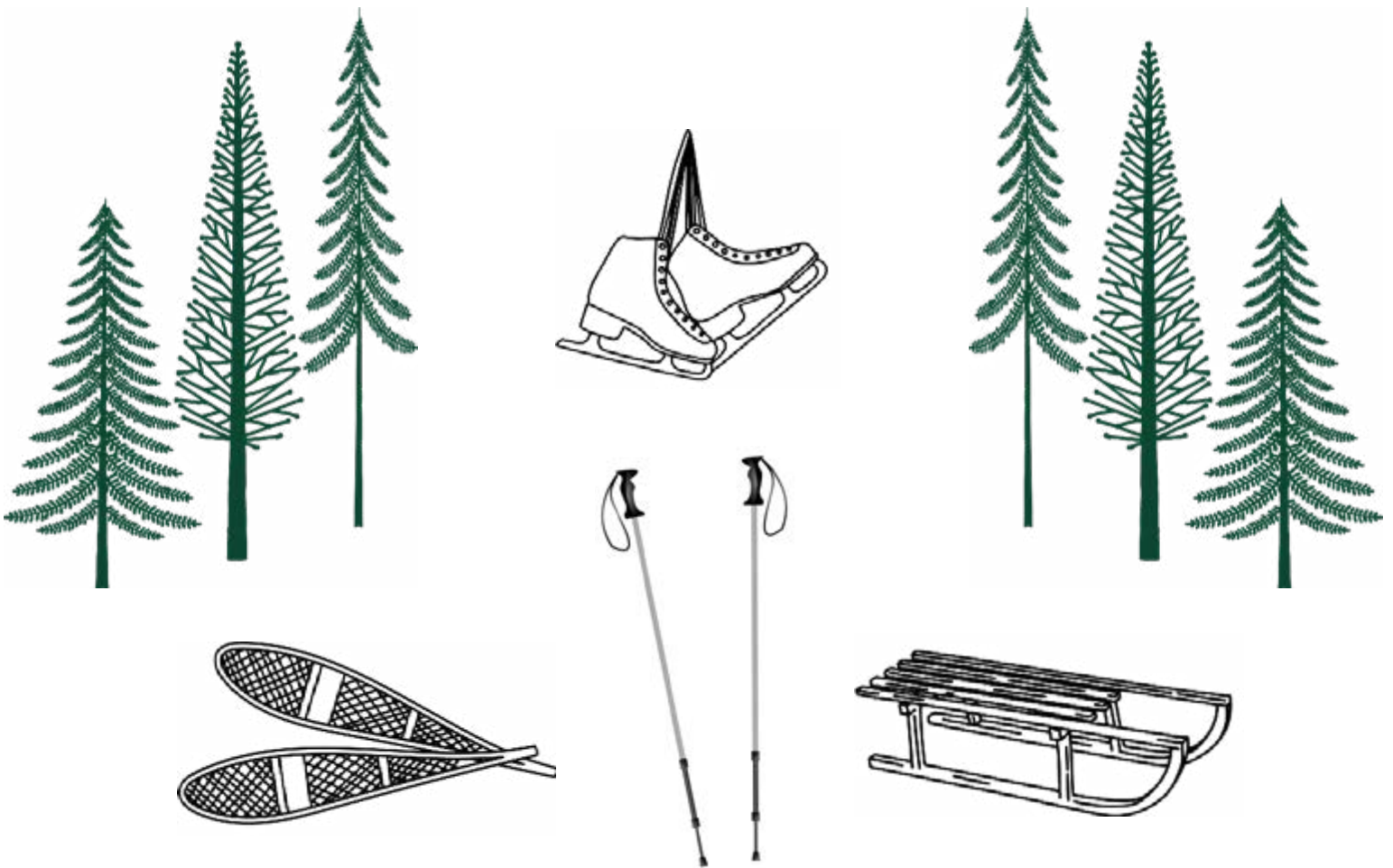


NS Outdoor Network Equipment Loan Share & Discuss

Summary of notes
January 2022



Nova Scotia
Outdoor Network

Overview:

Equipment loan rentals have become more popular with an increased focus on self-directed recreation activities. They also can alleviate, in part, the cost barrier to accessing some outdoor recreational activities. With many municipal recreation departments and community organizations offering a variety of types of equipment loan programs we discussed different approaches to the provision of equipment loans, challenges and opportunities they present, and shared resources for further review.

