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FEASIBILITY OF MULTI-YEAR/LIFETIME CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAIL-PASS

A report to the Legislature
pursuant to
Laws of Minnesota, Special Session 1985,
Chapter 13, Section 23, Subdivision 2

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Trails and Waterways Unit
Trail Programs Section
500 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55146

February 1986

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Three groups were surveyed about the feasibility of a multi-year ski trail-pass. These groups were "licensed" skiers, skiers in general, and ski-trail managers. Which multi-year option did they support?

- "Licensed" skiers and trail managers thought the three-year trail-pass was most appropriate. Skiers in general were not asked which multi-year option they prefer.
- Considerable support remains among skiers in general as well as "licensed" skiers for the continuation of an annual trail-pass.

Among the three groups surveyed, a consensus exists on how to price a three-year trail-pass. That consensus is:

- A three-year trail-pass should cost \$14.00 for an individual and \$21.00 for a husband/wife combination trail-pass.

Perhaps most importantly, the three surveys measured general support for fee-based funding of ski trails:

- Seventy-five percent of "licensed" skiers think a multi-year license of some kind is a good idea.
- Only one quarter of skiers in general suggested paying no fee whatsoever.
- Fifty-eight percent of all ski-trail managers and 69 percent of managers receiving state appropriations support the trail-pass program.

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1. BACKGROUND

American society appears to be shifting away from multi-purpose funding as it relates to many public services. The focus on fee-based funding extends to every level of government. The U.S. General Accounting Office symbolically led the way into the 1980s with its encouragement to state and local governments to balance budgets by charging user fees (Report to Congress, CED-81-32, April 22, 1981).

The trend toward user-funded services has taken on new dimensions in Minnesota in the mid-1980s. In an effort to increase accountability and to accelerate the use of certain funds, the Minnesota Legislature has "dedicated" a number of fee-based Department of Natural Resources (DNR) trail accounts for specific purposes. These accounts include the snowmobile trails and enforcement account (Laws of Minnesota, 1982, Chapter 580), the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) account (Laws of Minnesota, 1984, Chapter 647) and the cross-country skiing account (Special Session Laws of Minnesota, 1985, Chapter 13, Section 200). The message for each of these programs is that publicly provided services, at least in trail recreation, should be linked directly with the revenues they generate.

Between 1973 and 1982, public ski trails were partially funded by the snowmobile trails and enforcement account (Minnesota Statutes, 1980, Chapter 84.83). However, Chapter 580 of Laws of Minnesota, 1982, dedicated snowmobile funds strictly for snowmobile purposes and called for a study of possible funding methods for all other forms of trail recreation.

The study of funding methods, submitted to the legislature in January 1983, identified cross-country skiers as the trail-user group most likely to

succeed with some form of user-fee system.¹ At the urging of a number of state skier organizations, the Legislature enacted the ski trail-pass (Chapter 325 of Laws of Minnesota, 1983).² This trail-pass was the first and continues to be the only one of its kind anywhere in the nation.

The collection of trail-pass revenues is administered by the DNR Bureau of Licenses and allocation and use of these revenues is administered by the Trails and Waterways Unit. The cost of the annual trail-pass is \$5.00 for an individual, \$7.50 for a combination husband/wife, and the daily trail-pass is \$1.00. Trail-pass revenues are deposited in an ear-marked account and are appropriated for public ski-trail development, maintenance and grooming through grants made to local units of government and by directly funding ski trails in state recreation units. The ski trail-pass is required on approximately 2,000 miles out of the 2,600 miles of publicly owned and/or maintained ski trails. Skiers aged 16 through 64 are required to buy the ski trail-pass. Ski trail-pass exemptions include participants in races and official school activities and residents of state or local correctional facilities. The exemption requires sponsors to obtain a special use permit from the trail administrator prior to the event. Ski trail-pass non-compliance is a petty misdemeanor.

¹The weighing of the pros and cons of user fees, and an evaluation of ten different ski-trail funding methods was done in User Fee Feasibility on DNR-Assisted Recreation Trails, January 1983. Copies are available through the DNR Trails and Waterways Unit.

²One note is in order concerning semantics. The subject of this report is the "cross-country ski trail-pass." Even though it is commonly called a "ski license," it is a pass. "License" implies receiving permission to engage in a particular activity. With the trail-pass a fee is being charged for a service rendered which is permission to use a prepared ski trail. The trail-pass is unlike a license in that it is required for use of particular facilities (i.e., trails) rather than to engage in a particular activity (i.e., skiing). The focus is trail use, not ski use.

