



**GMNC Strategic Plan
2023-25
Adopted November 2023**

Mission Statement

Grand Mesa Nordic Council (GMNC) is a community-supported, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting fun and safe cross country skiing experiences on Grand Mesa for skiers of all ages and abilities.

Vision Statement

GMNC creates and sustains a safe, affordable, welcoming, and high-quality experience for all trail users. To accomplish this, GMNC is committed to:

Development and maintenance of winter recreational trails on the Grand Mesa in an environmentally responsible manner;

Engagement and participation by a wide variety of local and regional users through memberships, day visits, community events, races, and lesson programs;

Effective collaboration with the US Forest Service (USFS), local governments, and a wide variety of community stakeholders;

Proactive planning and outreach to stakeholders that allows GMNC to address our future needs;

Fiscal stewardship through responsible budgeting, fundraising, grants, and voluntary member contributions; and

Use of both professional staff and volunteers to support GMNC's organizational needs.

Overview

The GMNC Board is adopting a two-year strategic plan based upon its 2022 Master Development Plan (MDP) that was approved by the USFS in August 2023. The MDP is a forward-looking planning document which outlines the GMNC's priorities for the next 5-10 years. The strategic plan is intended to guide the Board and GMNC staff over the next two years, identifying key actions and timeframes necessary to help achieve these goals over the longer term.

Ongoing Operating Principles

- Identify the core competencies needed to operate this organization and assign them to professional staff and/or volunteers unless otherwise retained by the board:
- Continued successful permitting and reporting process with the USFS.
- High-quality trail management (grooming and trail preparation).
 - Equipment maintenance and replacement.
 - Financial management and membership growth.
 - Public relations, promotions and marketing.
 - Grant writing and fundraising.
 - Events organizing.
 - Volunteer coordination.
- Sustain fiscal stability and promote sound financial management:
 - Adopt responsible annual budgets each fiscal year.
 - Expand all current sources of revenue including membership dues, event fees, government grants, private grants and voluntary donations.
 - Develop long-term plans to replace capital assets by the end of their useful life.
- Continue to offer successful member events and programs:
 - GMNC race series and other sporting events.
 - Clinics and lessons at Skyway and County Line.
 - Social events (such as full moon skis and family fun days).
 - Special events for veterans, kids, school groups, and other community organizations.
- Maintain a strong community presence:
 - Encourage an inclusive culture of Nordic skiing for all our visitors.
 - Foster community and goodwill among trail users.
 - Be an available resource to other Nordic trail system operators and programs.
 - Work with community partners to increase access to skiing on the Grand Mesa.
 - Pursue a dialogue with the surrounding towns and counties focused on collaboration and marketing Nordic skiing and events in the GMNC region.
 - Continually update the GMNC website to reflect current information on trail conditions, lessons, and events.

Long Term Priorities

With input from the board of directors, trail users, GMNC members, and our community partners, GMNC has identified the following long-term priorities in the MDP:

- 1) Plan for increased usage to maintain quality experiences for users.

This priority means ensuring that the GMNC's trail systems provide a variety of offerings to meet diverse user needs. We want to preserve the kinds of outdoor experiences people seek when they come to trails, and this will require managing congestion and user conflicts as well as planning to meet user expectations regarding infrastructure and operations. The GMNC will look for creative ways to increase capacity without diminishing the user experience. Some of the solutions to consider include shuttle services and ride shares, expanded trails and community partnerships to manage overcrowding.

- 2) Reduce conflicts between various user groups.

As the number of people using trails has increased, conflicts between users have become more common. User complaints about conflicts between snowshoers and skiers have become a major problem over the past five years. With increased numbers of people bringing their dogs to the trails, the potential for dog conflicts has also increased. The GMNC aims to reduce these conflicts by creating dedicated areas for snowshoers and dogs (see below) and taking steps to reduce user density on trails. We have also seen an increasing number of incursions on trails by motorized and mechanized vehicles, and we hope to work with other user groups (snowmobile clubs and biking groups) to increase education and outreach and reduce these conflicts.

- 3) Expand the trail systems at Ward, Skyway and County Line.

Trails have experienced an explosion in the number of users. The GMNC hopes to accommodate increased use while preserving the user experience by creating some new trails to reduce density and accommodate more users. These new trails will provide more space for users to spread out and will ensure that even when the parking lots are full, people can find solitude and quiet in the woods. This trail expansion would include dedicated snowshoe trails and backcountry ski trails.

- 4) Build permanent structures at the Skyway and County Line Trailheads to create community spaces and safe havens in inclement weather.

Our users have long requested a place where skiers can warm up, gather together and get out of bad weather. To meet this need, GMNC is working on plans for buildings at first Skyway and then County Line that can serve as staging areas for events, community spaces, and refuges in bad weather. The GMNC's trails are situated at very high elevation, where weather can change at a moment's notice. The lack of a

permanent shelter at the Skyway and County Line trail systems can increase dangers posed by bad weather or deteriorating road conditions. Having solid structures will give trail users a place to shelter if they are stranded by stormy weather.

Goals

The Board has reviewed the MDP principles and priorities, and has established the following goals for the next two years, including accompanying objectives and actions to help achieve these goals:

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME
Financial Growth	Increase donations	Create a sustaining membership donor program	Immediate
		Reach out to top 50 donors to discuss becoming sustaining members	Fall 2023
		Evaluate outreach efforts and expand to full membership	Winter 2023
		Prioritize events to focus on increasing memberships	2023-2024
	Expanse business outreach and Grow business membership	Follow up with auction participants to explore business membership	Fall 2023
		Identify and participate in business organization meetings to promote GMNC business memberships	2023-2024
	Establish capital reserve funding goals	Use 2023 CPA report to review reserve levels and set annual funding goals from grants and any operating surpluses	2023-2024

Trail Expansion	Add new loops to County Line and Skyway that require minimal development and grooming	Review proposed trails with USFS and gain appropriate approvals; permission to test groom loops	2023-2024
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	Identify snowshoe only trails	Review proposed trails with USFS and gain appropriate approvals; permission to test groom snowshoe trails	2023-24
	Engage USFS about potential trail expansion in logged areas	Review logging areas for potential trail paths with USFS staff	2024-2025
	Improve Ward trail system	Explore options for backcountry and snowshoe only trail expansion at Ward	2024-2025
Skyway Cabin	Develop a fundraising plan based upon final construction cost estimates	Confirm remaining fundraising goal	Fall 2023
	Construction options	Confirm USFS stance on igloo and storage container	Fall 2023
	Complete fundraising necessary to begin construction	Reach out to select members to gauge interest and support for Skyway Cabin	Fall 2023
		Engage fundraising consultant for board-led capital campaign (training and support)	2024-2025
		Identify additional capital grants and apply for funding	2024-2025
		Reach out to GMNC partners and engage them on fundraising	2024-2025

		assistance	
		Evaluate funding status before any construction approvals	Spring 2025
Maintain favorable user experience	Address Trailhead congestion	Prioritize trailhead events around membership support and reduce “party” gatherings	2023-2024
		Review signage and messaging to reduce dog skier conflicts, walkers and other inappropriate use, and divert snowshoers onto test trails (see above)	2023-2024
		Trail Ambassador program to focus on volunteer assistance at trailheads	2023-2025

	Begin discussions with government stakeholders about parking safety and expansion	Outline Ward parking safety issue for CDOT, USFS and Delta County, particularly risks to sledders	Winter 2024
		Identify potential areas off of CO65 for additional parking	2024-2025
		Ask CDOT about installing traffic warning flashing signs along CO65 at Skyway, County Line and Ward	2024-25