

2023 SWS AGM Minutes

The AGM was held in person on December 3 from 5-7 pm at Freebird (40900 Tantalus Rd, Squamish, BC V8B 0R3)

1. **CALL TO ORDER - Mike**

- a. Start at 5:15
- b. Land acknowledgment

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Mike**

- a. Motion: Nikita Gazarov
- b. Seconded: Loren Parrfitt

3. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING MINUTES - Mike**

- a. Motion: Olivier Corbeil
- b. Seconded: Sandra Studer

4. **PRESIDENTS REPORT - Mike**

- a. Pepahim name reveal
 - i. The SWS asked the Squamish Nation if they would consider renaming “Spit Island” with a culturally relevant name and they did. The SWS is delighted to announce that the island has been renamed Pepahim.
- b. Thank you to members, staff, community partners & sponsors and fellow board members on a challenging year in 2023.
- c. Preparation for 2023 season focused on three key aspects:
 - i. *ACCESS in 2023 and beyond after the completion of CERP*
 1. During the Spit Rd removal the SWS spoke & met regularly with the Squamish Nation, the DOS and the SRWS with regular site visits so we could plan access from the road end in the Estuary.
 2. SWS made sure the big pile of rocks was removed and that a pathway for water sports would be left on the old road end for access for windsports and also other marine users, and a safe place to land would be left at the road end.
 3. But at completion of the project, two days before SWS season opener, we were told by the SRWS that we would no longer be permitted to access from the Estuary. We were then informed that we would need to re-write our Operations Manual which is a lengthy and dated manual at this time due to motorized vehicles not being permitted in that section of the WMA.
 4. Part of the problem was the Vision Committee chaired by the DOS went dormant for two years after CERP was approved. It takes weeks or months to coordinate calendars for these meetings. And key representatives both with the Squamish Nation and the DOS left their positions.
 5. The DOS helped the SWS to establish access from downtown by working with Matthews West. We would like to thank Sarah McJannet & especially Matthews West who have responded without question more than a few times for the SWS. They are very proud of the new wind sports beach they are building which must be open before tenants can move in to the Oceanfront.

6. Everything that happened was a massive change & pivot in a short amount of time that we needed to navigate to keep the season alive.
 7. Mike thanks:
 - a. The members for being patient and flexible as we established parking & the walking trails to approach the beach and staff learned the safest & most efficient way to operate.
 - b. To Sarah McJannet of the DOS for her work to help forge relationships & work towards a solution
 - c. To Matthews West who did not hesitate to work with us despite managing an active construction site. They requested we stick to designated parking & walking trails off the active road, and were patient as we tried to shift to this new paradigm. MWest has come to SWS aid on a few occasions, and they are very proud of the new windsports beach opening next year. There has been some negativity in the community around access from the Oceanfront, but we want to be loud & clear that we are grateful for MWest working with us on access this year and into the future.
 - d. To Tourism Squamish who helped design & fund the parking & rail signage
 - e. To Dan & Mel at Squamish Watersports. They immediately proposed that we use their dock for the first two weekends and hosted a season opening party as well as provided additional shuttles. They stepped in several times over the season to assist with mechanicals on the new fleet, providing shuttle & event support. So a huge thank you to them for their support this season especially around access.
 8. In the long run access from the Oceanfront will be beneficial to members. It provides members access to downtown businesses including the breweries. It cuts out the drive down the long dusty road, and the shuttle will be far safer to operate from the Blind Channel than in the daily changing river mouth especially with the wood debris that comes during the Freshette.
 9. Access will continue to evolve, but the SWS is working towards normalizing access & operations in the coming season or two as the Oceanfront continues to develop.
 - a. The Estuary may become a Nature Park in the future with the parking & road end ending much further back. We are working with our partners on a concept for future access from the Estuary.
 - b. Unfortunately there are costs associated with access in Squamish. It costs money to operate the shuttle. We are required to have jet ski retrievals and insurance to maintain access on the island.
 - c. We are trying to hold membership cost but the community needs to ask itself what they want.
- ii. *COMMUNITY A broader vision for strategic partnerships*

