AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

AgendaTitle:
Visitor; Crested Butte Nordic Center Director; Master Plan

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:
The attached materials were provided by the CB Nordic Center for discussion.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Submitted by: Katherine Haase for CB Nordic **Submitter's Email Address:** khaase@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date: 1/15/2015

○ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ◉ Worksession Time Allotted:

Agenda Date: 1/20/2015 Follow Up Agenda Date:

Revised April 2013

Crested Butte NORDIC

2014 Master Plan

CRESTED BUTTE NORDIC

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Photo Credit: Xavier Fané

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contact Information 1

1.0 Introduction 3

2.0 Vision 4

3.0 Values 5

4.0 Acknowledgments 6

5.0 Background 7

6.0 The Last Decade 8

7.0 Where We Stand Today - Summer of 2014 9

8.0 Goals and Objectives 10

- 8.1 Trails 10
- 8.2 Facilities and Equipment 11
- 8.3 Junior Nordic Team/Youth Programs 12
- 8.4 Events 13
- 8.5 Finance 14
- 8.6 Governance 14
- 8.7 Development 15
- 8.8 Communications 15

Appendix A Endnotes 16

Appendix B Organization 17

Appendix C Financials 18

Appendix D Master Plan Survey 19

Appendix E Trail Map 22

1.0 Introduction

This master plan is intended to guide the management, development and future of Crested Butte Nordic. It is based on board direction, input from staff, our membership, and from NGI, Nordic Group International, recognized Nordic ski area consultants. It addresses the following mission of our organization:

To provide individuals of all ages and abilities the opportunity to learn, enjoy and improve in the sports of cross-country (Nordic) skiing and snowshoeing. Our objectives are:

1) To acquire access and professionally groom a trail system for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

2) To provide quality rental equipment, professional instruction and guiding services for Gunnison County residents and visitors.

3) To support and develop amateur athletes for regional and national competition in the sport of Nordic skiing, and to conduct such competition.

4) To be a vital component of the Gunnison County economy.

Crested Butte Nordic pursues its mission in many ways; through the development and maintenance of winter Nordic trails and facilities, through our Junior Nordic Team/youth programs, by providing ski and snowshoe rentals, instruction and clinics, backcountry guiding services, by hosting a wide variety of Nordic and backcountry races, with backcountry hut rentals, and by providing fine dining at our trailside yurt.

In order to ensure the fulfillment of our mission, Crested Butte Nordic is dedicated to working in partnership with; the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM, the Towns of Crested Butte and Mt Crested Butte, other various public/private agencies, over forty private landowners, and local businesses and non-profits.

2.0 Vision

We envision Crested Butte as one of the premier destination Nordic resorts in the Country, a place where skiers visit because of our exceptional beauty, expansive trail system, and comprehensive program and event offerings.

We envision a Junior Nordic program that is one of the best in the nation. The emphasis will always be on having fun and developing a passion for Nordic skiing. Our program will also give our youth the skills and training necessary to compete on a National level if so desired.

We envision Crested Butte Nordic as a vital component of our community's winter economy as well as a unique model for human-powered winter recreation.

3.0 Values

We are *committed* to meeting our goals through practices that generate long-term local economic sustainability.

We believe *collaboration* is the key to success; we wholeheartedly support other organizations in the valley and beyond.

We believe *integrity* is paramount; we conduct our organization's business legally, ethically, and with concern for the environment.

We value being a *community* owned Nordic ski area that adds significant economic vitality to our valley.

We value environmental *stewardship* and we strive to protect the natural world.

4.0 Acknowledgments

This master plan for Crested Butte Nordic is a reflection of the vision and dedication of the Board of Directors. We want to thank NGI, (Nordic Group International), for steering us in the right direction nearly a decade ago. CB Nordic sincerely appreciates our many partners, especially the Town of Crested Butte, who shares town facilities and town property with us to make it all work.

CB Nordic's accomplishments over the past three decades would not have been possible without the incredible dedication of past and current board members and staff, numerous volunteers and our many funders and supporters. The commitment and dedication of the community is why we are now the "Nordic Ski Capital of Colorado."

5.0 Background

The Gunnison Valley has a rich history of Nordic skiing going back to the mining days of the early 1800's. In those days, skiing was more than recreation; it was also transportation for the early pioneers. Even the mail was delivered (by the legendary Al Johnson) to the adjacent mining communities using skis.

Decades later, from 1950 to1968, Western State College (WSC) under the direction of the Sven Wiik, produced the strongest Nordic ski team in the nation. Several US Nordic Team members, including Olympians were skiers from Western during that time period.

In the early 60's WSC skiers trained and/or competed up on Kebler pass, at Rozman Ranch, and on the Bench above Town. From 1964 to 1968 the National Championships and Olympic Trials were held in Crested Butte.

