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# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



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[www.bridgerskifoundation.org](http://www.bridgerskifoundation.org)

WELCOME



Evan Weiss  
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

There’s nothing more gratifying than to see how skiing has impacted our community. Special things happen here. Kindergartners learned the thrill of their first downhill. Seniors paid thanks to BSF for being their second family. We watched our our athletes experience the joy of volunteering for Special Olympics, and we saw BSF Pro Team athletes ski in their first-ever World Cup competitions.

In 2022-23, the Bridger Ski Foundation welcomed over 1,100 skiers into our programs and tens of thousands of skiers onto our trails. This meant we had to double-down on scholarships and fundraising to support this ski community, especially since we subsidize program fees to keep our programs more accessible. The mission remains the same: ensure that Bridger Ski Foundation remains a place where any kid can ski with us and provide incredible ski programs and a winter trail network that is open to all.

Our team and board of directors has a diligent plan to ensure that BSF can maintain capacity and quality programs as we grow. That means paying our core, full-time employees a wage that allows them to live in the area; continuing to expand scholarships; increases in program fees; and a strategic approach to raising funds that includes diverse funding sources.

I’m incredibly proud of the team we’ve built here at BSF. They’re passionate about skiing, about seeing our youth thrive, and giving back to the community. We’re committed to the grassroots, volunteer-based energy that built Bridger Ski Foundation, and everyone here at BSF is passionate about keeping that small-town, family feel in skiing. Part of that, of course, is the way this community rallies around skiing. When people ask me what makes BSF different, I always tell them it’s the community. You believe in the power of skiing, and you make all of this possible. Thank you!

2022-23 **SNAPSHOTS**



Grooming at  
Highland Glen



Freestyle Comp Team  
on the moguls course



Nordic Intro ski lessons



Skiers at Bridger Bowl



Devo skier getting coaching  
advice before the race



Summer means  
lots of mountain time



Pro Team athletes giving finish-  
line support



Champ visiting the Skiing in  
Spanish class



Freeride/Big Mountain skier  
taking the leap



ABOUT US



TRAILS  
ALPINE  
NORDIC  
FREERIDE  
FREESTYLE  
FREESKIING  
SNOWBOARDING

Bridger Ski Foundation’s roots go back to 1936 and the founding of the Bozeman Ski Club. From rope tows to chair lifts and homemade grooming equipment, local residents have always worked together to make skiing possible for our youth. Today, BSF offers unparralled opportunities to our community, with more than 30 programs in Alpine, Nordic, Freestyle, Freeskiing, Freeride and Snowboarding.

Our doors are open to anyone who wants to ski, and we celebrate the diversity of skiers across our programs and on Bozeman’s trails. To keep program costs down, we fundraise up to 50% of our operating budget each year, and we provide scholarships and equipment assistance.

As part of our community outreach, BSF has a trails program that grooms and maintains ski trails in town, as well as Sourdough and Hyalite (in co-operation with the U.S. Forest Service). Grooming began in the 1960s at Lindley (now called Sunset Hills), just a few blocks from Main Street, and has grown to seven locations and 80+ km of skiing. In December 2020, we installed a new, energy-efficient snowmaking system at Sunset Hills to provide a more reliable in-town ski season. All of these trails are “free” to the public, with grooming funded through a voluntary trail pass system and donations.