The original 1983 ski trail-pass legislation has undergone some evolution. Chapter 654, Laws of Minnesota, 1984, called for ski trail-pass stickers to be applied to ski poles rather than to skiers' outer garments as was originally prescribed. The daily pass continues to be a jacket tag. This act also narrowed the ski trail-pass requirement to only non-federal ski trails that have received state recreation money. Previously, all non-federal public ski trails were included. In 1985, the Legislature established the cross-country ski account (Special Session Laws of Minnesota, 1985, Chapter 13, Section 200) which "dedicated" all ski trail-pass revenues to ski programs.

As of January 1986, the ski trail-pass was available at 315 locations statewide, including state parks, the DNR Bureau of Licenses, and participating sporting goods stores, some gas stations, hardware stores, and commercial outlets. Non-state outlets are permitted by law to charge an additional 50-cent issuing fee. This issuing fee is retained by the seller.

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2. INTRODUCTION

The 1985 Legislature called for a feasibility study for extending the options from an annual and daily ski trail-pass to a multi-year or lifetime option. The legislation reads as follows:

Special Session Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 13, Section 23, subdivision 2.

The commissioner of natural resources shall study the feasibility of providing for a multi-year or lifetime stamp for cross-country skiing upon payment of an appropriate fee and in lieu of an annual cross-country ski license. The commissioner shall report to the chairs of the senate finance committee and house appropriations committee by January 15, 1986 on the findings of the study.

It is clear that a multi-year ski trail-pass could help mitigate the effects of unstable winter conditions. However, is a multi-year ski trail-pass attractive to skiers and trail managers? Also, how much would skiers be willing to pay for such a trail-pass? These issues are addressed in this report.

Because no other states have a similar trail-pass, this report consists of a brief look at what other states are doing to extend the provisions of a comparable program: the lifetime game and fish license. It then looks at how the Minnesota ski trail-pass has fared with users after two full seasons and the beginning of a third season. In addition, findings from surveys of previously "licensed" skiers, ski-trail managers and the general population of the state are reported. Finally, these findings were analyzed to make recommendations where appropriate and to identify areas of future study.

3. ASSESSMENT OF LIFETIME LICENSES IN OTHER STATES

The appeal of a lifetime license has been investigated elsewhere. Oklahoma was the first state to enact a lifetime game and fish license in 1967. Since then, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Indiana and Kansas have followed Oklahoma's lead. Officials from these states feel very positively toward the lifetime licenses. Each state has tailored its program to address its own needs. These lifetime license programs provide for perpetual trusts, which yield interest income above inflation rates.

The Minnesota Legislature, with the authorship of Senate File 699 and House File 1671 in 1985, began an investigation into the feasibility of lifetime hunting and fishing licenses. Each of these bills remains in committee pending the outcome of further testimony.

In response to this Legislative initiative, the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Section, researched Minnesota license fees for fish and game licenses between 1960 to 1980, rates of inflation (and correlated rate increases), rates of investment, and the numbers of people moving in or out of the state over time. These investigations have determined that an appropriate lifetime license fee would be at least 25 times the annual fee. This conclusion is supported by other evidence. In a selection of 14 organizations offering lifetime memberships, these rates, on the average, were 24 times the annual membership price (see Appendix A).

When Minnesota's present annual trail-pass prices are expanded by 25 times, we find that the appropriate rates would be \$125.00 for an individual lifetime trail-pass and \$187.50 for a husband/wife combination

trail-pass. Whether these rates exceed acceptable limits as reported in survey findings is the subject of Chapter 5 of this report: Results from Surveys.

4. PRESENT STATUS OF SKI TRAIL-PASS PROGRAM

Because ski activity is dependent upon stable snow-cover, the first two years of the program have been a study in contrast. The first season (1983-84) brought 47,000 participants, raising \$161,000.00 in revenue. Snow conditions were exceptional, with an early snow base which was stable through most of the season.

MINNESOTA CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAIL-PASSES SOLD

	SEASON		
	<u>83-84</u>	<u>84-85</u>	<u>84-85/ 83-84</u>
INDIVIDUAL	12,988	7,924	0.61
COMBINATION	12,513	7,607	0.61
DAILY	9,025	11,721	1.30
DUPLICATES	<u>2</u>	<u>-0-</u>	
Total Passes Sold:	34,528	27,252	0.79
One Additional: Person Per Combination	(+12,513)	(+ 7,607)	
Persons Represented:	47,041	35,359	0.75
Total Receipts:	\$161,105	\$108,393	0.67

Source: MN/DNR License Bureau, 1985; computations by MN/DNR Trails and Waterways Unit, December 1985.