In the 70's and early 80's there was a smorgasbord of Nordic opportunities in the upper valley. The Alpineer offered tours and clinics, and races were held on the Bench. The first Al Johnson uphill/downhill free-heel race was held on Mt Axtell in 1975.

In the late seventies and early eighties, Rick Borkovec (father of the telemark turn in this country) ran Nordic Adventures for Crested Butte Mountain Resort (CBMR) at the base of Snodgrass Mountain. Around that same time cross-country tours were also run out of the Nordic Inn.

In 1984, Jerry Deverell, director of Crested Butte Parks and Recreation and Bobby Ready, both local Nordic enthusiasts, engaged the community by starting a local Bill Koch Ski League. This was the foundation for our local Nordic club, which eventually transformed into Crested Butte Nordic.

These locals and others had a vision of providing groomed Nordic ski trails and all the associated benefits that would serve the locals and visitors of the Gunnison Valley. This group of locals incorporated CB Nordic in 1987 and established the organization as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1995.

Crested Butte Nordic has expanded exponentially from its inception to include an extensive trail network working with 40 landowners to provide over 50 kilometers of high quality Nordic trails. In the true sense of the word, we are a ski town and have been for over 130 years.

6.0 The Last Decade

Ten years ago the Nordic Council Board made a conscious decision to hire a full-time year round executive director and start strategically planning for the future. This was a major turning point in the organization's history. In 2005, they hired Nordic Group International, Nordic consultants, to do an assessment of the Nordic elements here in the Crested Butte area. The organization and the entire community has benefited greatly from those decisions. In the Town of Crested Butte's Master Park and Recreation Plan of 2010, locals surveyed voted CB Nordic's trails the *third* most visited recreational amenity-out of seventeen choices. Only the Center for the Arts and our hiking and biking trails are more visited.

In the last decade, the trail system has more than doubled in size, and our user days have tripled. Since then, the organization's assets have quadrupled. From 2010 to 2014 our total income has more than doubled.

We now have two snowcats to groom our trail system, and a cat barn to protect and maintain them. We have built an International Federation of Skiing (FIS) sanctioned race course (homologated) on the Bench, Ruthie's Run, and we have constructed a yurt on our trail system so we may provide fine dining as well as a venue for special events and parties. It also serves as a very pleasant warming "hut" for our day skiers.

Our trails can accommodate all levels of skiers, from beginner to elite racers. CB Nordic has a thriving youth program, we host the largest Nordic race in the state, the Alley Loop, and we also host the largest backcountry race in the nation, the Elk Mountains Grand Traverse. Along with that we provide lessons, rentals, dog friendly trails, guiding services, clinics, a Thanksgiving Training Camp, a race series, Master and Senior's programs, as well as fine ski-in yurt dining.

But perhaps the most important take away from the last ten years is that we are indeed successfully fulfilling our mission.

7.0 Where We Stand Today - Summer of 2014

Crested Butte Nordic is poised to reach to the next level. For the last ten years we have set the stage to become a world class Nordic destination ski area. This new master plan outlines how to take us there.

Crested Butte has all the ingredients. We have the terrain, we are blessed with an abundance of snow, and we have some of the most dramatic winter landscapes in the country. Our trail system surrounds a nationally recognized historic mining town that offers a wide variety of fine lodging, restaurants, and shops.[1]

While this master plan is, and will be, a working document to guide the organization forward, it is also crafted for our community; it's leaders, the non-profits and governmental agencies that we work with.

This is our vision of what human powered winter recreation could look like in the upper valley. Our plan, with the community's help, will vastly expand our winter's economic potential. But beyond economic considerations, when this master plan comes to fulfillment it will also substantially improve our community's quality of life.

At build out, our expansions will bring our trail system to close to 100 kilometers. That vision, when reached, will easily put us as one of the top five Nordic ski areas in the entire west. While this might seem like an aggressive undertaking, consider these facts.

CB Nordic's day pass sales last season were up 59% over the previous year.

More and more baby boomers are turning to Nordic skiing as they age.