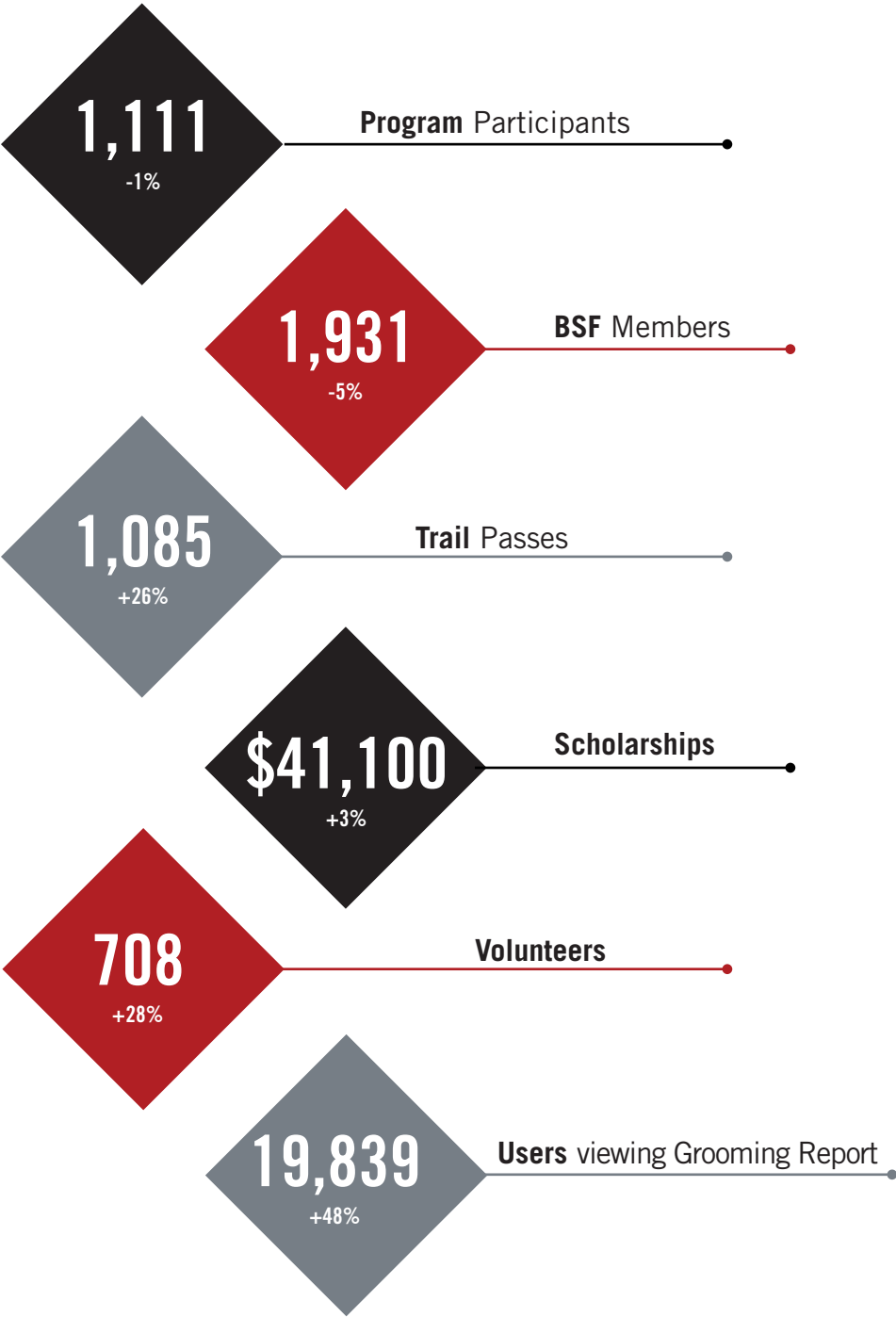
Our small ski town has raised national champions and Olympians, but moreover, we’ve given generations of Montana kids a love of skiing and the tools to pursue their passions with grit and strength. Volunteers continue to contribute thousands of hours to the cause, and our community selflessly supports our mission year after year.

**BSF MISSION**  
Inspiring a lifelong love of skiing, athletic excellence, and personal growth.



BY THE NUMBERS

2022-23



**SCHOLARSHIPS:**  
Keep skiing accessible in our community. These funds provide need-based financial aid to families who have difficulty affording program fees.

**VANS:**  
We provide approximately 12,600 van rides a year. This free transportation helps working families get their kids to our programs each day.





# 2022-23 NEWS

## SKIING IN SPANISH

Point of view: your Spanish-speaking family moves to Bozeman—land of long, snowy winters—but you don’t have any ski equipment, or a way to get to a ski program. The Bridger Ski Foundation forged a new partnership with Bienvenidos a Gallatin Valley, which helps to welcome Spanish-speaking migrants and their families to the area. With the help of a donor and the Share Winter Foundation, we provided ski lessons in Spanish to these kids and helped them thrive during Montana’s long winter. BSF and a team of volunteers assisted with transportation from school to lessons each week, and the BSF community pitched in to donate winter clothing. Salomon donated skis. And these kids absolutely loved learning to ski! We’re looking forward to growing this program and integrating these kids into our regular programs, as well.



## 2022-23 Championships

**2023 National Slopestyle Champion**  
Nicky Johnson won gold in the 17-18 category. His teammates put two more in the top 10 during the National Championships.



BSF finished 2nd in the **Peter Maxwell Carnival Team award**, based on all YSL races throughout the season.

