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## **Telemark Nordic Club Awarded Federal Enabling Accessibility Grant**

The Telemark Nordic Club in West Kelowna is on a path to become the only fully Accessible Nordic facility in the BC interior. The Club was today awarded a Federal Enabling Accessibility Grant to help fund an upgrade to the ski lodge facility to bring it up to current Accessible standards. When the upgrade is fully implemented, the entire facility including the upper lodge and washrooms will be wheelchair accessible and sit-ski / sled accessible.

Ron Earle, the Club's General Manager, is pleased to see the project moving forward. "We sometimes take for granted our good fortune to enjoy the Telemark facility and pursue our love of cross country skiing and snowshoeing", explained Ron. "We have such a beautiful facility. But the problem really struck home last February. We successfully hosted the BC Championships, which became the largest cross country ski race ever staged in Western Canada. Over 500 athletes from BC, Alberta, Eastern Canada, the Yukon, and several Northern states. We were embarrassed when we realized that the visiting para-Nordic athletes had to warm up and change in our machine shed because it was so difficult to access the upper lodge."

Ron further explained "we are a non-profit club with heavy reliance on volunteers. It is very difficult to find cash to fund special projects such as this. The Enabling Accessibility Fund was essential to kick-start the project. Plus RBC and the Kelowna Kiwanis Club have both pledged substantial cash and in-kind labour to the project which made us eligible for the grant."

CRIS Adaptive Adventures helped prepare the grant proposal and will become regular eager users of the facility upgrades. Dawn Widdifield, Executive Director of CRIS Adaptive Adventures, says "having the Telemark Nordic Club now fully accessible means that we will be able to utilize the Club for our programs on a regular basis throughout the winter. It means that more people with disabilities will be able to enjoy the pristine wilderness and the world-class trail system that the Club offers. Many of the people we support would otherwise never be able to experience the great outdoors without grants that support programs like at Telemark. This is much more than a snowshoe or cross-country ski opportunity – it means improved overall health and improved quality of life for people with disabilities."

The facility upgrades will be completed by June. Interim provisions are already in place to accommodate handicapped access for this season. Please call the lodge if you have questions or to make arrangements for a visit.

### **For more information:**

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Visit <http://telemarknordic.com/accessibility-project-details/> for more details

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