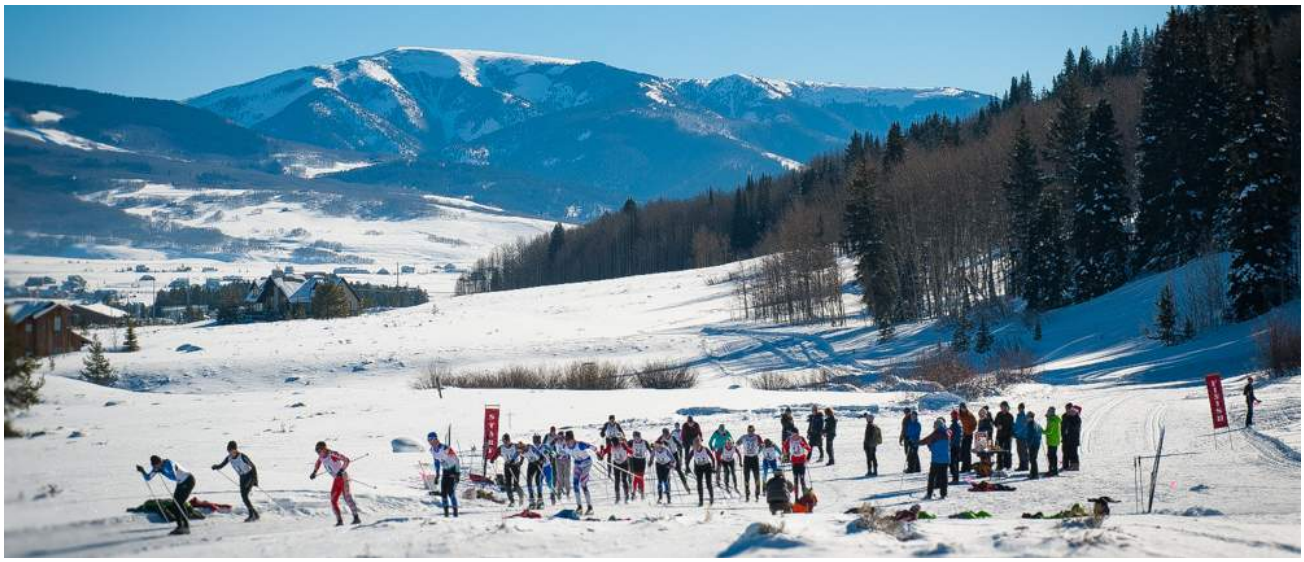
CB Nordic's growth has averaged over 11% annually since 2005.

CB Nordic's guiding services were up 110% over the previous year.

49% of Nordic skiers have an annual household income above $75,000

45.8% of Nordic skiers also alpine ski and 38.7% of Nordic skiers also Mountain Bike.

The Nordic Inn, just one of our several lodging partners, reported their Nordic guests generated $30,756 in taxes alone last season.



8.0 Goals and Objectives

Our master plan provides a conceptual direction and includes stated goals for each of the specified organizational headings listed below. Staff, based on the stated goals of the master plan, will develop a specific work plan with associated action items annually.

8.1 Trails

The trails are a major focus of our organization; it's where the "rubber meets the road," or in our case, where the “skis meet the snow.” Our number one priority is to always provide quality skiing and never compromise that with quantity over quality.

The following goals encompass our standard for trails, including aspects of planning, maintenance, trailheads, signage, safety, and access. Many of the trail expansions listed below will require easements from landowners, which is a continual work in progress.

8.1.1 It is our goal to secure easements and advocate for joint funding to tie our three trail systems together; Ruthie's Run, the East and West Side Trails. These connectors would also be a part of the Town's year-round perimeter trail and would include the “Ditch Trail” above the Nordic Center. They would include an over/underpass on highway 135, east of the Nordic center, and a bridge over Coal Creek, west of the Nordic center.[2]

8.1.2 We will design and create new maps that are topographically accurate.

8.1.3 We will design and build new signs, starting with our trailhead signs. Once that is competed we will address new signage on the rest of our trail system.

8.1.4 Continue trail engineering on other existing trails where easements allow. Engineered trails allow us to groom earlier in the season with minimal snowpack. We will make all trails a minimum of 16’ wide to allow for effective track packing and grooming to industry standards.

8.1.5 We will work with the Town and the Land Trust to connect Smith Hill to Mike’s Mile via CB Nordic's Beaver Trail; the winter version of the summer Lupine Trail. This trail expansion will involve widening Gunsight Bridge so it is snowcat/grooming compatible.

8.1.6 Expand our snowshoe only trails from 3.75k to 10k in the next five years.

8.1.7 We will work with landowners to secure easements so we can have winter (and in some cases, year-round) connectors for our communities via our trail system: the North Village, CB South, Meridian Lake, Skyland, and Larkspur.

8.1.8 Expand our groomed trail system to include Washington Gulch to Elkton and the Slate River valley to Pittsburg. Having groomed trails up these drainages will require community involvement as the Forest Service readdresses the winter travel management plan.[3]

8.1.9 Annually assess our "master groomed trail-system plan." As demand increases we will expand trail system to meet those needs.