Two Alpine Comp athletes qualified for **Western Region Junior Championships**, with Drake Fricke 3rd overall for U18s.



**13 Nordic athletes qualified for Junior Nationals in Alaska.** They had numerous top-10 finishes, with Max Kluck leading the way with a 2nd in the classic distance race. BSF was recognized as one of the top 5 ski clubs in the country.

**9 Freestyle athletes qualified for Freestyle Junior Nationals in Colorado.** Sisters Makayla and Meg Papke both had top-10 age-group finishes. Makayla Papke also qualified to compete at the U.S. National Championships at her first FIS Open.

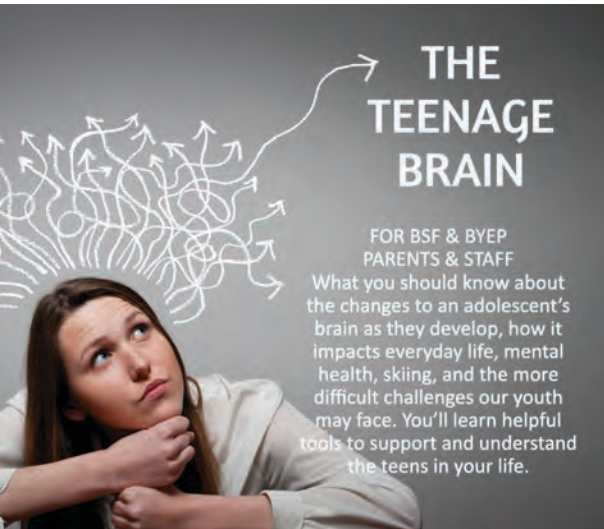


Senior Nordic athlete **Max Kluck was named to the US Ski Team** in May 2023!

## MENTAL HEATH INITIATIVE

BSF developed a new series of support tools for coaches, parents and athletes. The goal: to support mental health with tools to increase confidence and performance in all areas of life, and to decrease stress and anxiety. With a grant from the AMB West Community Fund, we were able to

- provide mental health training for our head coaches and program directors
- provide a session on “The Teenage Brain” for parents and coaches (with our friends at BYEP also participating)
- have an on-call mental health professional available to our coaches and athletes



Our on-call professional was Emily Danza, formerly a coach for BSF and MSU, who went on to specialize in sports psychology. Emily spent time working with our teams on the snow and was also available if anyone had questions or concerns. Our coaches used this service frequently, and Emily reports that she had hundreds of emails from our community--whether it was asking for help, a referral, or just advice on how to handle a conflict or help a friend in need.

## BSF Pro Team

The BSF Nordic Pro Team gives talented, committed skiers the opportunity to ski at the highest levels of national and international competition. Coached by 4x-Olympian Andy Newell, this team of dedicated skiers had a historic season.



Among their accomplishments:

- 2nd Team in the National Nordic Foundation Cup
- 3 athletes had multiple World Cup starts
- 1 athlete named to the U.S. Ski Team
- 7 athletes qualified for the OPA Cup finals in Europe
- 12 SuperTour podiums overall
- 5 athletes stood on the SuperTour podium



# WHY SKIING & BSF

## VOLUNTEER: Dan Brelsford

Dan Brelsford grew up on these slopes; his mom was president of the Bridger Ski Club (before it became BSF) and his dad was head of the National Ski Patrol. He made his mark racing for the Bobcats, including winning the 1978 NCAA Championship in slalom. Dan then coached the Bobcats for 30 years, and along the way he recruited Alpine race volunteers.

As a coach, an athlete, and as a parent of former BSF skiers, Dan understands how much it means to have helping hands. Today, he’s an ever-present volunteer on race days. Why? “Well, because these guys all did it for me. These are all my buddies who helped me for 30 years putting on ski races. For one, it’s to give back.” But Dan also enjoys being on the hill just watching the new kids enjoy racing. “It’s kinda cute.”



## SPONSOR & ALUMNI: Dee-O-Gee

Brad Jepson cross country skied for BSF during the 1980s. “My best friends were Nordies,” he says. “Back then, BSF existed on a shoestring budget. We never had team race suits or warmups. We drove used vans that often broke down. And it was a revolving door of coaches every year. We looked forward to Junior Nationals and breaking the budget with either a team hat or a sweater, if we were lucky. One year, we talked about t-shirts, but they never materialized. But honestly, none of that mattered. We loved to ski and train and compete. And more than anything, we loved the camaraderie and community of Nordic skiing.” So when Brad and his partner Sherri, owners of Dee-O-Gee in Bozeman, had the chance to sponsor the junior hats for the Nordic program this past season, they jumped on board.