1. One of our big pillars in 2023 was making the SWS more community focussed
 2. The SWS worked hard on strategic partnerships across the Squamish community. With the support of Woodfibre LNG, BCMC, and others - more on that from Sandy.
 3. We tried very hard to establish stronger community relationships with our closest partners – North Shore Ski & Board, Squamish Watersports, the kite brands offering demo days and community partners and businesses.
 4. Sponsorships are expensive for small businesses & brands, so our relationships with Squamish Watersports and North Shore Ski & Board are very important to us because they give back to the community in so many ways - whether thats from infrastructure or support on projects or operations, to providing jobs to locals & youth and building the island vibes with the event. Please support these businesses as much as you can with new gear purchases, lessons etc because ultimately it makes the windsports community stronger.
 5. We still have work to do in continuing to build our Sponsorship work to improve the way we work together, and to continue to partner and make Squamish top destination for wind sports.
- iii. VISION
1. Starting to craft a long term vision for the community legacy project that would see permanent access to Pepahim
 - a. The windsports community has been dealing with massive changes the last several years, but we are continuing to evolve a long term vision for wind sports & access in Squamish.
 - b. The SWS is working on Access, Safety, Green Operations, Events & Community, Sponsorships & Grants, the list goes on.
 - c. One of our directors Mike D will take on a Strategic Director role to help further define that future.

5. REPORT ON FINANCES - Sandy

- a. Comparative Income
 - i. Generated \$148,618 in pass sales this year.
 - ii. Received \$175,196 In donations, sponsorship & grants, mostly from TRF
- b. Comparative Expenses
 - i. Comparative expenses to 2022 but doesn't show the full picture because of a couple big purchases completed by the 2022 board when the road was being removed.
- c. Comparative OPEX
 - i. Higher staffing costs compared to last year
 - ii. Used more fuel for longer shuttle
 - iii. Insurance went up
 - iv. Payment processor for website charged high fees
- d. Balance sheet

- i. Grants (mainly TRF) contributed to large purchases of boat, seadoos, sea cans and composting outhouse.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND USAGE ANALYSIS - Will

- a. Total Usage:
 - i. 895 passes sold to 800 users (up from from 731 passes sold to 622 total users last year)
 - ii. Biggest groups were the same as last year
 - 1. Single members followed by family and day pass but day passes were way up and memberships were slightly down.
 - iii. Three pass and late season were popular again
 - iv. Majority of day pass holders bought 1.5 passes but as will show later we had issues scanning so this may be people riding for free
- b. Members
 - i. 436 people purchased Memberships (Family, Youth, & Single) - down from 469 in 2022.
 - ii. Youth membership doubled (8 youth members)
 - iii. 209 members took advantage of the early bird sale.
- c. Day Pass users:
 - i. 502 day passes sold to 371 unique users
 - 1. Up from last years 262 Day passes were sold to 153 people
 - ii. As usual most popular was the late season day pass
 - iii. 98 day pass users purchased 106 "3 packs" so a couple people bought more than 1
 - iv. We introduced a spectator pass this year and sold 30 of them to 19 people (how do we make these people riders?).
- d. Age
 - i. 134 members declined to answer but our demographics are as expected.
 - ii. Largest group: 35-44, 2nd - 25-34, 3rd - 45-54
 - iii. 1 Member is 75+
 - iv. 10 were under 18 but we only sold 8 youth passes?
- e. Geography
 - i. Sorted by postal code, using forward sortation area (first 3 digits)
 - ii. Majority of members and users drive up from other parts of the lower mainland (myself included)
 - iii. VON is Sunshine Coast & Sea to Sky Country so is a mixture of members from Gibsons, Pender Harbour, Bowen etc but majority are from parts of Whistler, Lions Bay, Britannia Beach, Garibaldi Highlands and Brakendale.
 - iv. 48 visitors from washington & 1 member
 - v. 27 visitors and 5 members from other parts of BC (mostly the Okanagan)
 - vi. Visits from Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dekota, Tennessee, Texas, Utha, and Virginia.