8.1.10 Work with the BLM and the Land Trust to build permanent bridges (as well as stabilizing sections of the riverbank) on Mike's Mile. This would create a year-round wide path to Gunsight Bridge and eliminate the need for our temporary bridging.

8.2 Facilities and Equipment

Design, construct, and maintain all facilities and infrastructure to support our mission.

8.2.1 Build a new Nordic facility that is fireplace warm, spacious and comfortable; a place where guests want to hang out. Work with the Town and the community to accomplish this much-needed expansion.

8.2.2 Develop a comprehensive equipment replacement plan for cats, snowmobiles, light grooming equipment and vehicles. Our number #1 priority is to replace our older snowcat. Maintenance shops for this additional equipment will be critical. Each season, we will set aside funds into our capital reserve to fund these upgrades.

8.2.3 Develop the yurt for more day use by providing hot drinks and light fare, especially during the busy periods. Assess yurt dining potential and build as demand increases. Explore leasing the facility to a concessionaire who has the expertise and experience. Plan for solar upgrade, toilet upgrade, and yurt "skin" replacement as needed. Schedule annual maintenance for cleaning and staining.

8.2.4 Research options for expanded remote facility or facilities. Peanut Mine- Cat Barn, Spur Nordic Center at Mt CB. Start planning for an additional shop to house our extra gear and grooming equipment.

8.2.5 Develop trailside huts and/or backcountry huts. We are currently working with one private landowner for winter use of their property. We would also like to develop smaller portable trailside huts.

8.2.6 Build a wood fired sauna on the Slate River. This amenity would be unique, and would truly set us apart as a destination Nordic area.

8.3 Junior Nordic Team/Youth Programs

With an emphasis on fun, we want to build a strong youth program that has the potential to develop into one of the best in the nation. Our youth are the future, so developing and expanding our youth programs are priorities for Crested Butte Nordic

8.3.1 Create a "sense of place" for our Nordic team. As we build our new facility, adequate team space is a high priority. That space will not only provide adequate lockers and room for changing, stretching, and light workouts, but it will also be a central hub where our kids can feel part of something larger than themselves.

8.3.2 Collaborate and partner with Crested Butte Snowsports Foundation to create more "development" program opportunities.

8.3.3 Host more high-level races on Ruthie's Run.

8.3.4 Work with facilities to proactively plan for new van rotations so our youth continue to be as safe as possible on the road.

8.3.5 Establish a competitive salary and model for year-round coaching position.

8.3.6 Plan for adequate office space for coaches with our new facility.

8.3.7 Increase female enrollment in the programs.

8.3.8 Develop youth volunteers with more training and experience.

8.3.9 Secure a "fleet" of race skis to help expand the program.

8.3.10 Establish a permanent "air" rifle biathlon-training venue. Explore development of a .22 range for biathlon competition.

8.3.11 Develop an endowment for the Junior Nordic Team.

8.4 Events

CB Nordic supports events in order to promote awareness, as well as use and enjoyment of the trail system, and to provide revenue to support our operations. It is an overall goal to have our events be the best they can possibly be.

8.4.1 Optimize participants and revenue potential while focusing on quality and fun for all our events; Thanksgiving Camp, Alley Loop, Gothic Mountain Tour, Grand Traverse, Summer Grand Traverse, Grin and Bear It, and Citizens Race Series.

8.4.2 Further development opportunities with existing events (improve, add a potential development element where appropriate.)

8.4.3 Work toward having year-round event staffing.

8.4.4 Develop a volunteer management and recognition plan.

8.4.5 Host "Ski for Light," an organization that assists blind skiers.

8.5 Finance

Sound financial management will ensure that Crested Butte Nordic can continue to provide a high quality trail system, as well as all the services we provide in perpetuity. CB Nordic will control costs and pursue operating profitability in order to ensure long-term financial viability. In order to execute our Master Plan to its full potential we will also seek additional sources of funding through partnerships, grants, and individual donors.

8.5.1 Hire a new accountant; review, consolidate our P and L, assess and improve our POS system, and better track our inventory.

8.5.2 Work with the Development Committee so we can begin building capital reserves.

8.5.3 Develop multi-year budgets (1-3, 3-5, 5+) to reflect our master plan.

8.5.4 Establish an Endowment for the CB Junior Nordic Team.

8.5.5 Develop financial policies.

8.5.6 Research a public funding mechanism that will pay for grooming costs so our entire trail system is free to the public. As we expand our trail system, enforcement becomes more problematic and more expensive. We believe that the costs to the community associated with offering "free skiing" will be easily offset by the revenue generated from visiting guests.

8.6 Governance

Maintain a diverse, committed board representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders and community members who are fully engaged, energetic, and responsible to the organization. The board's roll is to strategically chart the direction of CB Nordic. The staff's role is to implement it.