During the second season (1984-85), however, a stable snow base did not develop in most areas until mid-January, and then it was short-lived. Only 35,000 skiers participated in the program despite the penalty for

failure to purchase the ski trail-pass. 1984-85 revenues were only \$108,000.00

In late October 1985, the DNR increased its promotion of the ski trail-pass. This effort focused upon informing skiers about the program and highlighted the fact that funds collected would be placed in a set-aside, dedicated account for cross-country ski purposes.

Early indications are that 1985-86 trail-pass sales have far surpassed 1984-85 receipts. Spot checks made at Afton State Park in early January indicated that 95 percent of the skiers had purchased a trail-pass. Park employees at Fort Snelling State Park believe that skiers now assume they will need the ski trail-pass stickers on their poles. It appears that public awareness and support of the ski trail-pass have increased. Attributable factors may include extensive newspaper and television coverage, and distribution of 65,000 brochures to 1,500 locations, and a 1.5-foot snowfall in late November which has remained to the present (late February).

Nevertheless, the ski trail-pass program will always be subject to fluctuating weather conditions. Poor-snow means less ski trail-pass revenues. The recent "dedication" of cross-country ski receipts may help remove some of the program's uncertainties. Money raised during adequate winters can be carried over to maintain trails when snow conditions and subsequent revenues are lower.

5. RESULTS FROM SURVEYS

To determine public reaction to multi-year ski trail-pass options, the DNR completed surveys of three populations during the fall of 1985: "licensed" skiers, ski-trail managers and the general public. The "licensed" skiers, who previously had purchased the ski trail-pass, were randomly selected from DNR records. The survey consisted of a letter of introduction and a mail-in post card. Managers of public ski trails were also surveyed by mail, having been selected in a random sample of all ski-trail managers. These two surveys were conducted by Trails and Waterways Unit, Trail Programs Section staff. A telephone survey of 2,000 randomly selected households was conducted by the Minnesota Center for Social Research (MCSR), under contract with the Trails and Waterways Unit. The MCSR survey included questions which measured public awareness of the ski trail-pass program and skier willingness-to-pay for a three-year trail-pass.

A. Results from DNR Survey of "Licensed" Skiers (Appendix B)

Seventy-five percent of "licensed" skiers think a multi-year license is a good idea. When given a number of options, 26 percent of licensed skiers preferred to keep an annual license. Thirty-eight percent preferred a three-year trail-pass and 22 percent supported a lifetime pass. The remainder (14 percent) were split on a number of other trail-pass options.

When asked about willingness-to-pay for a three-year trail-pass, the most often specified price (mode) was \$15.00 for both an individual and combination license. The average (mean)

three-year suggested price was about \$13.00 for an individual license, and almost \$20.00 for the combination license.

When asked about willingness-to-pay for a five-year trail-pass, the most often suggested price was \$20.00 for both the individual and combination. The average five-year price was \$20.00 for the individual and \$30.00 for the combination trail-pass.

When asked about willingness-to-pay for a ten-year trail-pass, the often suggested price was split between \$20.00 and \$50.00 for the individual trail-pass and \$50.00 for the combination trail-pass. The average rate in these two ten-year options was \$34.00 individual and \$51.00 combination.

When asked about willingness-to-pay for a lifetime trail-pass, the most often suggested price was \$50.00 for the individual, and the combination price was most often suggested to be \$30.00 and \$75.00. The average individual price was \$52.00 and combination was \$76.00.

The above findings about multi-year trail-passes are tempered by the fact that 26 percent desire to keep the annual trail-pass. This view is reflected by the three most frequently volunteered comments about the ski trail-pass. These responses were drawn out of the 145 comments which were categorized into 36 separate "issues:"

	<u>PERCENT OF ALL COMMENTS</u>
1. Too large a lump sum is required for a multi-year trail-pass	6.9
2. No fees should be charged at all	4.9
3. Only annual trail-passes should be sold	4.1

Finally, the concern about the high cost of multi-year licenses may also be expressed in the fact that 38 percent of the licensed skiers support a three-year trail-pass as opposed to only 22 percent supporting a lifetime trail-pass.