## ATHLETE: Makayla Papke

“BSF has been an incredibly impactful place for me to grow into who I am today, from my first day of our Intro program to being 18th at the 2022 US National Championships in Deer Valley. BSF has provided opportunities for me to volunteer, make lifelong friends, and push myself to further my accomplishments in and outside of skiing. Being a part of BSF has never just been about skiing; it’s always been something more. Growing up at school I never felt like I belonged in a certain group, or with certain friends ... BSF is my family. BSF is my best friend. BSF is my past, and I’m excited to say that BSF will be forever a part of me. ... Thanks to BSF I have not only a new generation of friends but also a reason to continue being the best version of myself.”



# OUR COACHES



We look for coaches who know more than just technique. They are skilled teachers. They embody a love of skiing, and they understand the influence they have as mentors. Here, every athlete matters. And BSF provides the support and expansive training so our coaches can grow and learn throughout their careers.

First-Aid & CPR

Safe Sport Certified

110

Coaches on staff

Mental Health Training

Continuing Education

**Andrew Morehouse**  
Nordic Program Director  
Masters in Education  
Technician for US Ski Team

**Cody Ling**  
Park/Freeski Program Director  
Teaching Degree &  
Former Elementary Teacher

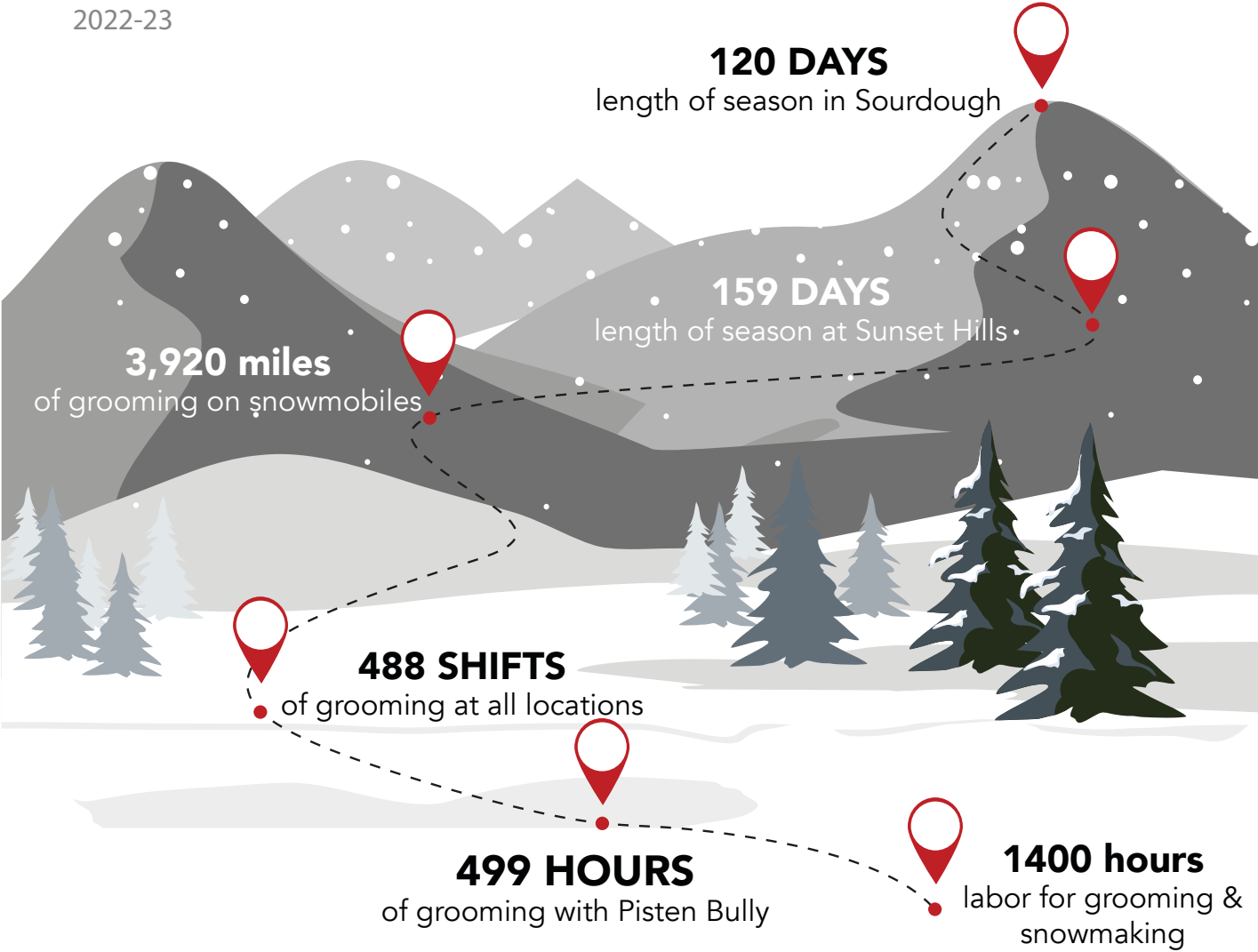
**Bailey Servais**  
Head Big Mountain/Freeride Coach  
Raft & Mountain Guide