8.6.1 Strategically build our board to capacity (12 members.)

8.6.2 Develop board member and officer succession plans.

8.6.3 Assess committee structure – revamp, revise, reinvigorate. Recruit non-board member committee members/volunteers. Create Task Forces specific to the Master Plan.

8.6.4 Develop an employee retention and succession plan.

8.6.5 Re-establish and Review Board "Manual," policies and procedures, bylaws.

8.7 Development

Develop the means to fully fund the organization in order to fulfill our mission.

8.7.1 Continue to build community relationships that promote the economic benefits of CB Nordic to the community.

8.7.2 Establish a comprehensive "Annual Development Plan" with specific goals.

8.7.3 Streamline, and create business sponsor packages consistent between the Team and CBNC.

8.7.4 Increase the K Club membership; Cultivate, Communicate, and Build.

8.7.5 Set up and maintain Giftworks Donor Database – On going.

8.7.6 Assess "development" oriented events with a goal of maximizing benefits.

8.8 Communications

Market CB Nordic not only to potential guests, but also "tell our story" so the community recognizes us as a valuable asset to our winter economy.

8. 81 Develop an annual communications plan.

8.8.2 Craft our "message" for each of the following groups; community leaders, donors, customers, and for our youth programs.

8.8.3 Present this message by hosting special events, through written, and one on one communications.

8.8.4 Rebrand CB Nordic (process is already started.)

8.8.5 For the first time ever, aggressively market CB Nordic outside of the Gunnison Valley and in doing so, double our "skier days" to 50,000 in the next five years.

Appendix A

Endnotes

1). NGI Report (2005)

Crested Butte Valley Nordic Assessment Conclusion

"This assessment finds the greater Crested Butte valley to have exceptional assets and advantages for realizing the goal of becoming a viable and competitive Nordic destination."

"Multi-season non-motorized trails, more trails, better trails and sophistication of trailhead services need to be part of this formula for success. Security of trail corridors and an adequate, responsible and enforceable balance of motorized and non-motorized use need to be part of this formula. And, a valley-wide commitment to weave this infrastructure into the fabric of all community elements, to provide doorstep access to commercial services, and to effectively educate all visitors to respectful penetration of the garden needs to be part of this formula".

"None of this will work well without an integrated balance of commitment between both ends of the valley and all levels of property ownership… a clear and sincere demonstration of solidarity of partnerships for the shared goal of creating an outdoor recreation destination Mecca that is the "best in the rest of the West".

"Finally, the guiding light for this project needs to illuminate a strategy that protects the quality of life in the valley without overwhelming it with change. No small task. But to do otherwise is to fail."

2). NGI report (2005)

"Connecting trails are the all-important threads that will bind scattered trail networks, communities and neighborhoods into an impressive and thoroughly integrated recreational matrix. In effect, the "connectors" will establish the valley's reputation as an extended ***pedestrian-friendly*** community with a class-act trails infrastructure that is comparable or better than the best.

The shuttle system, too, can (and should) both complement and augment connectivity of dispersed valley elements. But priority given to quality trail inter-connects is a clear signal to visitors of an investment that champions commitment to a sustained trails-driven destination focus.

In effect, trail interconnects become a bridging device that "…turns apples into apple pie." They are important, eminently logical, defensible and often readily fundable.""""

3). NGI report (2005)

"The Magic Meadows and upper Slate River drainage are aesthetically remarkable… nearly of National Park caliber. Geologic, ecological and environmental features abound, as do recreational opportunities.

This area, all by itself, creatively planned and designed for a variety of multi-season, non-motorized trails can be the most important ***signature product*** needed to elevate the greater Crested Butte valley's Nordic/Trails reputation to national recognition.

As part of a unique network of diverse but connected trail nodes, it has astonishing multi-season trail use assets. It could become the "flagship" example of a USFS/BLM/Land Trust/private land partnership that is committed to a state-of-the-art non-motorized trails structure.
Definitive zoning and enforceable regulations regarding access by motorized use has to be a priority if the vision for Nordic destination status is to be realized. Motorized use of several drainages—including some designated as non-motorized—is growing and will continue to grow unless enforcement is provided.

It seems evident that given numerous snowmobiling access options at present, it is more than reasonable that the Slate River and Washington Gulch drainages (at the least) should be zoned and enforced for non-motorized use. The more this use/trespass grows, the more a sense of ownership evolves among motorized users that can eventually overwhelm any objections."

