

# VILLAGE OF TESLIN RECREATION CONCEPT PLAN 2009

## Village of Teslin Recreation Concept Plan

Prepared by

Beverly Suderman, Principal  
Michael E. Kelly, Principal  
ME Kelly Consulting  
[Bsuderman2005@gmail.com](mailto:Bsuderman2005@gmail.com)  
Duncan, British Columbia

With

Danica Rice  
Principal & Planning Director  
Valhalla Trails Ltd  
Cowichan Bay, British Columbia

Under the management of

Té Khâ Planning and Development  
Brad Stoneman, Proprietor  
PO Box 286  
Teslin, Yukon Y0A 1B0  
(867) 390 2733

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Teslin Recreation Concept Plan, prepared simultaneously with the Teslin Official Community Plan Review process, suggests that the Village of Teslin take a community development approach to the development of its recreation program. The biggest issue facing the community is the potential burn-out of its recreation staff and key volunteers, due to overwork and perceived lack of support. Volunteerism has dropped off significantly over the past few years. Teslin offers a highly sophisticated set of programmatic offerings and recreational facilities for a community of its size, all of which is dependent on people to organize and implement. Stronger community leadership and ownership of the recreation program is required.

The community proposed that recreation be the foundation (or one of the foundations, along with cultural heritage and surrounding wilderness and lake) for a community-based economic development strategy based on tourism. Should the community decide to pursue this approach, it will have to engage community members in the development of the events, festivals, sports tournaments, or other tourism attractions, again depending on a larger base of people to make it work. Taking such an approach, over time, may generate economic returns that assist with recruiting people to help with the work of hosting such events, but that would certainly not be the case at the beginning.

The community enjoys its recreation, which provides a foundation for developing a more broadly based community leadership and volunteerism initiative. It also provides justification for developing additional recreational facilities, to reflect the changing needs and demands of community members, in particular for seniors and children/youth. The recreation plan is proposing a number of improvements and additions to the existing recreation facility infrastructure to ensure that recreational opportunities are available to all. These are outlined on the map, and include neighbourhood parks, trail development, improvements to the existing facilities, and addressing some gaps in the existing facilities.



1. **Neighbourhood Parks** – Each neighbourhood should have a small park where parents and children can play together. The distance should be no further than a parent with a stroller can reach easily. The old village has a few play areas: the school grounds, the day care, and Friendship Park. New parks are proposed for the Sawmill Road and Airport subdivisions, and Smarchville. A new park is in development at the base of the existing Sawmill subdivision, but it should be moved further north, to be more central once the new subdivision is built.
  
2. **Field Sports** – The baseball diamond area needs improvement. Some smoothing out of the landscape would improve its appearance and make it more welcoming. An archery target practice range could be created near the end of the runway, in the no-build zone east of Airport Road. It would need a wall behind the targets, to catch arrows that miss and to provide safety to whatever or whomever might be behind the targets. Target practice would not be permitted while baseball games are in progress. Safety would be a #1 consideration.
  
3. **Marina Improvements** – A fish cleaning facility should be placed near the water. The boat ramp should be lengthened. The concrete, tires, and other things that have accumulated under the bridge near the marina should be cleaned up.
  
4. **Beach and Community Day Use Park** – The Village should acquire the property across from the RecPlex. An environmental clean up will be required before this area can

be turned into a park. Beach sand will need to be imported to make a beach. A diving platform could be created further out in the lake, so people could swim to it. A water slide could be built so people could slide down into the lake. A small change room and rest room could be built. The rest room could tap into the sewage lift station, which is close by. Canoeing, kayaking, or sailing clubs could use the area to launch for excursions or lessons on the lake. An equipment storage place could be built, or equipment could be stored at the RecPlex.

5. **RecPlex Improvements** – The parking in front of the RecPlex could be transformed into an outdoor community events venue, with a bonfire pit (for winter events) and a stage for music and other performances. An addition to the RecPlex should be built to house a youth centre and seniors centre. These improvements would provide a beautiful gathering place, indoor and outdoor, for the people of Teslin.
6. **Youth Outdoor Recreation Facilities** – Two new facilities are proposed: 1) a BMX bike park with dirt track and jumps trails for BMX-type trick bicycles, with youth engagement in its design and construction; and 2) a new larger skate and bike park, with a greater range of ability-level elements, to replace the existing park. While youth engagement in the design of this facility is desirable, a professional designer with experience in developing combined skate and bike parks should be engaged to do the design work.
7. **Bouldering Wall** – Bouldering is like rock climbing, but without ropes. It focuses on strong moves, rather than climbing high. Bouldering walls are about 3 m high. They require padded floors in case people fall. The school would like to build an indoor bouldering wall.
8. **Shoreline Walking Path** – The community has wanted a shoreline walking path for a long time. Some of the shoreline might be too narrow for making a path, or too muddy, so some of the pathway might be better on the road. The path should connect with paths outside of the Village to go to Fox Point and the Heritage Centre. The path should go underneath the bridge to connect the motel and RV park with the village, without having to cross the highway.
9. **Trans Canada Trail** -- In 2009, the Trans Canada Trail route through the Yukon was finalized. It will go through Teslin. The focus will be on snowmobile touring, but the trail that is developed will be available also for summer hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, and other travellers who are not on the highway. The community has to make some decisions. Will the trail go through Teslin along the highway, or through the community? What kinds of signs will be put up to help travellers decide to spend some time in Teslin? The Village should try to get a pedestrian lane across the bridge as part of this trail. What other kinds of improvements should the Village try for as part of the Trans Canada Trail development?

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# INTRODUCTION

As part of the Teslin Official Community Plan review process, the Village of Teslin commissioned Té Khâ Planning and Development Services to develop a Recreation Plan for the Village, to be developed simultaneously with the revised Official Community Plan, and together with the Village Square Concept Plan.

Recreation is a very important part of Teslin's community life. In early 2009, the Village of Teslin (population of 450 people) fielded three hockey teams in the Yukon Aboriginal hockey tournament, an impressive accomplishment for a community of its size. There are facilities for winter sports, both indoor and outdoor. There are facilities for summer recreation activities, concentrated on the outdoors. There is an extensive trail network throughout the village, for both winter and summer use. There is an active music scene, as well as dedication to the traditional arts and other cultural traditions of the Teslin Tlingit people.

The Village of Teslin and the Teslin Tlingit Council both invest heavily in maintaining and enhancing the recreation experience for the people of Teslin. In both cases, this investment results from a concern to maintain a high quality of life for community members, and to promote a healthy community.

The Teslin Tlingit Council has the additional concern to maintain a vibrant Tlingit culture through their cultural programming. This programming is designed to assist youth to acquire traditional skills, and support the transference of culture and language through the involvement of Tlingit elders. A strong sense of self based on culture is vital to the maintenance of a vibrant community. The Village supports Teslin Tlingit cultural aspirations and related programming.

Lastly, the community recognizes a potentially strong linkage between their uniqueness and the quality of life they enjoy with economic development, particularly if the unique characteristics and features of life in Teslin could be packaged as a component of an economic development strategy for Teslin.

## HOW RECREATION PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The Teslin Recreation Concept Plan was developed as part of the Official Community Plan Review process. Initial community consultation workshops were held during the last week of May 2009. A graphic recording process augmented the discussions and conventional note taking. The mural that resulted from the specific focus group related to development of the Recreation concept plan is featured on the cover of this report. Given the naturally overlapping considerations of community members when discussing other components of the Official Community Plan Review, ideas also emerged at other sessions.