**Heidi Makoutz**  
Nordic Head Masters Coach  
Masters in Education  
NICA Head Coach



# TRAIL GROOMING

2022-23



As a member of the Outside Kind Alliance, Bridger Ski Foundation is working to share best practices, principles and tips for enjoying the outdoors in our community. In the second year of Ski Kind, we noted improved trail etiquette all over town. Survey respondents noticed, too. Thank you for spreading kindness. It's contagious.



## TRAILS FUNDING

Bridger Ski Foundation uses a unique model to groom and maintain all the Community Nordic Trails. All trails are free to the public in order to keep winter recreation affordable and accessible.

As a nonprofit, BSF must raise \$150,000 - \$200,00 annually to fund the Trails Program budget. With the increased length of the ski season, and a gap in funding from a past major grant source, BSF and community supporters had to double down on fundraising efforts this year to meet the additional costs (think 50-75% more fuel, labor, portable toilet rentals, wear-and-tear on equipment). We were able to take advantage of this incredible winter, providing the same or better quality grooming and consistency, across all venues (including some additional work this season in Hyalite).

This year, we also asked the community for support to help purchase two new grooming snowmobiles, replacing part of an aging fleet. The new 24-in. wide-track sleds were invaluable. Our ability to maintain trails, especially later in the season, would have been nearly impossible without them. Thank you to all who recognized the importance of this and pitched in to help!

## FUNDING SOURCES

- Voluntary trail passes
- Grants
- Individual donations
- Sponsorships

# 1085

TRAIL PASSES SOLD  
in 2022-23

Trail pass sales increased this year, in large part due to our snowy winter. However, BSF will need to make significant investments in new grooming equipment in the next several years, and that will require more consistent support from the community, even in the not-so-snowy winters.

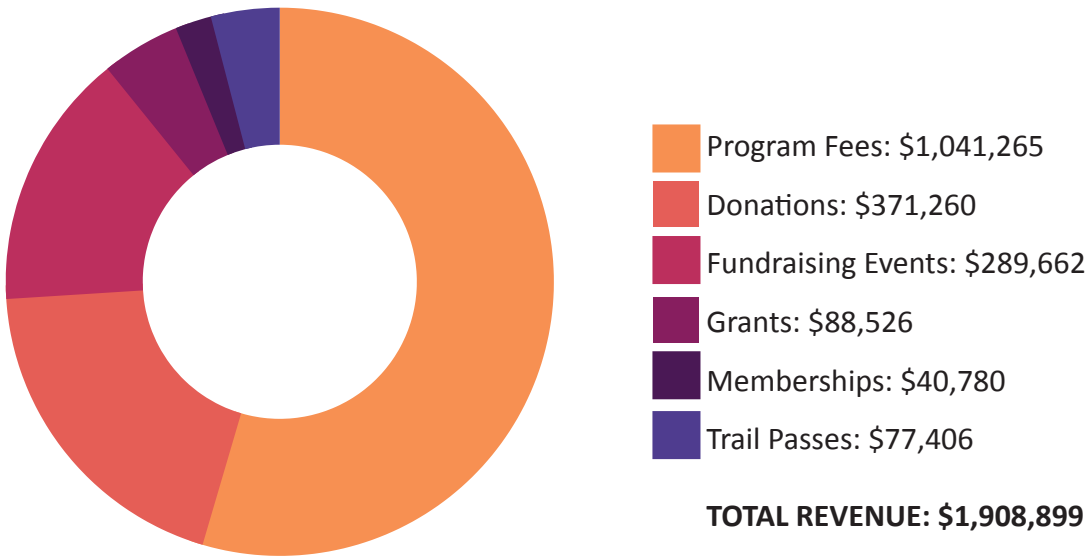
**THINK OF YOUR TRAIL CONTRIBUTION OR PASS AS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN WINTER TRAILS.**