According to this survey of "licensed" skiers, the three-year trail-pass would be most appropriately priced between \$13.00 and \$15.00 for an individual and \$15.00 to \$20.00 for the husband/wife combination.

B. Results from DNR Survey of Ski-Trail Managers (Appendix C)

Fifty-eight percent of ski-trail managers either "supported" or "strongly supported" the ski trail-pass program. Thirty-three percent either "opposed" or "strongly opposed" the ski trail-pass.

Among those trail managers receiving state money, 69 percent "supported" or "strongly supported" the trail-pass program, and only 23 percent "opposed" or "strongly opposed" the program. Among those trail managers not receiving state money, 47 percent "supported" or "strongly supported" the program, but 43 percent "opposed" or "strongly opposed" it.

When asked specifically how a multi-year license could help or hurt the ski program, managers responded as follows:

	<u>PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES</u>
1. Skiers are not willing to pay more money	8.4
2. It would be easy to administer	11.1
3. It would be convenient	13.0

When managers were asked what an appropriate cost would be for a three-year trail-pass, their average (mean) and most common (mode)

choice was \$15.00. The average price suggested for a three-year combination ski trail-pass was \$26.00, but the most frequent price (mode) was \$15.00.

The general message obtained from the ski-trail managers was that the ski trail-pass was an appropriate way to raise revenue. Managers were attracted to the multi-year ski trail-pass for administrative reasons, but were concerned about skier's willingness-to-pay. Prices suggested by managers were similar to those of "licensed" skiers and the general skier population.

C. Results from General Population Survey by Minnesota Center for Social Research, January 1986 (Appendix D)

Results from the cross-country skier questions in this general population survey show potential for the existing annual/daily trail-pass, as well as for a three-year trail-pass. Fifty-eight percent of the state's adults are aware of the DNR trail-pass program and an estimated 36 percent (slightly over one million Minnesota adults) have skied at some time in the state.

Respondents who had skied were also asked what they would pay for a three-year ski trail-pass. The three most frequent responses were:

<u>AMOUNT OF THREE-YEAR SKI-FEE</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
\$ 0.00	24.4
\$10.00	22.2
\$15.00	30.5

These responses show a wide divergence of opinion on what a three-year trail-pass should cost. In the Chapter 6, this divergent

opinion is discussed. When all responses to this question are averaged, the favored three-year rate is \$10.60. However, when respondents who are unwilling to pay anything for a three-year option are eliminated, the mean rate rises to \$14.03.

The MCSR survey documents that a large segment of the state's population is both informed and interested in cross-country skiing. The levels for willingness to pay for a three-year trail-pass are interesting in that they show a range of opinion. These results are compatible with the results of the other surveys.

6. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The ski trail-pass program has undergone a number of adjustments since it was enacted by the 1983 Legislature. These adjustments have been made to refine a concept that has found general support with both skiers and trail managers. In the continuing effort to find improvements in the funding of public ski-trails, the multi-year ski trail-pass is being investigated.

Generally speaking, if an annual license is priced adequately, a lifetime license set at least 25 times greater than the annual price would be considered adequate to compensate for the annual loss of revenue resulting from a lifetime license.

But, even though a lifetime ski trail-pass does have some attraction, such an option appears unacceptable to most skiers. This report does, however, point to a considerable interest in extending a trail-pass beyond a single year.

Generally speaking, skiers support the trail-pass method of trail funding. The most frequently preferred multi-year option was the three-year trail-pass, with the support of 38.0 percent of the "licensed" skiers. These skiers thought that the three-year fee should be \$15.00 for an individual and about \$20.00 for the husband/wife combination. The three-year option may be supported by most respondents because the annual trail-pass is considered too much of a nuisance to purchase annually, but a trail-pass for more than three years would cost too much. Further, the mix of opinion on this issue is underscored by the fact that 26 percent preferred to remain with a one-year trail-pass, while 22 percent preferred a lifetime fee.

Lifetime trail-pass options have already been discussed in part. In the "licensed" skier survey, the preferred rate for individual skiers was \$50.00. This is considerably less than the \$125.00 rate necessary for program survival. For the husband/wife option, the "licensed" skiers' preference made a four-way split into \$30.00, \$50.00, \$75.00 and \$100.00 groups. Again, this is considerably less than the required \$187.50 lifetime rate. Of all the written comments received, 6.9 percent centered around the concern that multi-year licenses represented too large a lump-sum payment.

