



Nova Scotia Outdoor Network

Get the Inside on the Outside

Strategic Plan





Strategic Plan

The following Strategic Plan is the first for the new Nova Scotia Outdoor Network and, as such, covers only two years (April 2016 to March 2018). It is anticipated that the network will evolve considerably in its first two years and the strategic plan will need to be revisited after this initial start-up phase. The plan was informed by various consultation sessions and meetings over the last six years, as well as by input from several professionals and leaders in the outdoor sector. This is an evolving document and feedback from stakeholders is welcome.

The Nova Scotia Outdoor Network, a project of Recreation Nova Scotia, is a coalition of the NS outdoor sector which will strengthen and support the outdoor community in our province through communication, sharing, collaboration and celebration. It will connect people, information, resources, events, organizations, outdoor spaces and activities. The work of the Outdoor Network aligns with and supports implementation of the Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia.

Vision

An outdoor community meaningfully connected to one another, to resources and to learning and stewardship opportunities.

Mission

To facilitate more communication, sharing, collaboration and celebration in the outdoor community.

Goals

To create a strong Outdoor Network, a coalition of the outdoor sector in Nova Scotia which will strengthen and support outdoor engagement in our province.

To encourage more Nova Scotians to get outside more often and participate in low-impact, nature-based activities.

Values

The Outdoor Network's values are based on a community that:

- Promotes low-impact outdoor recreation lifestyles
- Is meaningfully connected
- Plays, learns and supports outdoor leadership
- Understands the importance of healthy and safe natural spaces
- Uses and promotes evidence-based research and practice



Audience

The target, *primary* audience for the Outdoor Network is the outdoor community in NS, inclusive of stakeholders, individuals, organizations, businesses and institutions that consider themselves to be stakeholders within outdoor recreation, wilderness conservation, outdoor/environmental education, outdoor leadership, commercial guiding and retailers. This includes current enthusiasts and professionals. These are people and groups who want to help build our outdoor recreation culture in NS. The Outdoor Network's *secondary* audience is prospective outdoor enthusiasts.

Management

As a project of Recreation Nova Scotia (RNS), the Outdoor Network is managed by the Outdoor Advisory Council (OAC). This serves as a governance and sub operations committee of RNS and has the responsibility to establish the Outdoor Network strategic direction and plan, and oversee its operational development. The OAC is made up of outdoor professionals seen as experts in their field from across the province. The OAC will be supported in implementing the network's strategic directions outlined below by a working group assigned to each strategic direction (with the exception of the first strategic direction, Capacity Building, which will be the responsibility of the OAC itself).

Strategic Directions

To fulfill our mission and realize our vision for Nova Scotia, the Outdoor Network has established strategic directions in the following areas:

1. Capacity Building
2. Communications
3. Skill Building, Leadership and Education
4. Professional Networking and Development
5. Research and Evaluation
6. Advocacy

A definition of and objectives for each strategic direction are provided as follows.



1. Capacity Building

Create the foundations necessary to grow and support the Outdoor Network.

- Review and define the Outdoor Network governance model
- Grow the network membership
- To establish a meaningful presence in all regions of the province
- Develop and support strategic direction working groups
- Increase human and financial resource capacity to run the Outdoor Network in the long term
- Assess the process of establishing the network and revisit the strategic plan
- Align with and support the Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia and similar strategies and plans

2. Communications

Develop and implement a communications plan for the Outdoor Network's primary and secondary audiences.

- Launch the Outdoor Network
- Launch and evolve the online portal for information on the network as well as information for the public around events, skill building opportunities and outdoor places/spaces (including network and website branding)
- Create a communications plan for Outdoor Network members (primary audience), including communication pieces and evaluation of the plan
- Collaborate with and support existing promotional tools and resources



3. Skill Building, Leadership and Education

Ensure that Nova Scotian's have access to quality outdoor leadership courses, skills workshops and other learning opportunities.

- Identify gaps and opportunities in the delivery of skill building, leadership and education opportunities
- Develop a sustainable skill building, leadership and education funding model for the province
- Identify standardized criteria and competencies for outdoor recreation leadership
- Partner with and support existing stakeholders

4. Professional Networking and Development

Provide and promote opportunities for outdoor professionals and enthusiasts to meet face to face, benefit from professional development events and share best practices and resources.

- Conduct a professional development needs assessment of network members and stakeholders
- Offer an annual event to bring network members and stakeholders together
- Coordinate affordable, interdisciplinary and high level learning opportunities for network members
- Have a presence at key outdoor-related events, conferences and gatherings
- Collect and share success stories, best practices and resources with network members



5. Research and Evaluation

Ensure that outdoor recreation policy, practice and evaluation are informed by research and collaboration with academia and researchers.

- Gauge the state of past/current research around outdoor fields (outdoor recreation, outdoor education, outdoor leadership) in Nova Scotia
- Assess the needs for future research in Nova Scotia – at the program evaluation or academic level – of primary and secondary audiences
- Integrate Nova Scotia outdoor research results/needs with broader national and international conversations
- Collect and monitor baseline data/ to help evaluate and advance the network and the outdoor recreation sector
- Share research with network members (through website, LIN, etc.)
- Provide making-the-case and evaluation tools that are evidence-based to network members

6. Advocacy

Facilitate the coming together of outdoor stakeholders that have common interests and goals in order to change or influence policy and practices affecting outdoor recreation.

- Identify the evidence-informed issues, policies and practices the network will address
- Develop and implement an advocacy plan
- Recruit network members, stakeholders and outdoor enthusiasts to advance the advocacy plan
- Partner with and support other groups in their advocacy efforts that are aligned with the network's advocacy goals
- Respond to new and emerging issues that affect the outdoor recreation sector
- Become involved with relevant policy consultation processes

Implementation

The Outdoor Network's annual work plan will be driven by the strategic plan. The work plan will be divided into strategic direction sections. In each section, each objective will be addressed, with corresponding activities, targets, evaluation tools, timelines and responsibilities. Work plans will align with and support the implementation of the Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia.

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