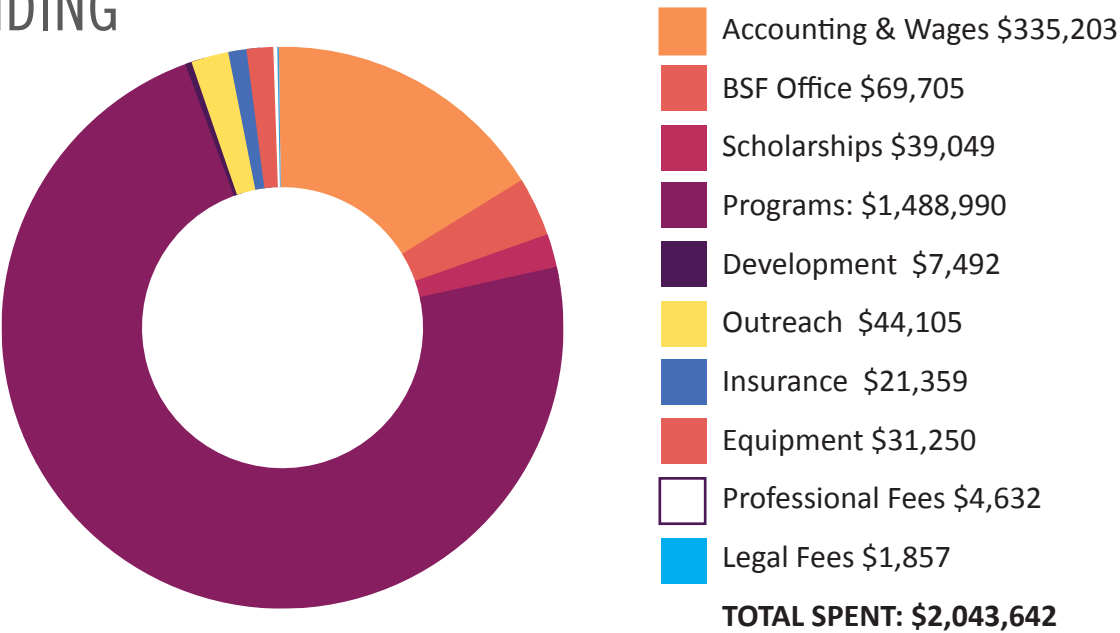
**SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY:** Make a donation of \$2,500 or more and get a plaque on the donor wall of the pump house. Or sponsor a section of trail and get a trail sign. Contact Laura Huggins at [laura.huggins@bridgerskifoundation.org](mailto:laura.huggins@bridgerskifoundation.org) or (801) 726-4517.

2021-22 FISCAL YEAR  
(June 1, 2021 - May 31, 2022) \*these financials  
have been independently audited

SOURCES OF REVENUE



SPENDING



**51%**

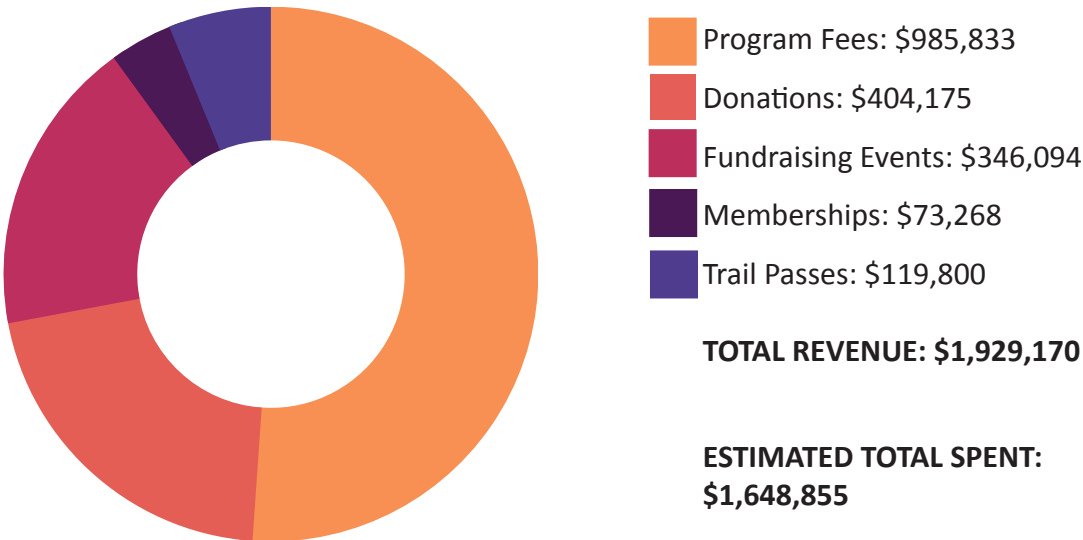
Program fees covered only 51% of the operating budget.