Appendix B

Organization

Board of Directors

Skip Berkshire-President

Rick Murray- Vice President

Rich Smith-Treasurer

Lauren Holbrook-Secretary

Rocky Kimball

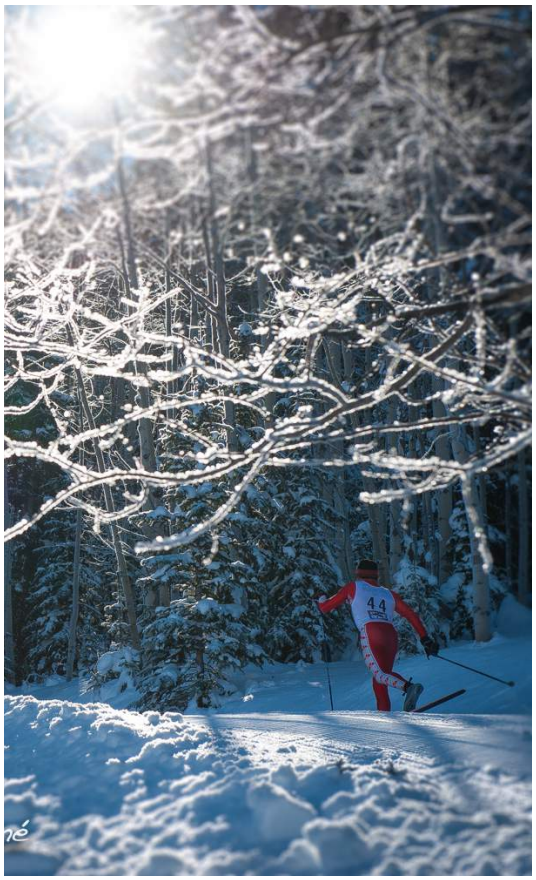
Jeff Delaney

John Meyer

Mike Haney

Charla Brown

Rosalie Ott



Key Staff

Keith Bauer-Executive Director

Linda Roberts- Administrative Assistant

Drew Holbrook- Development Coordinator

Andrew Arell- Events Director

Jay Hunt- Center Manager

Kevin Krill- Operations Manager

Austin Ross- Head Coach

Appendix C

Financials

	6/30/10	6/30/11	6/30/12	6/30/13	6/30/14
Income:					
Contribution, Gifts, Grants	$98,806	$120,538	$170,251	$248,204	$316,804
Program, Services & Events Revenue	$262,880	$292,535	$341,104	$387,133	$454,948
Total Income	**$361,686**	**$413,073**	**$511,355**	**$635,337**	**$771,752**
Fundraising Expenses	$4,582	$5,493	$7,367	$15,090	$21,592
Operating & Depreciation Expense	$350,242	$373,707	$465,900	$493,393	$568,438
Total Expenses:	$354,824	$379,200	$473,267	$508,483	$590,030
Net Income	**$6,862**	**$33,873**	**$38,088**	**$126,854**	**$181,722**
Assets	**$178,167**	**$208,942**	**$253,643**	**$344,678**	**$545,915**
Liabilities	$2,977	$4,241	$10,556	$30,966	$8,139
Equity	$175,190	$204,701	$243,087	$313,712	537,776

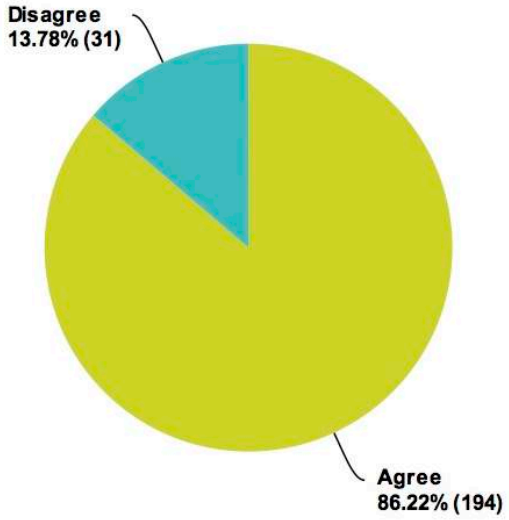
Appendix D

Master Plan Survey

Crested Butte Nordic surveyed our greater Nordic Community in the spring of 2014. These survey results helped the CB Nordic Board draft the organization's master plan. Below are the results relating to winter travel management in the upper East River Valley. This survey went out to 1,099 individuals. We had a 22.6% response rate which is higher than average and indicative of the interest and passion of our Nordic Community.

Q1 Of the six drainages north of Round Mountain, only one is quiet use during the winter; the East River to Gothic. CB Nordic would like to see a more balanced allocation of non-motorized/motorized use on our public lands. Would you agree or disagree with this statement?