In light of this, two possible courses of action could be taken to mitigate cost if a lifetime ski trail-pass were legislated. One option would be to pro-rate the lifetime fee based upon age (or the probable number of years that a skier is likely to ski). Another possibility would be to offer moderately priced installment payments. Both of these modifications are offered in other state's lifetime hunting/fishing licenses. Barring these special modifications, the acceptance of a lifetime ski trail-pass is doubtful at best.

Fifty-eight percent of all ski-trail managers support the trail-pass to some extent while 33 percent oppose it. However, support increases when considering only managers who have received state funding. These findings suggest that trail managers will support the program if it provides funding for their own trails.

Ski-trail managers were attracted to multi-year ski trail-passes for the reasons of convenience and ease of administration. One concern was the pricing of the trail-pass. On the question of the three-year option, trail managers suggested a \$15.00 fee (both the mean and the mode). The trail manager's suggested price for the husband/wife combination

trail-pass was \$26.00 (mean) and \$15.00 (mode). The ski-trail manager's pricing of the three-year option is similar to that of "licensed" skiers.

The last group surveyed about the multi-year ski trail-pass was the public at large. The survey found that 58 percent, or 1.7 million Minnesotans aged 18 or above, had heard of the DNR ski program. Thirty-six percent (about 1 million Minnesotans) have skied in the state at some time. How did these cross-country skiers respond to the pricing of a multi-year ski trail-pass?

The skiers among the general public had roughly a three-way split in responses. The three most common responses suggest three separate attitudes toward a ski-trail pass. The first group (24 percent) is unwilling to pay any amount for a three-year trail-pass. It may well be that these people have a "philosophical opposition" to any form of ski trail-pass. This is a very common public response to a user-fee when the full range of funding options is not presented to the respondent for evaluation. Another important factor to explain may be whether the trail-pass is linked directly with a specific service. Bush-whacking cross-country skiers, for example, would not desire a prepared trail, and quite naturally would not desire to pay for a ski trail-pass.

The second group of respondents (22 percent), those at the \$10.00 level for three-years, may well be the "bargain shopper" segment who are looking for a good savings, i.e., the benefit of three years of service for the price of two. A 33 percent discount in cost is less than the discount rates of some Twin Cities metropolitan area fine-arts organizations that offer season-ticket savings over box-office rates. In contrast, Twin Cities metropolitan-area professional athletic events do not offer this level of discounting. This may reflect the rate at

which tickets are sold. For example, the Minnesota Twins discount only 2 to 3 percent, the Minnesota Vikings don't discount at all, and the Minnesota North Stars discount between 9 and 20 percent (see Appendix E).

The third group of respondents (31 percent), those at the \$15.00 level for three years, may be the "convenience shoppers." With no discounting of rates, their primary interest may be avoiding the annual hassle of finding a place to purchase the ski trail-pass.

The opinions of those skiers classed as "convenience shoppers" most closely correspond to opinions of "licensed" skiers and ski-trail managers in reference to multi-year ski trail-passes. This group, preferring the \$15.00 three-year option, represented 31 percent of the general population skiers surveyed. This was a greater percent than those favoring no fee (24 percent) or a \$10.00 fee (22 percent).

The results of the three surveys suggest some consensus on how a three-year trail-pass should be priced. In summary form, these results are shown below:

SUGGESTED PRICING OF THREE-YEAR OPTION

<u>SURVEYED GROUP</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>		<u>HUSBAND/WIFE</u>	
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mode</u>
"Licensed" Skiers	\$13.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
Minnesota Skiers	\$11.00	\$15.00	Not Asked	
Trail Managers	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$26.00	\$15.00

Of the six statistics above for the individual trail-pass, the most common one is \$15.00, but the average of them all is \$14.00. The \$14.00 price is the most appropriate price for the individual three-year trail-pass because it averages the responses of those skiers who think

little or nothing should be paid for the trail-pass. The \$14.00 price also would be in deference to the 22 percent of the general population of skiers who would like to see some discounting of the annual price rate.

The individual trail-pass price is the logical base upon which to set the husband/wife trail-pass price, which is now set at 150 percent of the individual price (\$7.50 versus \$5.00). The price for the husband/wife trail-pass should, therefore, be \$21.00. This price also falls within the two means in the surveys, even if it does exceed the modes.