A summary of the ideas that emerged during this workshop includes:

- ❑ High levels of community engagement in recreation activities, whether as participants or organizers;
- ❑ Overcoming barriers to participation in recreational activities;
- ❑ Developing community skills and abilities to exercise leadership in recreation;

- ❑ Increased support for recreational programming for seniors and youth, and ways to bring the generations together through recreation;
- ❑ Increased levels and diversity of recreation activities, supported by increased staffing;
- ❑ Teslin as a tourism destination, based on recreation;
- ❑ Better use of the lake for non-motorized recreational activities, including sailing, ice sailing, canoeing, beach;
- ❑ Better indoor recreational facilities, particularly for youth;
- ❑ Awesome weekend events/festivals featuring sports or music or other cultural activities;
- ❑ Improving the aesthetics of the recreational facilities and the community as a whole;
- ❑ Improving the overall health and well being of the community.

Community input was augmented by an analysis of the current state of recreational facilities, programming, and policies, which are documented in this report.

The draft Recreation Concept Plan was presented to the community in September 2009 at follow-up community consultations, again part of the Official Community Plan review process. Generally the ideas presented in the plan were acceptable to the community members. No major concerns were expressed. There were a few suggestions, which should be addressed as part of detailed implementation planning. These included concerns about:

- ❑ The proposed waterfront trail through the Village. Due to lake level fluctuations, and due to the narrow space remaining between developed Village land and the water, any infrastructure related to a waterfront trail would be at risk from ice movement and/or flooding.
- ❑ Potential conflict between the community development thrust of this recreation plan, and the creation of neighbourhood based play parks, which may lead to greater neighbourhood identification and less community identification.

## RECREATION PLAN STRUCTURE

The Recreation Plan is structured into two major parts. Part 1 contains the situational analysis of Teslin recreation, including an assessment/overview of the existing recreation programming, facilities, and policy, identifying issues that emerge from the analysis. Part 2 contains the Recreation Concept Plan, based on the results of the community consultation together with the assessment of the existing recreation framework in Teslin. Part 3 contains recommendations from the consulting team as to how Teslin may wish to proceed with making changes to its recreation system.

## RECREATION CONCEPT PLAN LIMITATIONS

This Recreation Plan, prepared for the Village of Teslin alongside the Official Community Plan review process in 2009, is a concept plan only. For further development of any of the programming, policy or facility recommendations, further detailed study is required.

# PART 1: SITUATION ANALYSIS

Part 1 of the Teslin Recreation Plan looks at the current recreation programming, facilities, and policy to determine any issues which need to be resolved as the Village of Teslin moves forward with its new recreation plan.

## CURRENT RECREATION PROGRAM

The Village of Teslin has a very vigorous, innovative, and diverse recreation program, thanks to the commitment and energy of the Recreation Programmer, who plans, markets, and raises funds for recreation programming, and the volunteers who assist with organizing and delivery.

Recreation programming in Teslin encompasses sports and athletics, healthy living events, traditional Tlingit cultural opportunities, music, and community-building activities of all kinds. Outdoor recreation opportunities, which vary by season, include archery, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, skateboarding, snow machine races, and a special camp to learn winter survival skills.

Indoor recreation opportunities, which also vary by season, include hockey and other team sports, circuit training, yoga, free skating, curling, badminton, dances, Tlingit dance, breakdancing, carpet bowling (for seniors), music events (including guitar hero competitions), and movie nights. The ice & curling rinks are closed for the summer at the end of March. A weight room was completed in August 2009.

The Recreation Program supports an assortment of clubs and groups that meet regularly, including moccasin workshops, sewing and beading opportunities. Opportunities are developed specifically for children, youth, seniors, as well as inter-generational events, as appropriate.

Expeditions are organized through the school, the Teslin Tlingit Council, or through the Village of Teslin. In 2009, there were ski trips, and paintball trips.

Community building events include opportunities like the Valentine's Tea, Mother's Day brunch, youth dances, tournaments, bonspiels, curling workshops, and open microphone nights at the Recplex.

According to the Recreation Programmer, Teslin has three major annual community events each year:

- ❑ Mini Rendezvous (an end of winter festival, involving traditional games, crafts, and a pancake breakfast). In 2009, this festival included hockey, snow machine racing, and a Much Music Video dance;
- ❑ Canada Day (a summer festival, benefiting from the long hours of daylight, which includes a pancake breakfast, parade, and games<sup>1</sup>, as well as an evening supper); and
- ❑ Yukon Women in Song Music Festival.

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<sup>1</sup> Games in 2009 included archery, bike relay races, axe throwing competitions, canoe races, and kids games.

Both Canada Day and Mini-Rendezvous have been celebrated in the Village of Teslin for the past 40 years. The Music Festival idea has been around for a considerably shorter period of time.

However, in 2009, it appears that in addition to these three major events, there was a concert in the park (held July 5, and involving 8 hours of music, a BBQ, artist vendors and beer gardens), and the TTC-sponsored Ha Kus Teyea Celebration from July 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>.

Several Teslin-based organizations are concerned almost exclusively with recreation. These include:

- Teslin Recreation Society, which coordinates recreation activities within Teslin, and assists with grant submissions and the organization of events;
- Teslin Cross Country Sport Club (TCCSC), which focuses on running, walking, and skiing;
- Teslin Hockey Association; and
- Teslin Archery Club.

Other organizations or institutions that are concerned with recreation, but as only part of their mandate, include:

- Teslin School, which provides the use of its gymnasium in support of recreational activities and makes extensive use of the Recplex facility, as part of school-based programming;
- Teslin Seniors, which organizes recreational and other types of activities for older members of the Teslin community; and
- Teslin Tlingit Council, which is concerned to promote healthy lifestyles for its members.

## RECREATION PROGRAMMING ISSUES

Issues about recreation programming that emerged as part of the planning process include:

1. The need to engage more Village members in the development and implementation of recreation programming. The concern is that the staff members and core group of volunteers run the risk of “burning out” from working too hard to provide this level of recreational programming.
2. The need to engage more Village members to participate in recreation programming. It seems there may be barriers to participation, and the concern is how to overcome those barriers so that community members who are not currently living a healthy lifestyle can participate. The community participants identified addictions, mental health issues, and poverty as being among the barriers to be addressed. Many of these issues have been linked to the legacy of residential schools and the impacts of other past assimilation policies. These require cultural sensitivity and healing to be overcome.

3. The diversity of programming requires a lot of resources to be brought in from outside the community, leading to financial costs<sup>2</sup> and concerns about the sustainability of the offerings. If the participation fee is too high, community members are unable or choose not to participate. What is the ability and willingness of community members to pay for its recreational programming? How can the recreation program find the right balance?
4. Recreation provides the potential basis for linking with a Village-based or region-wide economic development strategy based on recreation. Building on the strength of the existing recreation programming (and facilities), it may be possible to develop ideas for events, which would bring other people to the community to participate on a year-round basis. The vision for this is “Teslin as a recreation mecca for the Yukon.” Ideas that were generated included: a music festival featuring First Nation entertainers, snow machine races, hockey tournaments, canoe races, outdoor movie nights, showcase for traditional skills and crafts. What is the interest and willingness and readiness of the residents and businesses of Teslin to participate in such an economic development venture?

## CURRENT FACILITIES

The Village of Teslin is blessed with a highly sophisticated system of recreation facilities for a community of its size. Teslin residents enjoy great access to both water and land based outdoor recreation activities. There is an extensive trail network, although the trails tend to be informal, rather than being constructed to official trail standards. There is a boardwalk near the RecPlex, which the community is very proud of and would like to expand upon.

The community also enjoys a large number of built recreation facilities including:

- Curling rink,
- Indoor ice/hockey arena,
- Community centre,
- Baseball diamond,
- Skateboard park,
- Children’s playground,
- Skiing and walking trails, including a boardwalk,
- Public marina, with outdoor BBQ facility and boat launch, and
- School gymnasium.