Answered: 225 Skipped: 23

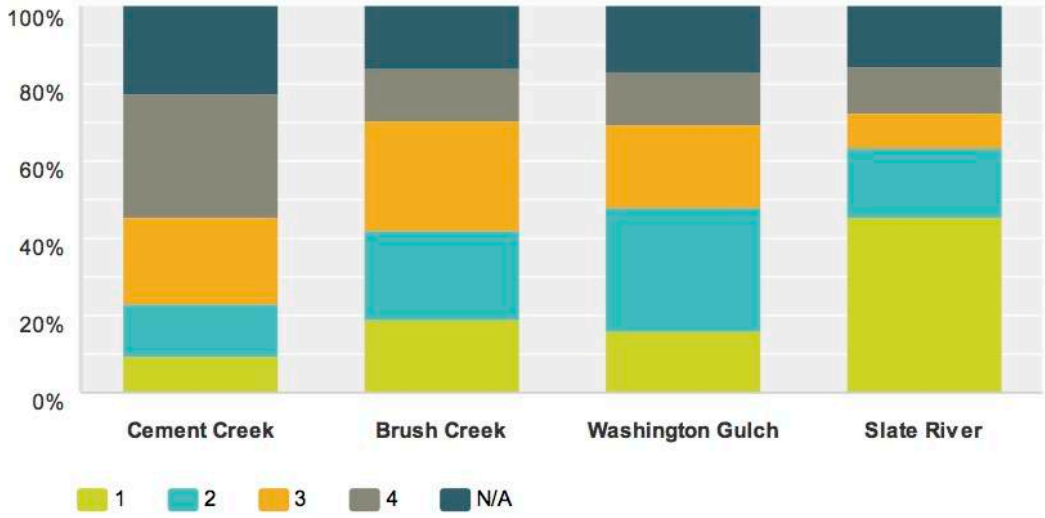


Answer Choices	Responses	
Agree	86.22%	194
Disagree	13.78%	31
Total		225

Survey for Crested Butte Nordic Strategic Plan

Q2 Please list, in order of importance, the drainages you would like to see as quiet use. If you do not want to see a particular drainage as quiet use, please select N/A.

Answered: 228 Skipped: 20

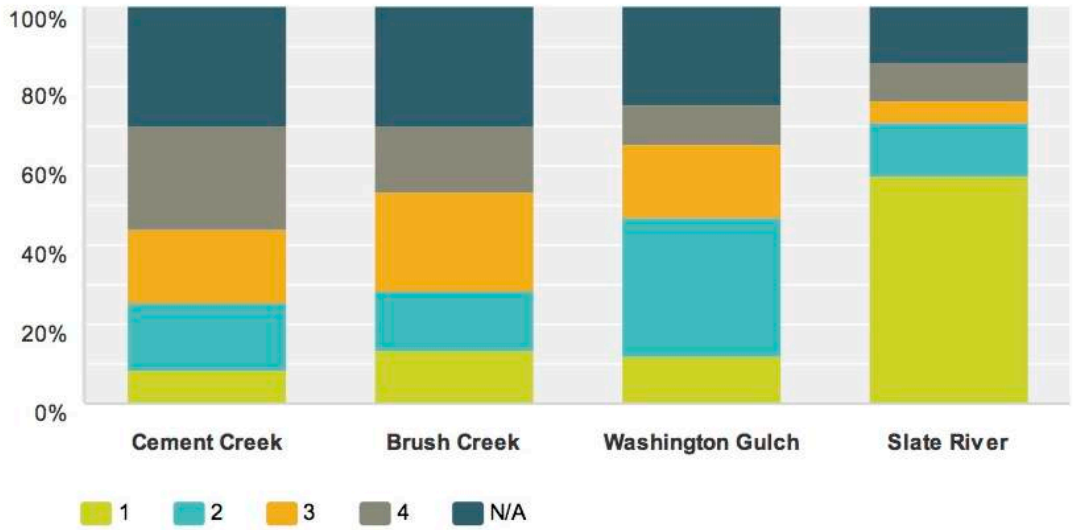


	1	2	3	4	N/A	Total	Average Ranking
Cement Creek	**9.65%** 22	**13.60%** 31	**22.37%** 51	**32.02%** 73	**22.37%** 51	228	2.01
Brush Creek	**18.86%** 43	**23.25%** 53	**28.51%** 65	**13.60%** 31	**15.79%** 36	228	2.56
Washington Gulch	**15.79%** 36	**32.46%** 74	**21.05%** 48	**13.60%** 31	**17.11%** 39	228	2.61
Slate River	**45.61%** 104	**17.98%** 41	**8.77%** 20	**12.28%** 28	**15.35%** 35	228	3.15

