



January 12, 2024

# THE KEPPOCH WINTER NEWSLETTER

Winter has officially arrived at the Keppoch, and we're thrilled to share some exciting updates!

We lucked out with some early snow this year and our small crew of staff and volunteer groomers worked hard at all hours of the day and night to make sure we could enjoy it. Thanks to them, we were able to be on snow as early as December 22, and have had many great days on skis, fat bikes, and snowshoes since then. What a gift.

The mountain has been buzzing with members and folks travelling in from greener corners of Nova Scotia who bought day passes. It's been really rewarding for us to see users of all ages and abilities out enjoying everything that the Keppoch has to offer.

Just like you, we are crossing our fingers for more snow in the coming months. The lodge is open every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. this winter. We serve free hot chocolate and coffee, and have cross-country skis, snowshoes and sleds available to [rent](#).

We will post regular snow and grooming updates to our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, or you can always find the latest at [thekeppoch.ca/conditions-shuttles](https://thekeppoch.ca/conditions-shuttles).

## In this newsletter:

- Save-the-date for our Winter Fun Day on February 11
- Winter trail etiquette reminders
- New shoulder season lodge rental rates
- New programming thanks to Sport NS grant
- An update on recent projects thanks to major grants
- New lodge hours
- We've changed our membership rates for 2024
- Work with us!



## Save the date: Winter Fun Day on February 11

Sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, disc golf, kids' games, s'mores and hot chocolate by the fire, hot dogs and hamburgers at a reasonable cost. Come enjoy all that the Keppoch has to offer at our Winter Family Fun Day on February 11. We hope to see you there!

## Be a winter trail etiquette pro

At the Keppoch, we make the most of what we get. Heavy and wet snow? We go snowshoeing. Light and fluffy? We get out our classic cross-country skis. Old and crusty? No problem! Perfect for skate skiing and fat biking.

We are fortunate to have such a comprehensive network of multi-use trails, and the necessary grooming technology and expertise, so we can play no matter what mother nature throws at us. With that, we have a shared responsibility to respect other trail users and the work and time of our volunteer grooming crew, who are often out late at night or early in the morning.

Here's some trail etiquette to keep in mind when you visit the Keppoch this winter:

- All trails to the left of the pump track are groomed for hiking, fat biking and snowshoeing only. Boots and shoes are welcome on all trails to the right of the pump track.
- If you are snowshoeing, fat biking or skate skiing, be mindful to not wreck the tracks for classic skis.
- Obey any trail closures or restrictions, especially during grooming and maintenance. They are only temporary and help make sure the trails set properly after grooming for all to enjoy.
- If you are snowshoeing, stay to the side and yield to skiers and bikers.
- Charge your headlamps and make sure to say 'hello' when approaching others in the dark.

## Work with us!

We're hiring a part-time Lodge Attendant for weekend work throughout the winter.

Find out more: [thekeppoch.ca/news/hiring-lodge-attendant](https://thekeppoch.ca/news/hiring-lodge-attendant)





## New programming thanks to SportNS

We are very excited to share that we have been awarded a grant to provide our first ever Introduction to Cross Country Skiing program for Syrian and Ukrainian children and youth, as well as a Summer Bike Camp.

The Town and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish Recreation departments are partnering with us by providing equipment. We are hoping to also open up spots in our programming for other children and youth in our communities.

Stay tuned for more information. Thanks to SportNS and our other partners!

## Shoulder season lodge rental rates now in effect

You may know already that you can rent the Keppoch lodge. It's a cozy space perfect for hosting your next family gathering, team building retreat or birthday party.

This winter, we're trying something new, by introducing affordable shoulder season lodge rental rates. These rates are significantly lower than our regular rates, but they come with a caveat. Your shoulder season lodge rental will be "self-serve," meaning you will be given access to the lodge and you are responsible for cleaning it before you leave. If you wish to be welcomed by a Keppoch team member and don't want to clean, all good, you can still use the regular rates.