The children’s playground in Friendship Park was upgraded in the summer of 2009 with swings and benches. A new children’s play park is in development on Sawmill Road.

The skateboard park was critiqued for being too difficult to learn on, thus being too dangerous and limited in its appeal/use. Older teenagers with skateboarding experience from elsewhere appear to use it on occasion, but the facility is too difficult for aspiring young skateboarders to learn on. It is also too small to permit joint use with BMX bikes.

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<sup>2</sup> While specifics of recreation programming costs were not available, the tax base and other revenue sources from Teslin community members account for only 20% of the cost of Village operations. The remaining 80% comes from grants from various levels of government.

There were a number of suggestions for improving the recently upgraded marina facility, including:

- ❑ Adding a fish cleaning table or other facility near the lake, so that there would be ready access to water to clean the fish (and the table);
- ❑ Lengthening the boat ramp; and
- ❑ Relocating the rest room so that it was not so close to the BBQ and picnic tables.

Village of Teslin public works staff maintains the recreation facilities, in coordination with the Teslin Tlingit Council. The energy costs of the RecPlex are of particular concern, costing \$6,000/month to maintain the artificial ice, resulting in significant amounts of waste heat.

A recreation programmer supports effective use of the recreation facilities by providing the required organization, thus removing some of the burden from community volunteers. A core group of volunteers is very active in delivering recreational activities within Teslin.

## RECREATION FACILITIES ISSUES

Issues about Teslin's recreation facilities include:

1. The community's desire for more and better facilities. Suggestions for additional facilities included:
  - ❑ The creation of a golf course;
  - ❑ The creation of an off-leash dog park for residents and visitors (tourists);
  - ❑ The establishment of a "multiplex activity centre" to include a climbing wall, a bowling alley, a swimming pool, a running track, a gym, bumper cars, and a "Subway" sandwich restaurant;
  - ❑ Better use of the lake, including the establishment of a canoeing and sailing facility, and a public beach with a day use area. Ice sailing could be developed as a winter activity;
  - ❑ Improved skateboarding opportunities, potentially combined with BMX bike trick or motocross-style trail riding;
  - ❑ The establishment of a seniors centre (since a youth centre was already in development), or a youth/elder centre, providing community members with a place to "hang out."
2. The community's desire for more trails, and an enhanced boardwalk that provides good exercise opportunities and destinations.
3. The community's desire to improve the aesthetics of Teslin's recreation facilities, with specific reference to improving the appearance of the RecPlex, and providing more green space.
4. Energy costs and other matters related to the financial and ecological sustainability of Teslin's recreation facilities.
5. Accessibility of the recreation facilities, particularly for seniors and others with disabilities or limited mobility.
6. Determining the right level of investment in community recreation facilities, given changing fashions in recreational activities.

## CURRENT RECREATION POLICY

Teslin's 1999 Official Community Plan included a section on "Parks and Open Space" which contained a significant amount of policy direction for recreation. The objective identified for lands designated for parks and open space was to provide a range of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community and preserve open spaces for the physical and social well-being of the community. Policies<sup>3</sup> in support of recreation included:

- ❑ Village Council will support a range of year round recreational opportunities to be available within the community, which reflect the age, gender and lifestyle interests of community residents.
- ❑ Village Council will work with the Teslin Tlingit Council to prepare a waterfront development plan to encourage resident and tourist use of the lakeshore.
- ❑ Village Council will support the identification and development of a community wide trail system linking all parts of the community including the lakeshore to Fox Point, the community centre, school and Hermit Lake.
- ❑ Village Council will ensure the community's parks and recreation facilities are developed for year round use to the maximum extent possible.
- ❑ Village Council will ensure all public recreation facilities take into account the needs of persons with disabilities in their design, construction and programming.
- ❑ Village Council will work with the Teslin Tlingit Council to investigate ways to improve recreational programming so that all existing facilities including the school are fully utilised.
- ❑ Village Council will work towards providing a range of recreational activity spaces, which provide residents of all ages with the opportunity for quiet solitude, collective participation, education and appreciation of the local culture and environment.
- ❑ Village Council will require the provision of supporting infrastructure such as sidewalks, benches, landscaping and lighting to encourage walking and ensure a safe, pleasant experience.

These policies continue to reflect the recreation desires of the community, and will be carried forward into the 2009 Official Community Plan. As policy, these statements continue to reflect the aspirations of the people of Teslin for their recreation programming and facilities.

## RECREATION POLICY ISSUES

Aside from the policy decisions/choices discussed in the sections on programming and facilities issues, Teslin has very few issues related specifically to existing recreation policy. The Village policies are well aligned with the Teslin Tlingit Council's *Community Development Plan* (2000) as well as the joint *Sustainability Plan*'s policy suggestions.

The major policy issue is to find the right balance for the community between the provision of recreation facilities and programming, and the financial sustainability of doing so, both from a

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from the Teslin 1999 Official Community Plan, section 5.11.

capital costs and ongoing maintenance and programming costs perspective. A directly relevant concern is the ability and willingness for community members to pay for their recreation activities.

Resolution of this issue is a matter for careful planning and reflection as additional facility or programming investments are contemplated. Village members and cooperating governments need to understand, and be comfortable with the cost-benefit trade-offs of enhanced recreational facilities in Teslin.

A second policy issue is to address participation goals more directly. According to the Sustainability Plan, “impediments to healthy lifestyles do exist in the community. Costs for some recreational programs are increasing as the expenses associated with them increase or the participation rate decreases. Waterfront use is somewhat limited due to access difficulties and debris along the shoreline. Residents who suffer from substance abuse are unable to enjoy the full benefits of the activities available.”<sup>4</sup>

The second issue can be addressed by increased partnerships or collaboration between the Village of Teslin (and its recreation department) and other social service organizations located in Teslin. It may be, for example, that specific recreation programming can be developed in conjunction with addictions counselling, improving the effectiveness of the addictions treatment, while assisting the Village to achieve its goal of increased participation by community members who are currently not engaged in recreation programming, and meeting their goal of being “A community that supports the healthy lifestyles of its residents”<sup>5</sup>. There may be other community-based social services that would benefit from tailored recreation programming as well.

A third policy issue is to determine to what extent it is desirable to commit to recreation programming as a component of a larger economic development strategy. While on the face of it, it seems like an excellent fit, particularly if the economic development strategy builds on Teslin’s other assets as well, there are a variety of pros and cons to any economic development strategy based on tourism.

The reasons for communities to undertake such an initiative include the potential for:

- ❑ Increased use of recreation facilities, which can generate revenue to support the operations and maintenance of these facilities, particularly if a user fee is charged for non-community members;
- ❑ Spin-off economic activity through tourist demands for shopping, accommodations, restaurant meals, etc.; and
- ❑ Increased local employment to meet increased demand for services.

The potential drawbacks to attracting tourists to Teslin include:

- ❑ A successful program may result in congestion, or overuse of facilities by visitors, making it difficult for community members to use them;
- ❑ Drug and alcohol or other social problems could be exacerbated, depending on the nature of the tourism that is attracted to Teslin.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Sustainability Plan, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Sustainability Plan, p. 7.

Any community-based tourism initiatives requires that the community be prepared for the impacts and requirements of the increased presence of visitors in the community. Community preparedness includes elements such as:

- ❑ Adequate supplies of food, water, and other supplies/supports, including accommodations and public toilets;
- ❑ Adequate numbers of trained staff to meet increased demand; and
- ❑ Increased policing (additional constables, checkpoints, etc.) for major events that bring large numbers of people into the community for a short time.