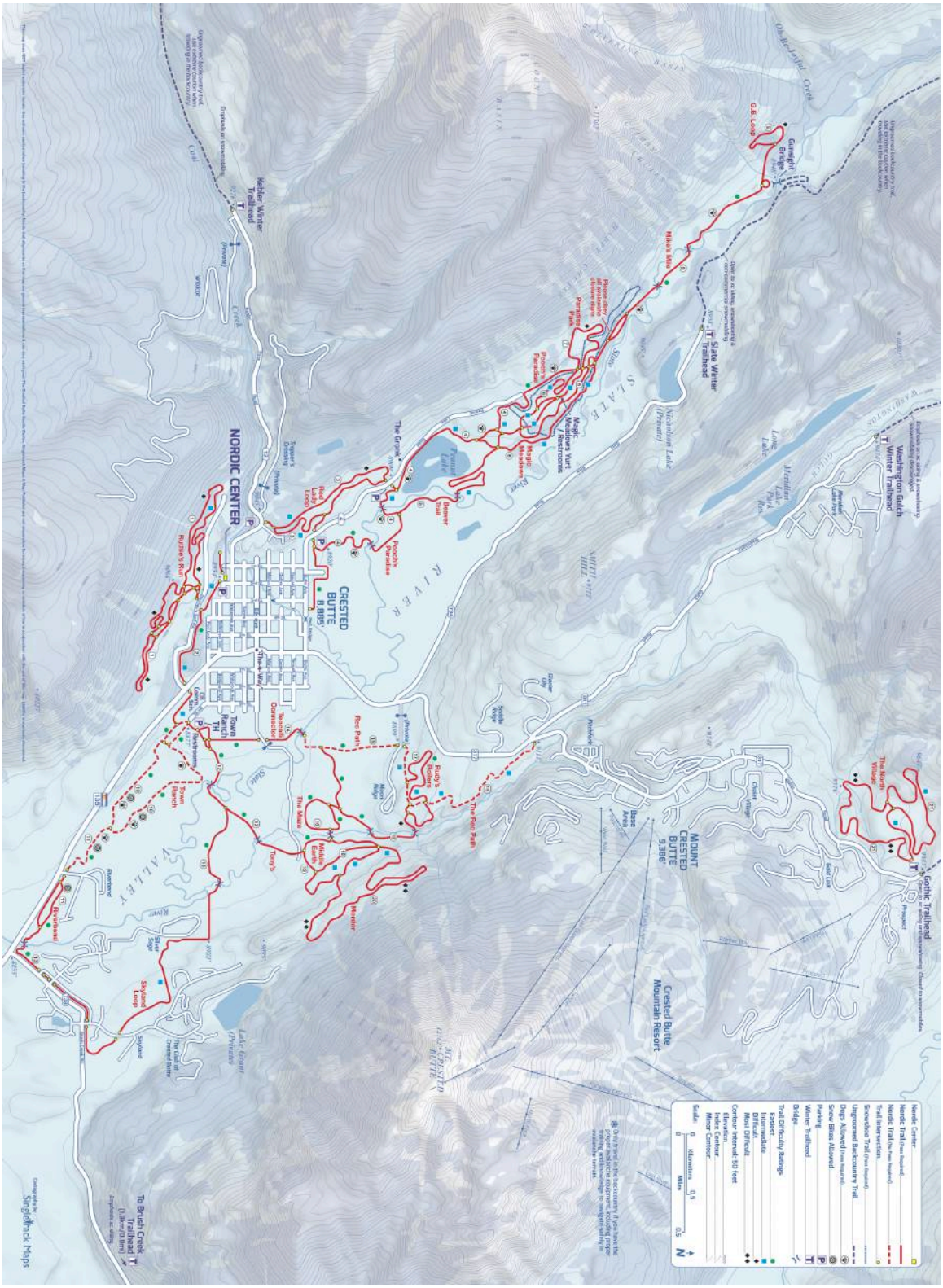
Survey for Crested Butte Nordic Strategic Plan

Q3 Please list, in order of importance, any drainage that you would like to see groomed as a possible extension of our trail system. If you do not want to see a particular drainage groomed, please select N/A.

Answered: 229 Skipped: 19



	1	2	3	4	N/A	Total	Average Ranking
Cement Creek	**8.73%** 20	**16.59%** 38	**18.78%** 43	**25.76%** 59	**30.13%** 69	229	2.12
Brush Creek	**13.54%** 31	**14.85%** 34	**25.33%** 58	**16.16%** 37	**30.13%** 69	229	2.37
Washington Gulch	**11.79%** 27	**35.37%** 81	**18.34%** 42	**10.04%** 23	**24.45%** 56	229	2.65
Slate River	**57.64%** 132	**13.54%** 31	**5.24%** 12	**9.61%** 22	**13.97%** 32	229	3.39

Appendix E

Trail Map