- vii. Visits from New Zealand, Australia, German, & the UK
- viii. 7 people gave us no postal code, 3 were early bird member purchasers.
- f. Attendance
 - i. 3440 scans on our new pass system.
 - a. Thank you everyone who made the effort to scan. And a big thanks to Sandy for doing the hard work of printing and distributing paper passes mid season.
 - ii. Our new pass system has a weird quirk where it only shows the last scan day of a pass so officially our busiest day was also our last day, Sept 15 with 73 scans but it's possible we had a bunch of 100+ scan days in the summer since there were a couple days with 25-30 day pass scans in August.
 - iii. Weather was average this year and we had 7 days with no wind.
- g. Scanning
 - i. Members: 3041 of all scans were by members
 - 1. Adult: 1845 or 6 PP
 - 2. Family: 1152 or 18/9 PP
 - 3. Youth: 27 or 3 PP
 - 4. Late Season: 17 or 3 PP
 - ii. Day Passes: 399 scans from day passes but we know we sold a total of 734 scans so were getting a 54% scan rate
 - 1. 3-Pack - 52%
 - 2. Single Day - 61% (best)
 - 3. Spectator - 53%
 - 4. Single Day Late - 55%
 - 5. Demo Special - 42%
 - iii. We need to improve this for a variety of reasons but key areas of focus are correct reporting for grants (like the TRF) and revenue. Not scanning and using the same pass multiple times hurts all members because it drives up operating costs per member/ per visit leading to price increases. We really need your help to scan every visit. If anyone has ideas on what would make them more likely to scan every time please let me know
 - iv. Thank you to all the members that I saw throughout the season asking if everyone had scanned in.
- h. Retrievals
 - i. 550 retrievals this year, up from last year & back to previous pre island levels
 - ii. Multiple busiest days this year with around 30 retrievals - wind died and everyone needed a rescue.
 - iii. About 6% of members had to get rescued
 - iv. 34 days had no retrievals

7. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT - Jack/Loren

- a. Intro (Jack)
 - i. Thanks for an awesome season everyone. We appreciate the patience and understanding in the beginning as we faced access struggles and had to constantly adapt.
 - ii. Thanks to Staff for the amazing job this season by our returning staff Tony and Chris and our new staff for this season Tommy and Inga.
- b. Season Recap (Jack)
 - i. This Season I feel like we've got a pretty solid foundation for next season! Everyone has learned how to efficiently load and unload the boat and the team work was great!
- c. Shuttle boat and Daily Schedule (Jack)
 - i. We will definitely be fine tuning the shuttle process and want to hear from everyone. The more suggestions the better ahead of next season.
 - ii. We want to create a shuttle schedule that works best for all the members. Reduce wait times, while also saving fuel by avoiding shuttles for 1 or 2 people at a time.
 - iii. Maintenance days will be scheduled throughout the season (ideally on weekdays), this will make sure the boat is reliable and any down days will be noted well in advance.
- d. Passes (Jack)
 - i. We lacked consistent pass scanning. With the difficulties of pickup and dropoff zones it was hard to set up a protocol that was quick and simple for members. Next season we will have everyone's passes printed in the very beginning and make sure that scanning is streamline. Day passes will likely continue to be digital as its too much of a hassle to print those, but we are looking at some options to scan ppl before getting on the boat without slowing things down. As much participation from the members as possible is appreciated!
- e. Spit Organization and Safety (Jack)
 - i. Overall the beach organization was good this season but there is still a lot of room for improvement. Please remember on those busy weekends or weekdays we still need to get kites out of the launch and land area ASAP. Also unless you are an advanced kiter dont use the launch spots closest to the honey hole as they can be hazardous.
 - ii. With regards to launching and landing - please please avoid the river launches. Nearly every serious incident we have had the past 2 years has been a result of gusty winds and the river launching zone. The river launch is very advanced and should only be used by very experienced riders on steady days.
 - iii. Throughout the season I noticed people jumping closer and closer to the rocks and just want to remind everyone the wind isn't always the same direction and sometimes you won't be pulled away from the spit as quickly

as you might think (specially when the wind is coming from the south). We had some close calls with the dock.