Other issues to be addressed include:

- ❑ How narrowly or broadly should Teslin promote recreation for this purpose, i.e. should the focus be on sport-related tourism, like hockey tournaments, curling bonspiels, canoeing races? Or should it be much more broadly promoted, i.e. boating on the lake, hiking and camping in the woods, snow mobile touring, as well as specific events centred in the Village?
- ❑ Who's going to own/operate the recreation-based economic development strategy? Is it going to be driven by the public sector, i.e. the municipal government or Teslin Tlingit Council? Or by the private sector, i.e. local businesses? Or some combination of the two with a clearly defined partnership?
- ❑ The need for a village-based communications strategy & broad-based marketing strategy. The village-based communications strategy would keep village members informed about upcoming events, and make sure that they were engaged/involved and prepared for a major community event. The marketing strategy gets the message out to the larger world to make sure that tourists come to the planned event to make it a success.

## OTHER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

In 2009, the Klondike Snowmobile Association, which is the lead Yukon-based organization for the Trans Canada Trail, identified the complete routing for the Yukon portion of the trail. It will go through Teslin. Apparently, the Association has not been in touch with anybody from Teslin for 10 years, so this would be a good time for Teslin to get in touch with them, to influence how the trail is developed and to identify the benefits the community will receive from having the Trans Canada Trail run through Teslin.

The development of the Trans Canada Trail through Teslin indicates that there will be year-round tourism developing in Teslin itself, particularly since it is the snowmobile association that has taken the lead. Their focus will be primarily on snowmobile touring, but the trails that are developed will be available also for summer hikers, cyclists, and other long-distance, non-highway travellers.

Key decisions include:

- Trail routing through Teslin – along the highway, or through the community, potentially along Nisutlin Drive;
- Development of way finding signage and town entry kiosks (gateways); and

- Any other improvements the Village wishes to lobby for, including a safe pedestrian lane across the Nisutlin Bridge, sturdy enough to support snowmobiles and other non-road transportation, including horses.

During the Recreation focus group meeting in September 2009, a Teslin committee to address these questions, and to initiate conversation with the Klondike Snowmobile Association was established. Volunteers members included: Autum Jules, Randy Koe, John McCormick, Nataschaa Chatterton, and Billy Smarch. Doug Hogan agreed to take the matter to the Teslin Recreation Society to determine whether or not they were willing to take the lead on this initiative, and chair the committee.

Working closely with the Klondike Snowmobile Association on the development of the stretch of Trans Canada Trail routing through Teslin could bring significant benefits to the community, including:

- ❑ Improved long distance trail development in the Teslin region;
- ❑ Improved safety for snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles in the Teslin region, due to improved availability of off-road trails;
- ❑ If a snowmobile club is formed in Teslin in association with the Klondike Snowmobile Association, it could lead to improved safety through improved knowledge of snowmobile operation;
- ❑ Increased tourism, and longer or more tourism seasons in a year, with the economic benefits and job creation that would accrue; and
- ❑ Potential job creation for trail maintenance activities.

## SUMMARY

While the Village of Teslin enjoys excellent recreation programming and facilities, and has policy and the political will to support a highly diverse and comprehensive recreation program, issues remain, and choices need to be made about the future direction of Teslin recreation.

Key questions include:

- ❑ What is the role of recreation within the community? Can it fill multiple roles, i.e. healthy lifestyle for residents, as well as economic development generator?
- ❑ What is a sustainable level of recreation programming for Teslin, given human resource capacity (staffing and volunteers), and financial requirements for both construction and maintenance?
- ❑ How can Teslin fulfill the potential of its recreation programming through greater participation of more Teslanders in both participation and implementation of recreation programming?
- ❑ Which of the desired facilities from the community's wish list are desirable and feasible? Which have such limited appeal or are so expensive that they do not merit further attention?

Community consultation, together with this analysis, indicate that key areas for consideration include:

- ❑ Enhancements to:

- Recreation facilities, particularly lake access and the development of a seniors and youth centre, to remedy weaknesses/gaps in the current roster of facilities.
- The existing Recplex, to increase its year-round useable space, energy efficiency, and accessibility.
- Existing trails network.
- Increased partnerships and volunteer development for the Recreation program.
- Increased attention to sustainability as a consideration for any programming or facilities decision.

# PART 2: RECREATION CONCEPT PLAN

Based on the existing recreation programming, facilities, and policy, together with input from community consultations conducted in May 2009, Part 2 outlines the vision, goals, principles, new policies, action plans, and recommendations for moving forward to further develop recreation in Teslin.

## VISION

Recreation in Teslin builds community by bridging cultures and generations through engagement in a variety of healthy and sustainable recreational experiences. Recreation includes: sports and athletics; the arts; community building events; and traditional cultural activities. A strong network of community volunteers support recreational programming and activities.

## GOALS

1. To provide a variety of quality indoor and outdoor, year round recreation facilities and programs for residents and visitors.
2. To provide a wide range of program opportunities and events for residents and visitors to engage in sporting and athletic activities.
3. To provide a wide range of program opportunities and events for residents and visitors to engage in and share Teslin culture, arts, and leisure activities.
3. To provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster appreciation, enjoyment, and respect for local parks, trails, and the region's natural environment and ecosystems.
4. To develop strong community-based leadership for Teslin recreation through voluntarism.
5. To develop a year-round recreation-based regional economic development strategy that provides opportunities for cross-cultural experiences, leadership development, and partnerships.

## PRINCIPLES

### *Sustainability:*

1. To provide facilities that are designed and constructed for efficient maintenance, and sustainable long-term operation costs.
2. To pursue programming and events that are economically efficient and that have limited (if any) negative environmental impacts on land, air or water.
3. To appropriately adapt facilities for use on a year-round basis.

*Cultural Appreciation:*

Working collaboratively with the Teslin Tlingit Council, and in a culturally-sensitive manner, to provide opportunities to share, reinforce, and respect Teslin Tlingit culture and cultural values, including a feeling of connection to the land.

*Community Ownership:*

To provide opportunities for residents, visitors and groups to volunteer and develop leadership and community-based ownership of Village events, programs, festivals and facilities.

*Building Partnerships:*

To develop relationships and partnerships between the Village of Teslin and governments, businesses and non-profit organizations on a community, regional, territorial, and federal level to enhance opportunities for sustainable economic, social, environmental, and transportation development through recreation.

*Program Variety:*

To provide a variety of year-round experiences for a diversity of user types, age, skill, and ability levels. Where possible, intergenerational integration will be encouraged as appropriate to programming objectives, i.e. seniors and youth, parents and children. Opportunities for innovative programming ideas and creative expression will be encouraged.

*Safe public access:*

To provide locals and visitors with a physically and emotionally safe place to enjoy and participate in recreation-based activities and events, regardless of physical ability/disability or age.

*Effective Signage and Way Finding:*

To provide clear and concise signage that guides tourists and locals to recreation destinations. Signage should be consistent throughout the Village, through sign design (size, colour, lettering) and branding.<sup>6</sup> Signage may take the form of way finding (directional), regulatory (bylaw) or interpretive (cultural or maps).