**73%**

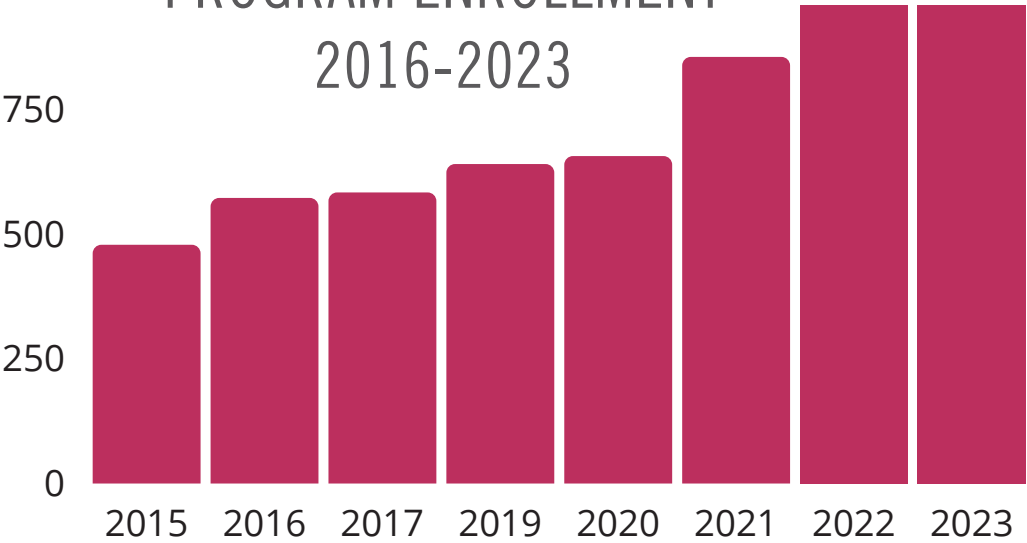
73% of spending went to direct program costs

2022-23 FISCAL YEAR  
ESTIMATED  
(June 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023) \*These are estimated numbers, pending year-end close. Does not include noncash items such as depreciation. Final audited numbers and spending breakdown will be available in late 2023.

SOURCES OF REVENUE



PROGRAM ENROLLMENT  
2016-2023



“ Throughout my career, people asked how I got into Freestyle, and I think a big part of the decision my parents made signing me up was that the Bridger Ski Foundation was, and remains, an affordable and accessible program. My family and I came to learn very quickly that it also was a very supportive and community-based program.”

-Heather McPhie, 2x Olympian in Freestyle



# THE OUTLOOK

Since 2015, enrollment in BSF programs has increased 132%. As a nonprofit that subsidizes the cost of our programs to keep fees lower for families, more kids in our programs has meant we’ve had to significantly increase the amount of money we fundraise each year. BSF has charted a plan for the future in order to keep our organization resilient while still maintaining our commitment to the mission of BSF. We’re strategically working to increase our ability to invest in the club each season, increase cash reserves, and focus on the athlete experience.