- iv. Also please NO JUMPING over or around the BOAT. Please shoulder check before changing directions as well, and generally always be looking around on the water for other kites, even upwind!
- f. Spit Island Systems (Loren)
 - i. Energy System
 - 1. SWS replaced half the battery bank this year as it was quite aged. And replaced the inverter with a much smaller one that is more efficient.
 - 2. We will likely have to replace the other batteries this year as the other bank is also quite aged.
 - 3. We would like to add some more solar panels next year and add some more battery capacity.
 - ii. Webcam
 - 1. SWS added a live streaming cam of the honey hole. The action cam! You can view any of the sessions that were recorded over the summer on the SWS youtube page.
 - 2. We also have a webcam of the land/launch area that refreshes every 30 seconds and shows the analog wind sensor.
 - 3. It would be great to add another cam, but our internet streaming is limited so we will have to look into that.
 - 4. SWS are also looking into adding a webcam that views the pickup spot so we can view how many ppl are available for pickup in order to efficiently transport people to the island.
 - iii. Wind Sensor
 - 1. SWS had the wind sensor operational during the summer. It is mounted on the sea can. It does a decent job of showing the current wind, but is not mounted in the ideal spot due to some range issues.
 - 2. We would like to add a new LTE wind sensor for next year that would be mounted at the end of the spit and operate all year round. With 2 wind sensors we should get better data and have a more holistic view of the wind.
 - iv. Sign Board
 - 1. SWS got the LED sign board operational again and we have been displaying the current time and the shuttle schedule. Big shout out to Tommy for his help on getting that working!
 - v. Composting Toilet
 - 1. SWS added a composting toilet to the spit. It seems to be working quite well and is much nicer than the old porta potties. Next year we will continue to operate it. Thanks to Sandy for organizing that and to Todd Nichols for installing and maintaining it.
 - vi. Laptop

1. SWS will likely need a new laptop for next year with a bit more horsepower (the live streams are taxing on our current laptop), if anyone has anything they can donate that is a decent setup that would be great!
- vii. Gear Storage
 1. We had a sea can available for member gear storage, it was very full. Next year it would be great to have some more gear storage. And please don't leave your gear in the seacan all summer if you don't plan to use it.
- viii. Alternative landing spots
 1. Next year we are looking at different spots to unload the boat at the island as in the middle of the launch/land zone really isn't the best spot. We will look at options for this over the winter. If you have any experience in this area, input would be welcome.
- ix. The Team
 1. Jack, Tony, Tommy, Chris and Inga did a great job and I would like to thank them for their hard work, patience and dedication.

8. ELECTION OF THE NEW BOARD - Mike & Will

- i. Motion: Chris Joseph
- ii. Second: Milton
- iii. Vote: Motion Passes
- b. President: Mike Palethorpe
- c. Vice President: Olivier Corbeil
- d. Past President: Sean Millington
- e. Secretary: Will Schwenger
- f. Treasurer: Sandy Heidebrecht
- g. Sponsorship: Benedikt Fleischhacker
- h. Member Engagement: Tyler Cuthbert
- i. Windpark Facilities: Loren Parfit
- j. Communications: Allie Duncan
- k. Strategic Planning: Michael Dobell
- l. Web Design: Jacob Pokluea & Adrien Poirson
- m. Legal: VACANT
- n. Events: VACANT
- o. Grants: VACANT
- p. Directors at Large:
 - i. James Hoffele
 - ii. Patricia Kost
 - iii. Jamie Martin

9. NEW BUSINESS - Members ideas, concerns and questions

- a. Patricia - Pictures & Media doesnt have alot of women, and women that are shown are not riding. What is SWS 'plan to address this?