*Minimization of user conflicts:*

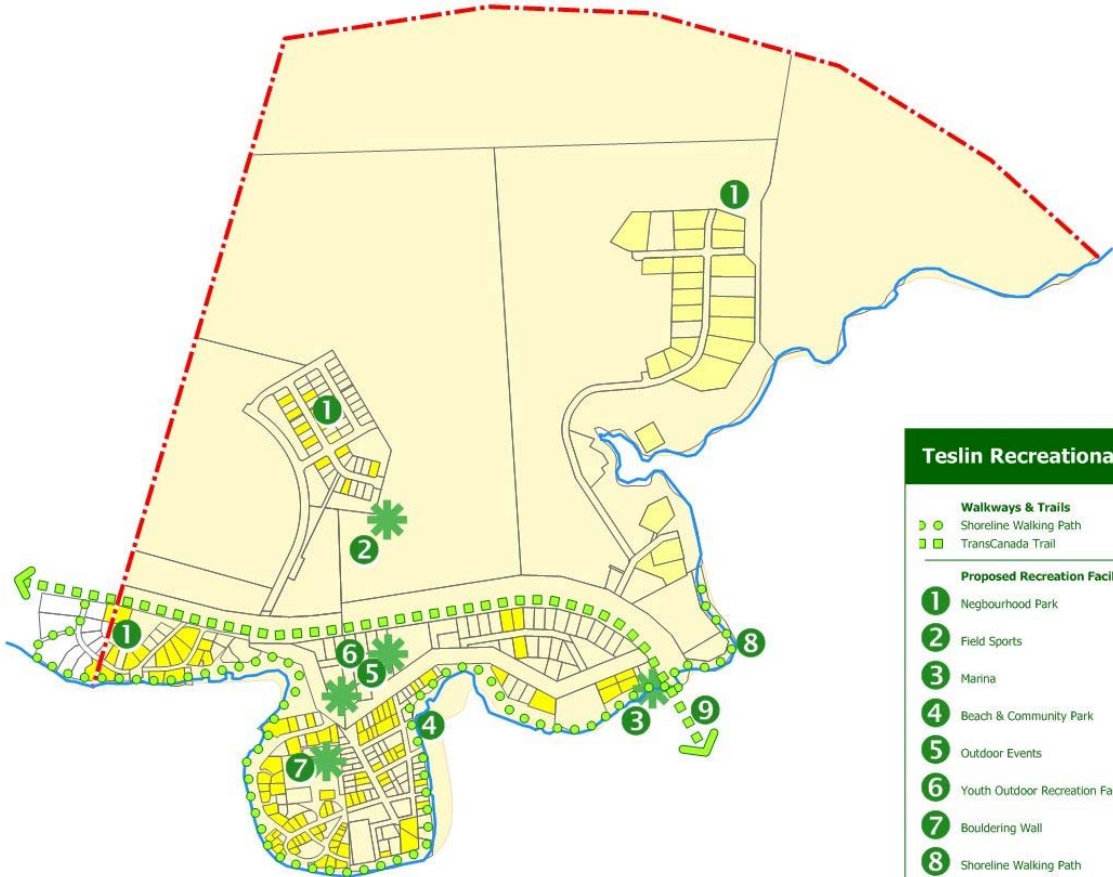
To provide facilities, program activities and events that:

- Minimize potential user conflicts,
- Make an effort to build consensus, and
- Provide necessary regulations, signage and thoughtful and just decision-making to ensure safe and sustainable experiences.

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<sup>6</sup> Branding means the use of the Village of Teslin logo or other “brand” to give a consistent look to the signs, and to designate these signs as “official” and therefore, reliable.

RECREATION CONCEPT PLAN



**Teslin Recreational Plan**

**Walkways & Trails**

- Shoreline Walking Path
- TransCanada Trail

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**Proposed Recreation Facility Sites**

- ① Neighbourhood Park
- ② Field Sports
- ③ Marina
- ④ Beach & Community Park
- ⑤ Outdoor Events
- ⑥ Youth Outdoor Recreation Facilities
- ⑦ Bouldering Wall
- ⑧ Shoreline Walking Path
- ⑨ TransCanada Trail

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**Existing Recreation Facility Sites**

- ★

## RECREATION PLAN COMPONENTS, POLICIES & ACTIONS

The components of the Teslin Recreation Concept Plan include the following:

1. Recreation programming and facilities,
2. Trails,
3. Parks, and
4. Community development.

The ideas offered here build on existing policy and initiatives, together with the ideas that emerged as part of the public consultation process in May 2009, drawing together the themes and threads of discussion into a single Teslin Recreation Plan.

### 1. RECREATION PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES

While the community is blessed with a highly sophisticated and comprehensive set of recreation facilities, there are a few gaps or challenges in the existing recreation infrastructure that should be addressed, and a few additional facilities that should be added.

The gaps include recreational access to the lake, a mid-sized outdoor community event venue, and a seniors and youth centre, whether separate or combined. The creation of these three facilities would strengthen the “heart” of the community, which is currently centred on the RecPlex.

Areas needing improvement include the current skateboard park, the marina, and the baseball diamond area. The baseball diamond itself resides in splendid isolation near the runway approach (no-build) zone. The creation of an archery target practice field directly in the runway approach zone would assist with developing skills and strength for a traditional activity, and address a community need.

Additional indoor winter recreational opportunities that are likely to appeal to youth and children are also desirable. The school would like to build a bouldering wall, so that opportunity is integrated into proposed new recreational facilities as well.

### RECREATION PROGRAM AND FACILITIES POLICY AND PLANNING

Proposed policy includes:

- ❑ To provide places where people can comfortably gather to socialize, plan and enjoy opportunities associated with the development and preservation of Teslin art and leisure and cultural activities.
- ❑ To provide a place for residents to gather, organize and conduct activities in a social and locally pleasing setting.
- ❑ To provide residents and visitors with low-cost, well designed, energy efficient, universally accessible, and sustainable recreation facilities that have been constructed to high quality standards.

- ❑ To provide a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities that are based on land and water activities that promote the development of a variety of necessary skills in the arts, cultural and community capacity building.
- ❑ To provide sufficient and quality facilities that provide opportunities for the Village and surrounding area to host tournaments, festivals and events such as soccer, baseball, ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, among others.
- ❑ To develop indoor and outdoor recreation programs that are suited to a broad range of interests, ages and backgrounds that meet the varying recreation and seasonal needs of the people of Teslin, including activities that progressively increase skill levels.
- ❑ To develop local or region-wide recreation-based indoor and outdoor community events, workshops, races, festivals and competitions that are varied and meet the changing needs of the community.

#### PUBLIC BEACH

Recreational access to the lake is addressed through the creation of a public beach and community day use park along the lakeshore near the RecPlex. This part of the lake, a very small bay, is very shallow, and its water tends to warm up more than the rest of the lake in the summer, making it ideal for non-motorized water-based recreation.

To make the beach a reality, the Village will need to acquire the properties across Nisutlin Drive from the RecPlex currently occupied by Frank's Automotive Repair. Because of its current use, it is anticipated that an environmental clean up will be required before this area can be turned into a park and beach. Beach sand will need to be imported because the current soils stratum is a mix of pebbles, silt and clay, which turns muddy when wet. Any infrastructure built to enhance the beach experience would have to be built above flood levels, and high enough on the beach to be spared damage from ice movement in the spring.

Beach enhancements could include:

- ❑ A diving platform at a swimmable distance out in the lake, located at a depth that would encourage diving.
- ❑ A water slide built on the shore so that people could slide down into the lake, landing with a big splash.
- ❑ A small change room and rest room. The rest room could tap into the nearby sewage lift station.
- ❑ Canoeing, kayaking, or sailing clubs could use the area to launch excursions or lessons on the lake. NOTE: Motorized boats can be launched from the marina, and would have to be prohibited from this area, due to the silty bottom.
- ❑ An equipment storage place could be built, or equipment could be stored at the RecPlex.