1. Our core staff is our most valuable asset. With a skyrocketing cost of living, a few years ago we started making changes to our compensation in order to ensure we can offer a competitive wage to recruit and retain key staff.
2. In the past, BSF relied on a few big grants and a few large donors. We’ve built more resiliency into our fundraising strategies so that we now have a diverse portfolio of supporters and we’re less dependent on fundraising to balance the budget.
3. We planned a stepped increase in program fees in order to catch up with inflation. Program prices will increase again in 2023-24, and after that, we anticipate fees to level off.
4. With both program fees and travel costs increasing, BSF increased scholarships each of the last two years. We will continue to grow the scholarship fund, as the need for scholarship support is apparent and it keeps skiing accessible.
5. We’re looking at ways to solve looming transportation issues. Our van fleet is aging and expensive to maintain, and with more kids skiing in our programs, the demand for additional vehicles has arrived. Team transport is an important part of keeping our programs available to working families, getting kids from school to lessons every day. We recently received a grant that will help us begin adding new vehicles to the fleet, and we will continue to pursue additional funding for transportation.
6. While we have a comfortable, modest office with a multi-year lease, BSF is cognizant that should we ever have to move, the price of commerical space could be extremely challenging. A long-term home for BSF would be ideal, as would permanent storage for our trails equipment. Our board of directors has formed a new committee to address long-term strategic planning, including office and storage space.
7. Much like our van fleet, our trail grooming equipment faces both aging and capacity issues. This year, we were able to run a capital campaign to buy two new snowmobiles. As we begin to anticipate the necessity of a new snowcat and other machinery in the next few years, our goal is to grow support through annual trail passes/memberships so that BSF can afford to invest in needed equipment when the time comes.
8. For 2023-24, we plan to increase coaching staff at the Devo and Comp levels, with an improved focus on internal coach training and mentoring.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community is the cornerstone of the Bridger Ski Foundation. We’re proud to partner with the following organizations for our ski programs and trails.

- Bienvenidos a Gallatin Valley
- Bozeman Health
- Bozeman & Belgrade School Districts
- Bridger Bowl
- Bridger Creek Golf Course
- Custer Gallatin National Forest
- Crosscut Mountain Sports Center
- Gallatin Valley Land Trust
- Hale Creative Consulting
- Outside Kind Partners
- One Montana
- Special Olympics Montana

# MAIN EVENTS

- BSF Ski Swap
- FUNSKI Series
- Oktoberfest/Après Ski
- Jim Bridger Trail Run & Roll
- Banff Mountain Film Festival
- Winter Kickoff
- Northern Div Freestyle Champs
- Nordic Jr National Qualifiers
- Northern Div Alpine Races
- OHG Championships

# OUR PROGRAMS



## NORDIC

Learn to ski,  
Development,  
Competitive, Adult  
programs, PG & Pro Team



## ALPINE

Intro to racing,  
Development,  
Competitive, PG, & Adult



## MOGULS/FREESTYLE

Intro to Freestyle,  
Development,  
Competitive teams



## BIG MOUNTAIN/ FREERIDE & SNOWBOARDING

Competitive team



## PARK/FREESKING

Intro to Freeskiing/  
Freestyle, Development,  
Competitive team



## TRAILS

Grooming at Sunset Hills,  
Highland Glen, Bridger  
Creek Golf Course,  
Sourdough, Middle  
Schools, & Hyalite \*with USFS



#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Hunter Lacey, President  
Natalie Flowers, Vice President  
Jordan Helvie, Secretary  
Geoff Stephenson, Treasurer  
Chris Darnell  
Erin Gaasch  
Eric Goldwarg  
Spencer Lawley  
Tyler Maxwell  
Erik Renna  
Caroline Roy  
Chris Sledz  
Ben Stanley

#### **STAFF**

Evan Weiss, Executive Director  
Lisa Ellison, CFO  
Laura Huggins, Director of Development  
Sally Rohrer, Development & Operations Manager  
Jenny White, Communications & Marketing Director  
Andrew Morehouse, Nordic Program Director  
LaRue Seitz-Dettori, Alpine Program Director  
Kenny Wilson, Alpine Program Director  
Mike Papke, Freestyle Program Director  
Cody Ling, Freeski Program Director  
Dan Cantrell, Community Nordic Trails Manager  
and 100+ coaches

#### **AMBASSADOR BOARD**

Hannah Downey, Board Chair  
Brett Boeckel  
Emily Danza  
Max Littlefield  
Tim Baucom  
Samantha Lee  
Becca Cristando  
Anjie Martins  
Patrick Gillis  
Koby Gordon  
Jamie Martin  
Linden Mallory  
Abram Misiluti  
Grace Mabie



## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

BECOME A MEMBER

MAKE A DONATION

VOLUNTEER

ATTEND AN EVENT

PURCHASE A TRAIL PASS

LEARN MORE AT  
[WWW.BRIDGERSKIFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.BRIDGERSKIFOUNDATION.ORG)



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