In summary, the surveys of the skier community suggest that a three-year trail-pass priced at \$14.00 for an individual and \$21.00 for a husband/wife combination would be most acceptable.

7. IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE TRAIL-PASS CHANGES

A number of issues bear directly on the discussion of a multi-year ski trail-pass, but extend beyond the investigations of this report. These issues may be grouped into two general categories: program impacts of a multi-year trail-pass, and skier motivations as they relate to a multi-year trail-pass.

In the area of program impacts, one question remaining is whether a three-year option would replace or be an addition to the three existing ski-fee classes (i.e., daily, individual annual and husband/wife annual). In any case, the daily trail-pass probably should be maintained as is. Its' appropriateness has been demonstrated both by those who rent ski equipment on a daily basis, and by more experienced skiers who have uncertainties about future weather conditions.

The question remains of whether a three-year option should replace a one-year option. Surveys have shown the significant number who prefer an annual trail-pass. At issue is whether a substitution of one trail-pass type for another would serve to increase or decrease sales. Would skiers who now prefer an annual trail-pass switch to a daily trail-pass or to a three-year trail-pass? If both a one and a three-year trail-pass were offered, would significant numbers of sales agents refuse to carry all license types in an effort to keep license inventory or license agent bonding costs lower?

Another issue that may be considered when offering a three-year ski trail-pass is whether to continue the husband/wife trail-pass, either as an annual or a three-year option. One argument in favor of continuing the husband/wife category is that it may allow family participation in an

activity which might otherwise be viewed as too costly by a single wage-earner's spouse-and-child household. This option also offers the option of one spouse being able to purchase the trail-pass for the other, because only one of the two signatures is required at the time of purchase. Perhaps the primary factor in support of the husband/wife option is that it follows the precedent set by fish and game licenses.

On the other side of the husband/wife option discussion we have the concern that it discriminates unfairly against single skiers and singles living in the same household. It may also encourage perjury concerning marital status and it may simply be less necessary now when we have fewer single-income families than we once did in our society.

In summary, the implementation of a three-year ski trail-pass should proceed in one of the following ways:

1. Addition of the three-year individual and husband/wife options to the existing options of daily, individual annual and husband/wife annual.
2. Substitution of both three-year options for both the existing one-year options.
3. Elimination of the annual husband/wife option and addition of the individual three-year option.

A remaining aspect of the multi-year trail-pass discussion involves setting necessary funding levels. Appendix F discusses the results of a 1984 ski-trail managers survey about trail costs. The basic message of this survey is that nearly all costs of doing business increase when trails are upgraded in any way. The bottom line, therefore, is to determine precisely what level of service should be provided to

cross-country skiers, and then set appropriate fee rates based upon the number of skiers participating.

The participation level for the DNR ski trail-pass has not yet stabilized. Public recognition and acceptance of the ski trail-pass may have changed significantly in just the past 1985-86 winter season as the result of better snow conditions, promotion and enforcement.

Any changes to the ski trail-pass cost-options should take into consideration the entry pattern of skiers who have never before purchased a trail-pass. What motivates the initial purchase of the trail-pass? How is this motivation affected by price? Motivation is indeed an important consideration when discussing cross-country skiers. One can assume that a skier's willingness to pay is related to any combination of the following factors:

1. "How likely am I to be able to use my ski trail-pass during any given period of time?"
 - This is dependent upon personal time availability and the availability of proper snow conditions.
2. "How much can I afford to allow my investment in ski equipment to stand idle? In other words, is my investment sufficient so as to cause me to also invest in 'licensed' ski opportunity regardless of when my time and the weather permit?"
 - This motivation is dependent upon equipment costs.
 - This concern may well translate into a longer commitment to paying a ski-fee, regardless of how often a person actually is able to go skiing. This motivation could cause a person to buy a multiple-year ski trail-pass even if s/he is able to go skiing only once in three years. The reassurance lies in the fact that a program is on-going and available if and when the personal ski opportunity exists. Or perhaps the purchase of the pass will somehow motivate the purchaser to actually get out and ski.

3. "I am uncertain as to whether, when I finally get around to skiing, I will be able to find a place where I can buy a ski trail-pass."

- This is another motivation for the purchase of a multi-year trail-pass. It is a reassurance that the purchase "hassle" has been eliminated.

The related issues as discussed in this section do have a bearing on how to make proper choices. These factors should not be overlooked. Understanding program impacts and skier motivations is required if oversights are to be avoided with new legislative initiatives.