We don't rent the lodge during regular open hours, so when you rent, you can be sure to have it all to yourself. The space features heat pumps so it's always nice and warm, accessible washrooms, a full kitchen, cozy fireside seating, tables and chairs to sit up to 44 people comfortably, Starlink Internet, a flat-screen TV and Bluetooth speaker, exterior decks and a picnic area.

Find out more at [thekeppoch.ca/rentals](https://thekeppoch.ca/rentals) or send us an email at [info@thekeppoch.ca](mailto:info@thekeppoch.ca) to inquire about availability. Note that lodge rental fees listed do not include taxes.

	Half day May-Oct	Half day Nov-April	Full day May-Oct	Full day Nov-April
Members	\$225	\$135	\$425	\$270
Non-Members	\$275	\$150	\$525	\$300
Non-profit / school groups	\$225	\$135	\$425	\$270

## New lodge hours

Great news – we have extended our lodge open hours for the winter. We'll be here every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our trails are always open unless otherwise stated on social media. Thanks for becoming a member or buying a day pass so we can continue to welcome you at the Keppoch and provide excellent trail conditions. Get yours online at [thekeppoch.ca/memberships](https://thekeppoch.ca/memberships)

## Recent projects thanks to major grants from the province, ACOA, and the Town and County

Thanks to partnerships and funding from the Province of Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Town of Antigonish, and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, many exciting projects were completed in 2023.

The Canadian Association of Community Living is building sturdy benches that will be located throughout Keppoch's lands, the trailhead at Whiterock will soon have outdoor privies and new signage, the same goes for Cameron Lake, which has been redesigned with a new entry, parking lot, and walkway. The walkway to the dock is now much more accessible and user friendly.

As many know, new downhill mountain biking trails have been added to the hill. For the walkers among us, Soul Stroll trail now has a beautiful extension and on the other end of the land, Big Allan trail is ready for two new trails that will loop back towards the lodge. We've been able to purchase trail equipment and you may have noticed our new shed being built.

An incredible amount of work was completed to clean-up from Hurricane Fiona, allowing many trails on the west side of the hill to re-open. Thanks to this funding, we had an amazing summer of operations in 2023. We're confident 2024 is going to be incredible at the Keppoch!





## New membership rates for 2024

If our small team of staff and countless volunteers are the heart and soul of the Keppoch, then our members are the life blood. Seeing you out on the trails, using our facilities, hanging out in the lodge, sharing these moments with friends, family and strangers – that’s why we do what we do. You bring the sense of community and it is incredibly rewarding for us to know we’ve had a role in making it happen. It’s special.

This year, we have made the difficult decision to increase membership fees at the Keppoch. As a charitable and largely volunteer-run organization, we depend on membership fees for our day-to-day operations. They are essential in keeping the trails and the lodge open and in great shape. They allow us to implement continuous improvements on the mountain – like the new downhill mountain bike trails we built this year and the completely transformed access at Cameron Lake for summer 2024. They help us maintain our winter grooming equipment and the shuttle truck. They help us pay our staff so we can continue to welcome you on the mountain. They also help us with recovery and getting ‘back at it’ after extreme weather events (think Hurricane Fiona clean-up, or 2021 floods).

In short; your membership fee is directly invested into the facilities, trails, and experience at the Keppoch for everyone to enjoy. As a member, you get year-round access to our extensive trail system, swimming and paddling at Cameron Lake, reduced member rates on shuttle truck passes, rental equipment and lodge rentals...the list goes on. Thank you for your understanding and continuing to support us by being a member at the Keppoch. In turn, we will continue to support you with exceptional trails and facilities.

A sincere thank you from the Positive Action for Keppoch Society Board of Directors

	Annual membership fee*
Adult	\$84
Family**	\$198

\*plus applicable HST

\*\*families must be living under one roof