 3D printing technology.

Business Portion

i. Call to Order for Business Meeting

David Powell called the meeting to order at 7:47 p.m.

ii. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Saul/Chris to approve the agenda as presented. Carried

iii. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: John/Chris to approve the previous meeting minutes from April 14, 2025.

iv. Business Arising From the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

v. President's Report (David Powell)

Over the past year, the board has remained focused on strong governance and financial accountability. We held 10 meetings to stay on top of key issues within the trail community, guiding our strategic priorities and ensuring responsible oversight of the organization.

Our website continues to serve as an important resource for trail users across the province, providing access to trail maps, safety information, environmental guidance, and other key resources. Our social media presence also continues to grow, now reaching more than 10,000 followers. Through these channels, we regularly share trail updates, promote events, and showcase the beauty and diversity of Saskatchewan's trail systems.

We once again delivered two successful photography initiatives: the "Give Us Your Best Shot" contest in June and the "Winter on the Trails" contest in January. These contests continue to engage trail users and highlight the unique experiences available across our province.

Our communication efforts also included our monthly *Tails from the Trails* e-newsletter and *SaskTrails Explorer*, our twice-annual digital magazine, both of which continue to inform, inspire, and connect members of the trail community.

In terms of trail development and enhancement, we worked in partnership with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport on improvements at Katepwa Point Provincial Park, supported through funding from the Trans Canada Trail. These efforts contribute to improving access and enhancing the overall trail experience for users.

We were also pleased to welcome this year's Saskatchewan Storyteller, Ella Gidluck, who shared engaging stories from trails across the province throughout the summer. This position was supported through the Trans Canada Trail's Green Jobs Initiative and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association's Parks for All Grant.

Through our Member Trail Grant Program, we supported important projects led by the Prairie Sky Trails Association, Echo Valley Trail Advisory Group, and the Wahkohtowin Trail Committee. These investments continue to strengthen local trail systems and support the dedicated volunteers who make this work possible.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Otter Limits for their generous \$5,000 donation raised through their Fun Run event. Their continued support plays an important role in advancing our work. I would also like to recognize our core sponsors, Saskatchewan Lotteries and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, for their ongoing commitment to trails across the province.

Motion: David/Chris to accept the President's Report as presented. Carried

vi. Approval of Financial Statements (Pat Rediger)

The audited financial statements were presented, showing a year-end cash balance of \$68,345, down slightly from the 74,189 from the previous year. Total assets and liabilities balanced at \$76,099.

Core funding from Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund increased to \$36,310. Through effective leveraging, total revenue reached \$121,730, largely due to the TCT grant we received to support trail development at Katepwa. Other revenue sources included grants, membership fees, donations, and advertising revenue.

Expenses for the year totaled \$128,624. Expenses included communications, insurance, professional fees, summer employment, and the "Give Us Your Best Shot" photo contest.

The organization ended the fiscal year with a deficit of \$6,894.

Motion: John/Chris to approve the financial statements as presented. Carried

Motion: John/Chris to accept Marcia Herback as the auditor for 2026. Carried

vii. Bylaw Amendments

There were no bylaw amendments.

viii. Resolutions

There were no resolutions this year.

ix. Board of Directors Election

Chris Exner retired from the board and was thanked for his efforts.

The following members were nominated to the board of directors: Brett Park, Alan Otterbein, Saul Lipton, Ryan Goolevitch.

Motion: John/Chris for nominations to close.

Carried

All of the nominations were acclaimed to the board.

x. New Business

Leslie Beck raised a discussion regarding recent engagement with Trails Manitoba and potential opportunities for collaboration.

Pat Rediger reported that he met with the Executive Director of Trails Manitoba to discuss shared priorities, funding models, and best practices. He noted that Trails Manitoba operates with a provincial endowment fund that provides stable, ongoing funding, in contrast to the Saskatchewan Trails Association's model, which relies on core funding from Saskatchewan Lotteries and periodic applications. Trails Manitoba also administers a provincial trail grant program, whereas the STA continues to provide support through its own Member Trail Grant Program.

The discussion highlighted opportunities for future collaboration between provincial trail organizations, including the potential for joint initiatives, knowledge sharing, and possibly a Prairie-based trail conference involving Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta. It was noted that stronger interprovincial relationships could support trail development and advocacy efforts.

Members also discussed broader opportunities related to trail connectivity across provincial borders, including the potential to strengthen links between Saskatchewan and Manitoba trail systems as part of larger, national trail networks.

Leslie Beck also shared an example of a potential trail development opportunity near Creighton, where former infrastructure lands may be repurposed into a trail system once environmental remediation is complete.

No formal motions were brought forward under new business.

xi. Adjournment

Motion: John to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.