Proposed policy for the creation of a public beach:

- ❑ Provide a waterfront park that is trail accessible, useful year-round, that includes uses such as a safe swimming area, canoeing, sailing, picnicking, children's play, ice fishing, kayak or sailboat boat dock, small boat storage, a beach, washroom facilities, an all

season structure for users, snack bar etc. Winter uses may include Nordic club house or ice fishing warming hut.

#### OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENT VENUE

The Village Square Plan is proposing to contain vehicles and parking, making a large central green space possible, extending from the RecPlex to Nisutlin Drive and from the RecPlex entry to the Municipal Hall parking area. While larger events will continue to use the grass play fields, smaller events would be better accommodated in a central green area.

The community desired a smaller gathering space for festivals and community events such as Mini Rendezvous, Canada Day, and Yukon Women in Song Music Festival. Bonfires are required for the winter events, and a stage is useful for all of these events, which incorporate music and other types of performance.

The Village Square Plan proposes that a demountable stage be installed, with some mounting structures permanently built into the grass area to make the erection of a tent or other tensile structure and stage an easier task. This would ensure that the views from the seniors/youth centre in the proposed addition to the RecPlex would not be impeded when the stage was not required.

It also proposes a bonfire pit, thereby meeting the community's requirement for a mid-size outdoor gathering place.

#### SENIORS AND YOUTH CENTRE

The seniors/youth centre, whether created as a joint facility or two separate facilities, would require adequate space for both groups, and some programming would have to be determined to see how that space would need to be organized. An effective place to build the seniors and youth centres would be as an addition to the existing RecPlex.

The proposed addition would be made up of two stories, creating a step-wise approach to the front of the RecPlex, breaking up the monolithic appearance of the current facility. The lower floor would project further into the area currently being used as a parking lot, permitting the creation of a roof deck to be accessed from the second storey. The roof deck would overlook the central grass area and event space, and could provide a very pleasant seating area in the summer months, whether for a coffee shop, or as part of the seniors centre. The projected floor space for this addition is roughly equivalent to that of the existing "sick" historic building, so would compensate for the building's loss, should it be demolished.

The proposed addition is envisioned to be constructed with lots of glass to capitalize on the views across the lake of the Three Aces mountain, and benefit from passive solar orientation from its south-facing exposure. It should be constructed to use waste heat from the ice hockey arena, so as to require little (if any) additional heating. It would be constructed to be fully accessible for seniors or people with disabilities.

#### SKATEBOARD PARK REPLACEMENT

The issue with the existing skateboard park is that apparently it is too difficult to learn on, thus being too dangerous and limited in its appeal/use. Older teenagers with skateboarding experience

from elsewhere appear to use it on occasion, but the facility is too difficult for aspiring young skateboarders to learn on. It is also too small to permit joint use with BMX bikes.

Therefore two new facilities are proposed:

- 1) A BMX bike park with dirt track and jumps trails for BMX-type trick bicycles, with youth engagement in its design and construction; and
- 2) A new larger skate and bike park, with a greater range of ability-level elements, to replace the existing park.

While youth engagement in the design of the combined skate and bike park facility is desirable, a professional designer with experience in developing combined skate and bike parks should be engaged to do the design work.

Developing a BMX bike park in the forested area between the RecPlex and the highway should be relatively cost-effective to do. There are some articles available on the internet which provide advice, starting with how to plan it out, and keeping as many trees as possible, to keep the route interesting. Construction should be completed with shovels or other hand equipment, and not with heavy equipment. A committee of youth who will use this facility should be created to help plan it and build it, together with the Village Public Works Foreman and the Recreation Manager. For more information check out these websites:

<http://www.genesbmx.com/build-dirt-jumps.html>, and  
<http://www.atbmx.com/articles/build.html>.

Developing a new larger combined skate and bike park will be more expensive, and will require an experienced designer to avoid the kinds of problems that the original skateboard park is experiencing.

#### BOULDERING WALL

Another physically challenging and fun facility for winter indoor recreation is bouldering, which is like rock climbing, but without ropes. It focuses on strong moves, rather than climbing high. Bouldering walls are about 3 m high. They require padded floors in case people fall. The handholds/footholds can be moved occasionally to create different routes, so that the facility is always changing and continues to present challenges. The school would like to build an indoor bouldering wall, and they've identified an area to build it. If designed to be flexible, this would be a great addition to the Village's recreation facilities for children, youth, and young adults.

A bouldering/climbing team should be developed along with the facility to assist with teaching those new to the sport how to approach it, to manipulate the bouldering wall for use by different groups of people (children, youth, and adults), and to keep the bouldering wall interesting over time, through the creation of new routes.

#### MARINA IMPROVEMENTS

Marina improvements should include:

- ❑ Adding a fish cleaning table or other facility near the lake, so that there would be ready access to water to clean the fish (and the table);
- ❑ Lengthening the boat ramp; and
- ❑ Cleaning up the debris (concrete, tires and other things) that has accumulated under the bridge near the marina.

Relocating the restroom is a desirable outcome, but a lower priority than the other improvements, in part because it would be very expensive to do.

#### BASEBALL DIAMOND AREA

The baseball diamond itself is a very good facility, but the area around it needs improvement. The ground is currently very lumpy, with piles of vegetation that have not been removed after a vegetation management exercise, making the area look uncared for. Some smoothing out of the landscape would improve its appearance and make it more welcoming.

#### ARCHERY

An archery target practice range could be created near the end of the runway, in the no-build zone east of Airport Road. It would need a wall behind the targets, to catch arrows that miss and to provide safety to whatever or whomever might be behind the targets. Target practice would not be permitted while baseball games are in progress. Safety would be a #1 consideration.

The Village would want to work with Elder Sam Johnson, youth, and other community members with an interest in archery to determine how best to set up an archery target practice zone, and how to diversify archery skills training opportunities. For example, while it is not appropriate in the runway approach zone because of the need for trees, it would be highly desirable to develop other types of archery practice facilities, including field archery, with ever changing routes with varying target distances, or outdoor 3-D target shooting, which mimics hunting by using targets in the shape of animals. For more information, see the Fort Collins Archery Association website at <http://www.ftcollinsarchery.com/range/range.html> or this article from the National Field Archery Association about the various types of archery competitions (<http://www.nfaa-archery.org/field/info.cfm>).

## 2. TRAILS

While there are many trails in Teslin, almost all are informal, unsigned, and may or may not be maintained. There can be problems with trail user conflicts, particularly between motorized and non-motorized trail uses.

As part of the Official Community Plan review process, a request was made that a separate trail system be developed for quads and snowmobiles, because these vehicles (which are used as primary transportation by many people) are not road legal.

The community has wanted a shoreline walking path for a long time, which should be investigated further. The Trans Canada Trail's Yukon routing has been identified, and the trail goes through Teslin.

Many of these challenges are best addressed through policy and detailed planning, although some trail development is also desirable.

#### TRAILS POLICY AND PLANNING

Proposed policy includes:

- ❑ Trails should be developed that create opportunities for health and fitness promotion, allowing residents to walk or bike, ski or snowshoe to destinations depending on the season and to reduce resident dependence on the automobile. Trail connections that encourage people to walk to visit each other, or to complete personal business at essential businesses and services, strengthen communities as well as promote the health of community residents.
- ❑ Trails should be developed as a tourism resource, linking hotels, campgrounds, and RV parks to other tourism destinations around Teslin.
- ❑ A Trails Master Plan for Teslin should be developed. It would examine the local and regional trail network including the Trans Canada Trail and provide recommendations for sustainable trail improvements to existing trails and suggestions for future trail system expansion. The plan should include an inventory of all Village and surrounding regional trails, trail types and standards for construction and a detailed and staked trail layout of sustainable existing and potential trails. A cost analysis and phasing plan should also be included to be prepared for grant opportunities that may arise in the future.
- ❑ Trails should be designed to create a sustainable system that connects to all major destinations including: all residential neighbourhoods, the RecPlex, the school, the ball fields, waterfront park and other public facilities such as the post office, Village offices, library, and longhouse, daycare facilities as well as to provide public trail access to cultural and geographic landmarks such as historic sites, waterways and prominent viewpoints.
- ❑ To avoid user conflicts and ensure user safety, signage that clarifies regulations for motorized and non-motorized use and dogs access on trails should be developed and included in new Village bylaws.
- ❑ Where new residential developments are being created, as well as to provide connections from existing residential developments to key destinations and neighbourhoods, the Village should emphasize trail development as an alternative or adjunct to roads.