- i. SWS working to reskin to show more diversity in website & media
 - ii. Worked with a local photographer to take photos and asked her to focus on women and youth.
- b. Patricia - Members would like to see a section of the spit that is designated for launching & landing (no jumping in that area) to make it less intimidating.
 - i. Jumping zone in honey hole
 - ii. If your going to jump, do it upwind of the spit jump halfway through the pylons
- c. Patricia - In the past we had a pump up zone, will this be coming back?
 - i. Need to enforce and look at what we can change
 - ii. Idea to update carpets for different colors for storage, launch, land areas etc
- d. Dan Grains - On the new windsport beach could we have an in and out ramp on the rip rap? This would help with the flow of the beach, can this be discussed with mathews west?
- e. Squamish Watersports would like to help with a professional videographer and photographer with regards to content needed
- f. Chris - expresses appreciation for SWS board. Space and behavior issues from members. Don't envy staff but they need to be firm up front to enforce SWS code of conduct and launching areas.
 - i. Loren: all community should be involved too as well as staff.
 - ii. No signage - need better for next year
- g. Jamie - Thanks to the current board from the past. Previous president, joining back to help.
 - i. Mike thanks Jamie for his work in the past. Following in big footsteps
- h. Milton - There are other ways we can record data, the SWS needs more reliable manual ways to record number of shuttle tips we can compare with scan in system to validate/
 - i. Mike - operation team and web team are looking at ways but might use clickers on boat
 - ii. Henry - I was set up to scan passes and if multiple members do this we could cover more ground and record more information
- i. Woman in Purple - How will you communicate planned maintenance days?
 - i. Oli - planned maintenance days will be published well ahead of time and dates booked in spring.
- j. JJ - Why aren't we charging for storage space for board storage?
 - i. Mike - talked about this, storage was at own risk (Is a theft risk) and offered as a bonus for pass holders.
 - ii. Henry - Can storage be by donation?
 - iii. Anyone with ideas or opinions asked to contact Mike
 - iv. Alton - SWS should prioritize storing bulky items so they don't go on the shuttle every day
 - v. Ned - How about I membership gets storage from 1 board 1 kite etc

- vi. Mike D - We need to move forward from survival mode to growth mode and embrace the opportunities we have. Need to introduce women, youth & minorities to grow the sport.
- k. Nikita - we need better communication from the SWS board on long term projects, can this live on a wiki?
 - i. Mike - Two big priorities for us are events and communications. We know we need help to grow these things but it's a big job and we need everyone's help
- l. Chris - Have we had any issues from members using Bozos?
 - i. Mike - Members of the public reported early season kites and CN Rail Police came out to issue tickets. Have tried to have conversations about access but there is no appetite with DoS, CN Rail, or Squamish Terminals
 - ii. Olivier - SWS official position that we do not support members accessing bozos
- m. Sally John - what will the SWS do if they can't make the \$150K operating budget?
 - i. Sandy - Budget uses conservative numbers
 - ii. Mike - We as a community need to address this, there is a cost for access now in squamish
 - iii. Henry - everyone who's out there needs to have a membership since we will rescue them, should we offer passes at different prices for members who don't want rescue?
 - iv. Mike - what about donations for retrievals? SAR does not charge because they don't want anyone to hesitate and this is
- n. Question about Nexans and launch of kites - i foresee someone launching and floating in on the swimming beach. (why are we even allowing people to launch kites off the new beach?)
 - i. Olivier - it's a public park with DOS we have no control over, SWS is working with them to figure out what that looks like.
- o. Do we have any data on non member rescues?
 - i. SWS - No we don't
 - ii. Robin - can we educate everyone about risks?
 - iii. Maxime - implement mandatory scanning after a rescue?
- p. Are we planning to run the shuttle later in the day next year
 - i. SWS going to look at extended days for after work sessions or moving operating times
- q. Can we build an extended dock as a launching area at Nexans?
 - i. Olivier - That is an option the SWS is exploring
- r. How will staff see rescues that need to happen on Nexans?
 - i. Nexans is unsupervised

10. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:00