Equipment for loan could include:

- Bikes
- Adaptive equipment
- Snowshoes
- Outdoor play equipment
- Hiking packs and more

About:

As part of the NS Outdoor Network's goal of connecting the outdoor sector and increasing participation in the outdoors, we aim to host conversations with the recreation sector in Nova Scotia around specific topic areas. Our first conversation is around equipment loans.

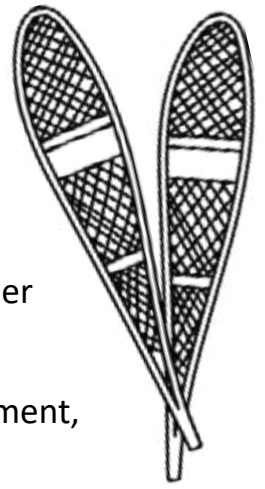
Participation:

We had approximately **30 participants** including representatives from provincial recreation organizations, community groups, RNS members, municipal departments, and the public.

We covered three main topics: Outdoor Pursuits Equipment, Adaptive Equipment, and Measuring Impact, and summarized the discussion on the following pages.



Outdoor Pursuits Equipment:



Areas of Discussion

1. Maintenance/Repair

- a. There is a level of confidence required for both the borrower and lender for necessary upkeep
- b. Maintenance of equipment (wear and tear) – having to replace equipment, having to clean (often comes back dirty)
- c. Responsibility/care - education of the public – understanding their responsibility to take care of the equipment

2. Storage

- a. Difficulty with space for adequate storage of equipment.

Potential Solutions & Successes

- Agreement for users on maintenance and use – courses to educate the user and lender
- Success with grant application to support purchase, storage, and maintenance e.g. Canadian Tire Jumpstart
- Partnerships with schools for bike maintenance, libraries
- QR code stickers linking to videos instructing users on how to use equipment safely

3. Promotion and access

- a. In some places equipment loan programs are having trouble taking off/reaching community members – looking for ways to connect with the community
- b. Creating partnerships with local vendors – cross promotions on resources available

Potential Solutions & Successes

- Growth especially during covid
- e-Bikes for seniors to get active
- Skis, snowshoes, crampons popular in Winter – wheel blades for strollers/wheelchairs, lawn games in Summer
- Social media as a tool for promotion, focus on Instagram stories increased engagement

CASE STUDIES OR KEY EXAMPLES:

Municipality of the County of Antigonish

- Full range of outdoor gear with long-standing loan program. 14 x 24' shed to store gear with a trailer for mobile programming
- Support from council with funding each year and local businesses
- Key partnerships e.g. red cross, lifeguards for hippocampe at beach etc.

Adaptive Equipment:

Snowshoes for prosthetics; hippocampus (all terrain wheelchairs) allow access to rocky terrain, sand, can go into water, go in snow, ski attachments, one size fits all and can be adjusted for all sizes/ages; adaptive bikes/trikes; swim supports; sport wheelchairs; snowcoaches (adaptive sleds)

Areas of Discussion

1. Education for lenders and borrowers

- a. Both parties need good knowledge of the equipment so it is used safely and correctly
- b. Public also need information on what is possible – what equipment is available and where to find it. Ensuring people know what is available is key

Potential Solutions & Successes

- Visuals and videos of equipment so people know what to expect – people with lived experience using the equipment.
- Safety guidelines for anyone who borrows.
- Partnerships e.g. Community Living Association

2. Cost and Liability

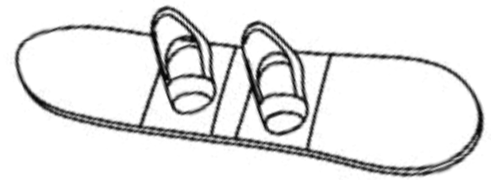
- a. Adaptive equipment can be expensive but there are good, local vendors available
- b. Tremendous value in having loaner sport equipment so people can try before buying themselves

3. IWK

- a. Partnerships across the province – support for setting up equipment loan programs
- b. Resources around safety guidelines. Most effective when showing someone using equipment

RESOURCES:

- IWK Recreation Therapy [Facebook Page](#)
- Kate and Andrea from IWK



CASE STUDIES OR KEY EXAMPLES:

West Hants

- Successful advertising on social media with lots of attention. Pictures used to demonstrate the adaptive equipment with new series of posters.
- [LINK HERE](#).