#### SHORELINE WALKING PATH

The community has wanted a shoreline walking path for a long time. Some of the shoreline through the Village and west of the village along the highway might be too narrow for making a path, or too muddy, so some of the pathway might be better on the road (through the Village) or connecting the to the existing George Johnson trail on the north side of the highway (to the west of the village). The path should connect with paths outside of the Village to go to Fox Point and the Heritage Centre. The path should go underneath the bridge to connect the motel and RV park with the village, without having to cross the highway. This trail should connect to the proposed beach/ community waterfront day use park so that it can be accessed and enjoyed all year round.

#### TRANS CANADA TRAIL

The routing of the Trans Canada Trail through Teslin provides the community with many opportunities:

- ❑ Economic development, because it will bring new types of visitors into the community who will require accommodations, meals, and other services;
- ❑ Enhanced trails through the community, thereby improving the quality of life for community residents, and
- ❑ Opportunities to improve the signage and other ways of communicating with all tourists, not just trail users.

One of the key enhancements to the community that might be more amenable to negotiation in light of the Trans Canada Trail designation is to add a pedestrian lane to the Nisutlin Bridge. Cost estimates for adding a “clip-on” pedestrian lane range from \$600,000 to \$1,000,000. To date, the Yukon Highways Department has been reluctant to engage with serious planning for such an enhancement. However, with the creation of the Trans Canada Trail, a long-distance trail to connect all of Canada, there may be points of negotiation that were not previously possible. Apparently, the bridge itself is due for significant maintenance as well, which provides another opportunity for economies to be garnered from the inclusion of such an initiative.

To capitalize on the opportunities presented by the routing of the Trans Canada Trail through Teslin, the Village should:

- ❑ Work closely with the Klondike Snowmobile Association to develop, maintain and include the Trans Canada Trail alignment through Teslin.
- ❑ Create a subcommittee including members of local area motorized and non-motorized, summer and winter clubs (Cross-country Teslin, ATV, snowmobile) to help plan appropriately for the development of the Trans Canada Trail in Teslin.
- ❑ Encourage residents to become active members of the snowmobile association and engage with its volunteer efforts including the maintenance and development of the trail lookout, interpretive signage and other amenities.
- ❑ Provide a Trans Canada Trail alignment that leaves the Alaskan Highway and navigates through the central part of Teslin to expose tourists to all the town has to offer.
- ❑ Provide amenities to tourists who are using the Trans Canada Trail, including trailhead signage at both the north and south ends of the Village, washrooms, and shelter.
- ❑ Work closely with the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Klondike Snowmobile Association, and the Trans Canada Trail’s national organization to lobby for bridge improvements to ensure safe pedestrian or non-road vehicle crossing.
- ❑ Seek future trail opportunities that may reach out to surrounding areas such as the TransCanada Pipeline for diversified loop opportunities and trail experiences for locals and visitors.

As part of the community consultations in September 2009, a community committee to plan for the Trans Canada Trail was started. Volunteers include:

- ❑ Doug Hogan – who was going to approach the Teslin Recreation Society members about potentially taking the lead on this committee;
- ❑ Autumn Jules
- ❑ Randy Koe
- ❑ John McCormick
- ❑ Billy Smarch
- ❑ Natascha Chatterton.

### 3. PARKS

Each neighbourhood should have a small park where parents and children can play together. The distance should be no further than a parent with a stroller can reach easily. While the old village has a few play areas (the school grounds, the day care, and Friendship Park), newer areas of the Village do not have tot lot play parks nearby. Therefore, the Recreation Plan proposes that new parks be developed for the Sawmill Road and Airport subdivisions, and Smarchville.

At the time of writing, a new park is in development at the base of the existing Sawmill subdivision. This proposed park should be moved further north, to be more central once the new subdivision<sup>7</sup> is built out. Further, the Recreation Plan proposes that neighbourhood parks should be built into the planning for all new subdivision development, along with trails to connect those subdivisions to the main village areas.

The Recreation Plan also proposes that all new major subdivisions (more than 3 lots) be evaluated during the planning and application process in terms of the need to provide neighbourhood parks and trails. The Yukon Subdivision Act permits up to 10% of land within a subdivision be allocated for community amenities. For Teslin, a 5% of land for the creation of neighbourhood parks and a further 5% of land for the creation of trails to connect the new subdivision to major walking destinations is recommended.

The need for a dog park was identified during community consultations. There is a dog park associated with the Yukon Motel's RV park, complete with pooper-scooper stations. The need for an additional dog park did not seem to have much traction with the community, given the amount of open space available for walking dogs off-leash (throughout the informal trail system), and the fact that many community members have working dogs rather than pet dogs. However, this issue should receive further study. It may be primarily a question of safety for dog owners who want to provide their pet dogs with a fenced enclosure to run around and socialize with other dogs.

#### PARKS POLICY AND PLANNING

Proposed policy includes:

- ❑ Encourage the development of parks that provide access to locations that facilitate recreational uses and that offer opportunities to locals and visitors of all ability levels and ages.
- ❑ Develop regulations and bylaws that encourage the control of dogs off leash and responsible pet ownership, either through the provision and enforcement of leash laws, or by developing a dog off leash park.
- ❑ Develop policy and procedures to ensure park and trail area allocations during the subdivision application process.

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<sup>7</sup> In partnership, the Yukon Territorial Government and the Teslin Tlingit Council are proposing to develop a 60-lot subdivision north of the existing Sawmill subdivision.

- Select appropriate land parcels, based on the following principles:
  - Parcels located within or near development providing relief from development, which are both scenic and have potential to become small parks;
  - Parcels that contain unique vegetation or scenery;
  - Parcels that provide destination, passive recreation areas close to homes or businesses;
  - Parcels adjacent to other open space or recreation parcels that enlarge and improve the existing economic or social values;
  - Development buffers;
  - Parcels that can accommodate future sporting facility needs such as ball or playing fields suitable for hosting events and tournaments.

PARKS LAND ACQUISITION

To make the beach a reality, the Village will need to acquire the properties across Nisutlin Drive from the RecPlex currently occupied by Frank’s Automotive Repair. There are likely to be environmental liabilities associated with this property, which will also need to be cleaned up before this area can be turned into a beach and community day use park. However, from the perspective of both environmental and community health, the creation of this type of recreational facility along the lakeshore would be a crowning jewel in Teslin’s recreational offerings and parks system.

Specific lands to be acquired to create the beach and community day use area include the following:

<b>Lot</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Current Owner</b>	<b>Note</b>
1,2,3,4,5,9,10	14 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	Private	
6	8 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	Private	
1,2,3,4	9 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	VoT ?	Lots listed as Undevelopable
	Gov’t. Reservation Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	YTG	
	15 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	VoT	
1,3	8 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	VoT	
2	8 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	YTG	
4,5	8 Teslin	41709 CLSR YT	TTC	Settlement Land

**What Is Community Development?**

It is a "grassroots" process by which communities:

- ❑ Become more responsible;
- ❑ Organize and plan together;
- ❑ Develop healthy options;
- ❑ Empower themselves;
- ❑ Reduce ignorance, poverty and suffering;
- ❑ Create employment and economic opportunities; and
- ❑ Achieve social, economic, cultural and environment goals.

Source: Service Canada, Community Development Handbook (1999), p. 6 ([http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/comm\\_deve/cdhbooke.pdf](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/comm_deve/cdhbooke.pdf))

Key issues facing Teslin in the development in their recreational programming include the need to develop a larger, stronger volunteer pool, and grow the number of staff members supporting the programming. To make this happen, the community needs to own its recreational programming and feel responsible for its successes and challenges. How can that happen? The Village can take a community development approach to its recreation programming.

Community development is all about relationships. Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing these people with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities. A wide variety of practices can be utilized for community building, ranging from simple events like potlucks and small book clubs, to larger-scale efforts such as mass festivals and building projects that involve local participants rather than outside contractors.

Taking a community development approach to the Teslin recreation programming will require a much more active volunteer recruitment, management, and development program, and may require a much more extensive set of committees or societies to manage specific aspects, similar to the Teslin Hockey Association, and their management of the Teslin hockey program, with support from Village personnel. Ideas for additional clubs or associations include:

- ❑ Snowmobiling, to encourage safe use and operation of snow machines, and organize fun outings;
- ❑ Archery club, to encourage interest in the sport, emphasize safety, and assist with the development and management of facilities;
- ❑ Bouldering club, to encourage interest, provide training, and assist with the development and management of a bouldering wall;
- ❑ Sailing and/or canoeing club, to assist with the development of appropriate facilities, provide training, and organize events.

Key principles for developing such a human recreation infrastructure include empowering volunteers to do the work, including having the opportunity to develop new skills, and providing appropriate supports, whether equipment, mentoring, or space where they can meet.

**RELATIONSHIP,  
RELATIONSHIP,  
RELATIONSHIP --  
IS THE FOUNDATION OF  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
ENGAGEMENT WORK**

Look folks in the eye, smile and mean it!

-- *Thanya Al-Saadoon, Community Developer, Duncan, BC*

Support for developing a volunteer recruitment and management program can be obtained through the Yukon Volunteer Bureau,<sup>8</sup> which can assist with ideas and resources. The Yukon Community Development Fund (CDF)<sup>9</sup> gives Yukon community, industry & professional associations, non-profit & charitable organizations, and municipal & First Nations governments money for projects and events that:

- ❑ Support community well being;
- ❑ Create jobs;
- ❑ Generate spending on Yukon goods and services; and
- ❑ Have measurable social, cultural and economic benefits for Yukon residents and communities.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

Taking a community development approach will also require a much more active partnership approach with non-traditional partners. These could be agencies serving individuals with barriers to full participation in existing recreation programming, and potentially developing program specific responses to their needs. These could be major corporations with investment in the local area, like mining, pipeline, or forestry companies, or they could be local businesses, which could provide financial or in-kind support. It may be that existing relationships with other levels of government, particularly the Teslin Tlingit Council, could be strengthened to assist with increasing the amount of community support and engagement for recreation programming.

The routing of the Trans Canada Trail through Teslin provides opportunities for partnerships with organizations such as the Trans Canada Trail and the Klondike Snowmobile Association. Working together, it may be possible for Teslin to improve quality of life for its citizens while developing a portion of the national trail system. Of particular interest is the potential for adding a clip-on pedestrian lane to the Nisutlin Bridge, which would enhance community safety enormously, while providing increased opportunities for local trail development east of the bridge.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Trans Canada Trail through Teslin also provides opportunities for local economic development, through meeting the needs of a new group of tourists/visitors to Teslin, namely the users of the Trans Canada Trail. For example, long distance snowmobile touring groups may wish to make a stop in Teslin for the night, which might involve restaurant meals, require beds for the night, include re-fuelling or grocery shopping. They might choose to make Teslin a destination, based on the quality of its museums and cultural or recreational facilities.

There was considerable discussion about the potential for local economic development through the recreation program, by offering unique festivals or events to draw people to the community. Some ideas included:

- ❑ Creating a unique music festival, like a festival of First Nations entertainers. While there are a number of festivals like this in southern Canada, there do not appear to be any in the North at this time. This could potentially create quite a draw to Teslin. It would need

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.volunteerbureau.yk.ca/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cdf.gov.yk.ca/>

further research, and quite a lot of funding would have to be raised to create a festival that had drawing power beyond the Yukon. The timing of the festival would also have to be carefully selected, so as not to conflict with any other major event in the Yukon.

- ❑ Building on the success of last winter's snow machine races on the lake. This would be relatively low-cost to host, but would require marketing and volunteer recruitment to make it successful. Given the noise and fuel consumption of these types of events, it may be that such an event would not pass a sustainability test. But as long as the people of the Yukon are still using snow machines, it may fulfill short-term economic purposes.
- ❑ Hosting more sports tournaments in Teslin. Depending on the scale of the tournaments, and the particular sport, it may be that existing recreational facilities are adequate for increased tournament activity. If so, this would be a relatively low-cost approach to economic development, but would require communications, marketing, and volunteer recruitment to make it successful.
- ❑ Developing a mountain biking race through Teslin's forests and surrounding wilderness. According to Bike Yukon, there is only one epic mountain bike race in the Yukon, called the "King of the Canyon" in the Whitehorse area. It occurs in September of each year, and has two courses (25 km and 50 km), winding through all the trails in the area. Further research would be required to determine the economic potential of such an event. In 2009, only 9 riders participated in Whitehorse, down from 20-30 in past years.

All of these initiatives would require significant community commitment (people, resources, and money) to making them happen effectively. They would also require Yukon-wide coordination of event dates, to ensure no inappropriate competition between communities, and the potential for all communities to benefit by not competing for the same markets at the same time.

A Yukon-wide economic development strategy based on recreation might be appropriate. Such an initiative would need to include branding and development of unique offerings by communities, resulting in increased participation opportunities, quality of life enhancing events, and accessing grants to fund such initiatives.

Resources available to fund activities and events include:

- ❑ Community development funding through Building Rural and Northern Partnerships, a federal program. More information at <http://www.rural.gc.ca/RURAL/display-afficher.do?id=1244146341952&lang=eng>.
- ❑ Yukon Community Development Branch funding, which encourages and supports active living and healthy lifestyles in communities through the promotion and development of recreation and sport; and establishes and nurtures partnerships with Yukon people, community organizations and the volunteer sector. More information can be found at <http://www.community.gov.yk.ca/general/communitydevelopment.html>.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PLANNING

Proposed policy includes:

- ❑ To develop partnership opportunities through events with organizations such as the Trans Canada Trail Foundation, the Klondike Snowmobile Association, the Trans Canada Pipeline, local clubs and non-profits etc. will provide the opportunity to encourage

working relationships to develop recreation amenities and programs that will help to strengthen the community.

- ❑ To develop a strategy for community-based engagement including voluntarism, and communication techniques for receiving feedback and ideas from people as to how the Village can best meet recreation needs and program demands.
- ❑ To provide a marketing and communications strategy that includes public notice boards, brochures, newspaper ads, maps, regular emails, etc around the Village letting locals, clubs and visitors know of daily recreation programs and events. Marketing and communications could require literature, including a tourist brochure, and maps, regarding the overall Village parks and trail system. Information kiosks could be located at the Trans Canada Trail pavilion or at community gateways. Other notice boards or spots around town might include the library, RV park, RecPlex, etc. Programming of events should be communicated in all of these venues on a year round basis.