WINTER EQUIPMENT LOANS

TYPES OF EQUIPMENT:

- Snowshoes (variety of sizes)
- Ice Skates & Hockey Helmets (child & adult)
- Nordic Walking Poles
- Cross Country Skis, Poles, & Boots
- Ice Grips

Specific Adaptive Equipment:

- Polar Skis (attachment for strollers - seen in righthand photo)
- Ice Sledges (optional push bars)
- Rolling Walker
- Hippocampe (all-terrain wheelchair - seen in below photo)



Reserve Your Equipment

Contact Bekah Craik
(bcraik@westhants.ca)
(902-790-9647)

WWW.WESTHANTS.CA/REC

Measuring Impact:

How do we know that (free) equipment loan programs are helping more people access recreation?

Areas of Discussion

1. Surveys and Data Collection

- a. Lots of anecdotal evidence being recording – photos and quotes. Seeing people borrow equipment who don't take part in regular programming
- b. Social media engagement used as indicator of popularity
- c. Tracking often easier when assigned to one person – when spread amongst staff it requires protocol on record keeping
- d. Trends can be seen year to year with what items are most popular

Successes & Ideas

- Survey users using simple scaling questions (1-10 rating) before and after equipment use
- Track numbers of loans
- Suppliers often have ideas of more popular sizes

2. Try it sessions

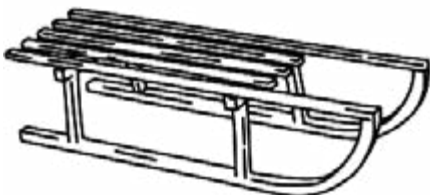
- a. Help increase confidence in equipment being used, especially new pieces of equipment
- b. Partnerships with schools and libraries
 - i. Having people access the equipment in the library helps people access the library who typically wouldn't

3. Partnerships

- a. Partnerships can help with creating impact by working directly with marginalised communities

EXAMPLE

Partnership with POSSE Project (Peer Outreach Support Services & Education) based in Windsor.



Tip: for hippocampes, and other adaptive equipment, order adult sizes.

Other updates:

Youth Employment Experience (YEE) Grants

- Applications are now open, closing on 17th February – could be used to support Equipment Loan Programs
- Awaiting funding confirmation of Green Jobs continuing for next year - RNS will share once confirmed

Recreation NS

- Potential funding program for Equipment Loan programs coming – stay tuned for more information soon. (sign up to newsletter/social media for info)
- Sign up for the [newsletter](#)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Cassie Manuel – Recreation & Sport Inclusion Consultant

- Work underway to create an 'Equipment Loan Framework' to support administration of equipment loan programs at all stages. For more information contact Cassie (cassie.manuel@novascotia.ca) or Graham (gmounsey@recreationns.ns.ca)
- Through Northern Zone Inclusion & Access committee has sourced funding to develop training videos for pieces of adaptive equipment as a resource for staff and community. The group used stickers with QR codes placed directly on equipment directing people to the [YouTube video](#) with a walk through of how to use that specific item. The QR stickers are for sale (99c each)

Resources:

- Library of Things: <https://cbri.ca/category/library-of-things/>
- Hike NS Snowshoeing Resource: <https://www.hikenovascotia.ca/resources-snowshoeing/>
- Adaptive Equipment Loan Programs: <https://parasportns.com/resources/adaptive-equipment-loan-programs>
- Northern Region Inclusion and Access Adaptive Equipment Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQVGp-G9wZR71VldzM5TkVIQ>
- NS Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage Funding and Grants: <https://cch.novascotia.ca/investing-in-our-future>
- Transport Canada Rental Boat Safety program: <https://tc.canada.ca/en/campaigns/rental-boat-safety>
- STARTboating program: <https://startboating.ca/en>



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